

CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN

Not contented with drawing the 'saints'  
down upon him, he has attacked the  
'papishes' and is now in the condition  
somewhat of a nut between the two  
blades of a nutcracker.

-- Dr. Morgan to Cyrus Redding

(Cyrus Redding, Yesterday and To-Day,  
1863, III, 53.)

A NUT BETWEEN TWO BLADES:  
THE NOVELS OF  
CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN

By

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## DESCRIPTION

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

A reading of Maturin's six novels makes it necessary to re-evaluate the general opinion that he is chiefly a gothic novelist. This gothic view of Maturin is founded predominantly upon readings of The Fatal Revenge (1807), his first novel, and Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), his fifth. Although "traditional" gothic devices appear in both these novels, Maturin's searching analysis of Christianity as well as the specifically Irish framework make Melmoth, at least, more of a spiritual and social allegory than a gothic novel.

Maturin also published four other novels: The Wild Irish Boy (1808), The Milesian Chief (1812), Women, or Pour et Contre (1818), and The Albigenes (1824). The first three of these novels are set in contemporary Ireland and they analyze various conflicting forces which, in Maturin's view, retarded the building of a progressive and unified Irish society. In The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief, for example, Maturin presents two approaches to the problem of Irish leadership, a problem which the Union with Great Britain in 1800 had magnified. In Women, also, he dramatizes particular religious and social tensions in Ireland; but in this case, it is the religious gulf which separates various groups and which the growing power of the Methodist community intensifies. His final novel, The Albigenes,

likewise reflects religious tensions within Ireland; in this case, he reacts to the renewed threat posed by the native Catholics' quest for emancipation. Those who read these four novels -- Scott, Morgan, Godwin, the Irish Catholics and the Irish Methodists, and other contemporaries -- considered Maturin as more than simply a gothic novelist. Furthermore, if his letters to Sir Walter Scott and to Archibald Constable can be relied upon, Maturin regarded himself as a serious commentator upon Ireland's social and spiritual degeneracy rather than as a gothic novelist.

Maturin, an Anglo-Irish clergyman who distrusted Catholic and Methodist alike, was a deeply spiritual man. To him, Ireland's civil chaos resulted from the misdirected spiritual energy of these two groups as well as from the presence of irresponsible Anglo-Irish and British social leaders. For him, a solution to these problems could only be created by sincere and devoted Christian living which was most easily gained by following the forms of the Church of England. Throughout his career as a writer, this belief formed the basis of both his sermons and novels alike; and furthermore, it inspired his search for an effective medium through which he could analyze and suggest solutions to the problems which, because of its unique collection of religions and races, existed in Ireland. By reading all his novels, therefore, and by considering them within the Irish context of the social and religious tensions in which he wrote, a view of Maturin emerges which shows him to be not only a gothic novelist, but also an Anglo-Irish controversialist.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1800, the Act of Union transformed Dublin from a metropolis second only to London in the British Isles to a city of the economically, socially, and spiritually dispossessed. The Act was a direct response to Irish nationalism, and both the stimulus and the response derived from the French Revolutionary experience. Bringing the Irish population -- that is one third that of the British Isles -- under direct control of the English government, it rendered the Irish Catholics -- eighty per cent of the "disaffected" Irish population -- a manageable minority within the larger British political system. It was thereby intended to control some of the dangerous trends which had begun to flourish under the independent Irish Parliament established in 1782.

The formation in 1782 of an Irish Parliament in Dublin independent of the British Parliament had laid the foundation for channeling many social energies toward one focus, a focus through which remedies to Ireland's numerous problems came to be expected. The Penal Code and Roman Catholic and Presbyterian persecution, colonial economic programs fostered by Westminster, sectarian and decentralized education, and health programs, all received attention from the newly

established Parliament. Hopes for Irish national unity were aroused. Economic independence from England was fostered. By the 1790's, however, because of the example of the French Revolution, both the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and the British Government as well as the moderate Catholics became anxious about their future, anxieties which they hoped could be assuaged by Union.

The Union was a product of fears, fear of "French invasion, of revolution, of social levelling, and of what a frightened peasantry or an embattled and hysterical ruling class might undertake in terror".<sup>1</sup> To a British government at war with France, the Union promised "to close a dangerous gap in national defense." To moderate Catholics, the Union promised political and civil emancipation. To the Anglo-Irish "Protestant Nation", the Union "promised an end to the blood-red nightmare of a jacquarie."<sup>2</sup> They hoped that the Union would maintain their prosperity and social dominance; but in order to achieve this, they had to surrender their independence in matters of church and state. The Union, therefore, dissolved Dublin's centralizing function as a capital, and returned Ireland to the fold of the British Empire. Instead of resolving potential civil chaos, however, it precipitated Ireland into the blackest century of its tragic history, and forever isolated it from England.

Accelerated politically by the Irish rebellion of 1798, the Union relegated the Anglo-Irish into a second-class citizen status within the

Empire, and reinforced the predominant English view that the native Irish were a race of savages to be civilized by the cultivated British. The Union, in spite of its aims, reversed the promising conditions which had been developing in independent Ireland, and established conditions entirely unfavourable for building a civilized state. Political decentralization, personal frustration, and national stagnation all developed from the Union's enactment, and resulted in higher taxes, diminished trade, unemployment, and deterioration of property. It sounded the death knell for the growing sense of Irish unity, and entrenched the several warring factions, most prominent of which were the land-owning Protestants, commonly known as the "Ascendancy", and the Catholics. Although political expression of Irish identity was stifled, various cultural projects retained some of their earlier momentum, a factor which prompted some individuals to try to identify and to interpret for the English the unifying or disintegrating forces of Irish society. Foremost among these individuals were Irish men of letters.

It is in this Ireland and this Dublin that one such artist, Charles Robert Maturin (1780-1824), began his obscure quest for literary fame. By the time of his first publication, The Fatal Revenge (1807), there was occurring, among Dublin intellectuals, the gradual synthesizing of a national consciousness, through the publication of historical and contemporary accounts of Ireland, spurred by a desire to correct the distorted English conception of Ireland. Two early



expressions of this trend toward a more informed understanding of Ireland include Young's Tour of Ireland (1780) and Walker's Historical  
Memoirs of the Irish Bards (1786).<sup>4</sup> Numerous associations and individuals devoted both effort and talent to the preservation and publication of Gaelic literature, efforts which complemented the growing  
 interest in both ancient and contemporary Ireland and its unique culture.<sup>5</sup> This expanded British interest in post-Union Ireland together with increasing Irish awareness of the need for mutual English-Irish understanding encouraged Irish writers, for the first time in Ireland's history, to make efforts to embody in their fiction Irish conceptions of Ireland. Two of the most eloquent writers of such fiction were Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan. Their best known novels were Castle Rackrent (1800) and The Wild Irish Girl (1806). Lady Morgan also published a famous and curious patriotic work entitled Patriotic Sketches of Ireland, written in Connaught (1807), and Maria Edgeworth, in collaboration with her father, the curious Essay on Irish Bulls  
<sup>6</sup> (1802).

Through Castle Rackrent and The Wild Irish Girl, Edgeworth and Morgan attempted, respectively, to present a realistic and a sympathetic picture of Ireland. Because there was little market for  
<sup>7</sup> fiction in Ireland itself, and, because in any case, the cultural identity sought by these and other writers required the reinforcement of external recognition, they directed their fiction toward the English reader in an

endeavour to correct the prevailing prejudice against things Irish. Morgan, indeed, occasionally lived in London and established contacts with publishers and with contemporary tastes there. Edgeworth, while remaining mostly in Ireland, published and did all her business through her influential and British father. Both Morgan and Edgeworth, thereby, had insight into prevailing literary fashions, and were able to capitalize on them in their efforts to correct English misconceptions about Ireland. Edgeworth lightened her basically realistic depiction of Irish landlords by satirizing stock Irish figures already familiar to the English reader. Morgan, on the other hand, appealed to the vogue of sentimentality and to the cult of the noble savage. Her Wild Irish Girl focussed upon the development of an Englishman as he encountered, understood, and acquired sympathy for Irish Gaelic culture. This novel contains many lengthy lectures on Irish culture, tradition, and religion presented objectively and enthusiastically. Both Morgan and Edgeworth comprehended the nature of the obstacles inherent in trying to appeal to a British reading public; both adopted appropriate devices to convey convincingly their interpretation of the problems which interfered with the British perception of Irish culture as well as their solutions to those problems.

Maturin, like Morgan and Edgeworth, wished to paint for the English reader a true picture of Ireland. He too had to contend with prevailing British public opinion in order to write of Irish cultural experiences for an English reader. Superficially, his Wild Irish Boy(1808)

and The Milesian Chief(1812) resembled Morgan's Wild Irish Girl(1806) because the first had a similar title, and because the second introduced an English character to Gaelic Ireland. His focus, however, was essentially different because he tried to present an Ireland of inevitable political destinies and also to convey his own Christian vision as part of the solution. Whereas Edgeworth and Morgan analysed the nature of the Ascendancy and of the Gaelic nation respectively, Maturin took a cross-section of Irish society -- from Gaelic paupers to absentee Anglo-Irish peers -- and examined not only the many conflicting cultural forces, but also the effects of those forces in moral and psychological terms upon the individual.

Maturin wrote of the cultural problems which confronted the upright Church of England man in Ireland -- the petty and not-so-petty conflicts between classes, between religions, and between values in the individual himself. He was not the energetic patriot and propagandist that Lady Morgan was, nor was he the detached, optimistic, and self-assured observer that Edgeworth was. He did not create characters of a particular Irish faction for the purposes of romance as did Morgan; neither did he write social commentary as Edgeworth did. In his need to penetrate surfaces, his interest focussed more upon the fate of an individual caught up in the Irish problem. He therefore devoted his attention to character formation and to patterns of behaviour rather than to technical literary structure. An exciteable

man, he tried to maintain his own personal values in spite of nationalists and patriots, and in spite of fashionable cults. A clergyman, he wrote about what he thought he knew best: the Irish people's behaviour and their capacity for self-deception in the face of Christianity.

Two other factors influenced Maturin and made his writings very different from those of either Edgeworth or Morgan. As opposed to their relative personal and financial independence, Maturin's poverty, isolation, and dependence created a vicious circle from which he, in spite of perseverance, could never extricate himself completely. He was a clergyman of the Church of England with a basic salary of  
8  
eighty pounds per year, with a socially inclined wife, and with a family that grew to four surviving children between the year 1807 and 1820. Therefore, he needed money. He also wanted to disseminate his understanding of both Christianity and the plight of Ireland, rather than merely to produce works of popular entertainment. However, his professional attachment to the Established Church was regarded  
9  
socially as an occupation which should exclude literary pursuits. Because he felt his calling sincerely, and because he lacked money, he could not move to London as Lady Morgan and other aspiring writers had done. This meant that he had to remain isolated in Dublin, distant from English markets and tastes, and aloof from contact with  
10  
other writers. These factors made it difficult for him to learn from other writers' mistakes.

Maturin had to fashion his personal concern for man's moral nature to a public taste of which he had no first-hand experience. His only security depended upon the Church, and he therefore felt obliged to write under the protection of a pseudonym -- Dennis Jasper Murphy -- because, although he wanted recognition, he did not wish to endanger his current position nor the chance of church advancement. Promotion could have relieved the intensity of his financial problems. The situation was further complicated by the fact that he did not want to write simply entertaining books. His concern with Christianity compelled him to write with purpose in order to disseminate his interpretation of Christianity. Also, like Edgeworth and Morgan, he wanted to help to form English public opinion about Ireland, a most compelling reason for wanting a large audience. A combination of these factors led him into curious compromises and mistakes, and all worked together to produce the particular kind of novel that he wrote.

The interplay of these factors induced him to attempt various forms of literary expression including drama, poetry, sermons, critical articles and reviews, and, of course, novels. Although he wrote gothic, regional, historical and the satirical novels, circumstances have conspired to present him to posterity, not as a writer of diverse talents, but as simply a gothic novelist.

Of all his writings, Charles Maturin is today primarily remembered for one novel, Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), and to

some extent, perhaps, for two other works: The Fatal Revenge (1807), his first novel; and Bertram; or the Castle of St. Aldobrand (1816), his first and only successful play. Although during his writing career (1807-1824) he published six novels, three plays, two long poems, and two collections of sermons, these other works have all been consigned to oblivion. It is the three better-known works which provide the basis for the general conception of the eccentric Maturin as a gothicist because they support the popular view summed up in a contemporary article and repeated until today:

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The Devil is a prodigious favourite with Mr Maturin. He is a principal figure in all his performances; and his sable majesty must be uncompromising indeed, if he feels not compensated by the poem and the romance for the occasional professional ill usage of the pulpit. 12

Maturin's own statement concerning his preferences in the preface to The Milesian Chief (1812) in some ways complements the reviewer's understanding:

If I possess any talent, it is that of darkening the gloomy, and of deepening the sad; of painting life in extremes, and representing those struggles of passion when the soul trembles on the verge of the unlawful and the unhallowed. 13

Growing naturally out of these statements, supported by various brief biographies which appeared in the nineteenth century, and reinforced by the lengthy introduction of the 1892 edition of Melmoth, are the first three critical studies of Maturin.

These appeared in Germany at the beginning of this century and they all treat Maturin as a terror-novelist. The first, Willy Müller's

Charles Robert Maturin's Romane "The Fatal Revenge" und "Melmoth the Wanderer". Ein Beitrag zur Gothic Romance (1908), sets the tone for practically all ensuing criticism. Relating Maturin to the development of Gothicism in England from Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1764) through Reeve, Radcliffe and Lewis, and discussing their influence upon him, Müller crystallizes a standard approach. He discusses some similarities between The Fatal Revenge and Radcliffe's The Italian (1797), and collates several passages which appear to be depictions of similar characters, but no more. He makes passing allusion to the influence of Goethe's Faust, Part I, on Melmoth -- the episode of Melmoth killing Immalee's brother -- but does not suggest how Maturin came by it.

Faust had not by that time been totally translated into English, and  
 14  
 Maturin could not read German. He further mentions some Rosicrucian overtones of Godwin's St. Leon (1799) which perhaps influenced Melmoth; but again, his treatment is brief. His liberal plot summaries are duplicated by Helene Richter in her study, Geschichte der englischen Romantik (1911). In volume one of her work, she presents an abbreviated description of Maturin the terror-novelist and, as had Müller, gives a narrative outline of The Fatal Revenge and Melmoth. These two German critics, together with Oscar Fernsemer in his Die Dramatischen Werke Charles Robert Maturin's, mit einer kurzen Lebensbeschreibung (1913), establish the basis of the early twentieth-century view of Maturin as a terror-writer.

The approach to Maturin found in the work of Müller, Richter, and Fernsemer is continued later in the twentieth century by a series of critics writing in English: E. A. Baker, Eino Railo, and Devendra Varma. They all approach Maturin in a similar way, discussing first the background to the gothic revival, and then associating Maturin with it. In his History of the English Novel (1934), for example, Baker acknowledges Maturin's non-terror works, dismisses them, and then discusses "the elaborate terrorism" of Melmoth.<sup>15</sup> Railo, too, in The Haunted Castle (1927), discusses Melmoth at length, and dismisses the other fictions after simply noting them. In fact, he tells us that of "Maturin's works I have read only The Fatal Revenge and Melmoth the Wanderer."<sup>16</sup> Both Railo and Baker treat Maturin's writings within a gothic context, as does Varma in his study, The Gothic Flame (1957). Not one of these critics attempts to understand Maturin's gothic novels within the context of his other works.

Perhaps the most representative as well as the most determined critical examination of Maturin's gothicism is Willem Scholten's Charles Robert Maturin, the Terror Novelist (1933). His introduction discusses romanticism, its rapid development after 1750, and the evolution of the gothic romance, the main inspiration for which he sees as Radcliffe's works. Scholten seeks to acquaint the reader with Maturin's neglected last novel, The Albigenses (1824). He maintains that Maturin is first and foremost a terror-novelist; and further, that



although The Albigenses is purportedly an historical novel, it embodies an unusual number of terror devices for a work of that genre. He, as do Baker, Railo, and Varma, ignores all Maturin's concerns except those relating to gothicism.

Undoubtedly the single most significant study of Maturin is Niilo Idman's Charles Robert Maturin: His Life and Works (1923).

As Scholten and others have done, Idman initially accounts for Maturin in terms of the development of gothic romanticism, but at least he considers biographical facts before classifying the novels.

To limit his topic, he tries neither to study Maturin's place in English literature as any particular type of novelist, nor to gauge his influence on French literature, although he indicates Maturin's

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importance to both. Intentionally brief in terms of critical evaluation, Idman attempts to clarify biographical mistakes carried over from the nineteenth century and to familiarize the reader with Maturin's lesser-known works. He, as Müller, Scholten, Baker, and others, associates Maturin with the gothic tradition. But he contends that Maturin is a product of many conflicting forces -- personal and environmental -- of his time. In addition to relating him to the gothic forces in romanticism, therefore, he also links him with the resurgent nationalism which Ireland, as well

as continental European countries, was experiencing. He asserts that nationalism is important in constructing a perspective through which to consider a writer such as Maturin. On this subject, he states:

Among Irish novelists Maturin and Lady Morgan were those in whose (earlier) writings this sense of a glorious past first found expression, besides which their works also, for the first time in fiction, aimed at a conscious and artistic description of genuine Irish scenery. Maturin's sense of nature was ever on the alert, and the beautiful Wicklow mountains were to him, as to many other Irish writers of later times, a constant source of poetic inspiration. 18

Idman links Maturin's interest in setting to a cultural tradition as well as to a nationalism which found expression through an interest in folklore, legend, and early Irish history. His book is significant because it lays a foundation for later and more accurate considerations of biographical material, a factor which leads inevitably to a necessary understanding of Maturin's Irish background. Idman has shown the direction that Maturin studies must take. Students of Irish literature have, however, done little to extend his work.

There have been no full-length Irish studies of Maturin, and those briefer ones usually assume the gothic bias, dismiss him as un-Irish, or ignore him completely. One of the more egregious examples is Brian Cleeve's Dictionary of Irish Writers (1967), which includes a sketch replete with factual and interpretive inaccuracies. Having stated that Maturin was born in 1782, he writes:

Ordained in the Church of Ireland and served as curate in Loughrea and Dublin. Began a school, and wrote plays and novels; The

Fatal Revenge 1807, The Wild Irish Boy 1808, (in answer to Lady Morgan's Wild Irish Girl of 1806), The Milesian Chief 1812, imitated by Walter Scott in The Bride of Lammermoor, Women 1818, the only of his books to deal with contemporary Irish society. Melmoth the Wanderer 1820, his masterpiece, and The Albigenses, all being novels of a gothic kind, written at least in part as an escape from the terrible poverty and degradation surrounding him in his Dublin parish, St. Peter's ....

He was one of the strangest among the many strange characters in Irish letters, and deserves more attention than he has ever received. Even during his lifetime, when his books created a considerable stir of interest, they were comparatively little read, none reaching a second edition before his death in 1824, in Dublin. 19

Contrary to Cleeve's information, Maturin was born in 1780, a fact which  
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both Idman and Scholten take pains to establish in their studies published, respectively, forty-four and thirty-four years earlier.

Both The Fatal Revenge and The Wild Irish Boy reached a second edition before Maturin's death. The Wild Irish Boy was not an answer to Morgan's Wild Irish Girl and bears little resemblance to it; neither was The Milesian Chief imitated by Scott in The Bride of Lammermoor; and Women is not Maturin's only delineation of contemporary Irish society. Cleeve's account of Maturin's writing is also incomplete, omitting both his sermons -- two volumes, two editions each -- and his dramas and poetry. Finally, his vague claim that Maturin's novels are all "of a gothic kind", typical of many similar statements that refer only briefly to his works, indicates the need for re-evaluation.

Perhaps the most thorough historian of the Anglo-Irish tradition of the first half of the nineteenth century is Thomas Flanagan, author of The Irish Novelists: 1800-1850 (1963). His book, a survey of prominent Irish writers, treats Maturin briefly, but at least Flanagan

accounts for his slight treatment:

Charles Maturin launched his career with two bizarre imitations of Lady Morgan -- The Wild Irish Boy (1808) and The Milesian Chief (1812), but it must be said that the true interests of the author of Melmoth the Wanderer lay elsewhere.... It is significant, perhaps, that both these highly gifted members [Maturin and J. S. LeFanu] of the Ascendancy should have turned to tales whose somber and uncanny atmosphere seeks to transcend the immediacies of social fact. Maturin's lonely and forbidding country houses, set in frightening isolation upon the bogs, and the strangeness of LeFanu's Dublin suggest the disquiet and desolation which subsequent members of their social class took to be the predominating fact of the Irish scene. 21

Like Cleeve, Flanagan suggests that Maturin's Wild Irish Boy is an imitation of Morgan's Wild Irish Girl. In spite of his qualification that it is a "bizarre" imitation, he is as wrong as Cleeve is. (The relationship between The Wild Irish Girl and The Milesian Chief receives closer scrutiny in Chapter III below.) Because Maturin's novels do not reflect the interests of those acknowledged Irish writers "whose involvement with the Irish scene was deep and steady, and in whose work we can trace the changing pressures of Irish life", 22 Flanagan excludes him from his study. Although dismissed as being "otherworldly", Maturin is at least not misrepresented as being only a terror-novelist. We shall see, however, that Flanagan's first statement is completely incorrect in that Maturin's work does reflect the "changing pressures of Irish life" more profoundly than does that of either Morgan or Edgeworth. It is Maturin's Christianity -- not yet as prominent a topic in the first three novels as it would later become -- which obscures his Irish concerns in the later novels.

The only other critics who seriously consider Maturin are H. W. Piper and A. N. Jeffares. They discuss him both as an Irish nationalist and as a creative artist, although they commit factual errors and are generally ambiguous in their article "Maturin the Innovator".<sup>23</sup> It appears, therefore, that serious criticism of Maturin is to be gleaned from the somewhat distorted and biased pictures of him presented by literary historians whose main concern is with the gothic. The literary historian of Anglo-Irish literature gives Maturin token consideration, and leaves serious criticism to the critics primarily interested in the gothic; and these, in turn, evince no interest whatever in the social concerns of Maturin's work.

More perceptive references to Maturin are found in Aodh De Blácam's First Book of Irish Literature (n.d.) and Horatio Krans' Irish Life in Irish Fiction (1903). Blácam, in a section entitled "The End of the Penal Age", describes Maturin's significance to Irish literature in this way:

Charles Robert Maturin (1782[sic] - 1824) a Dublin native and clergyman, wrote a tragedy, "Bertram," and a novel "Melmoth the Wanderer," which had some fame; also a number of other plays and tales. "Melmoth" (to which Balzac wrote a sequel) is a well-written macabre tale of the Wandering Jew type, manifestly in the tradition of Swift. In works like this, we see a definite vein of the Anglo-Irish genius, a horrific imagination which dramatises the insane universe of the sceptic.<sup>24</sup>

Limited though it be, this isolated attempt to delineate a definite characteristic of the Anglo-Irish imagination by linking Maturin with Swift is a masterstroke. Both share a gloomy vision of Irish life; both hate and

fear man's behaviour in groups; and both dislike and distrust the Irish native. Yet, both are concerned for individual man's as well as the natives' welfare in the face of insensitive British policies; and both satirize their contemporaries from the Protestant pulpit. Krans, too, in his Irish Life in Irish Fiction, mentions Maturin's capacity for satire and discusses its function in Women. The suggestions of both Blácam and Krans about Maturin's interest in satire have found, unfortunately,  
25  
no fertile ground.

There is one historian, however, who at least sees Maturin as an important member of the early nineteenth-century Dublin community. In Dublin 1660-1860, Maurice Craig, an architectural historian, describes the Dublin literary milieu of around 1820 and, ignoring Edgeworth, lists only Maturin and Morgan as the popular and recognised Irish writers of the period:

The literary scene in the years following the Union was no great improvement on the eighteenth century. Its best-known figures are Lady Morgan and Charles Robert Maturin, Lady Morgan...an insipid enough writer, with her Wild Irish Girl, her France, and her Italy, her Life of Salvator Rosa and other fashionable undertakings.... But she is not entirely to be despised, and, more important, she kept things going with her literary salon in Kildare Street from 1821 till 1839.... Maturin is a much more interesting figure.... His early novels and tragedies are tiresome -- Bertram deserves most of what Coleridge said of it in Biographia Literaria. He lives, of course, by Melmoth the Wanderer, the European culmination of the Novel of Terror.... If tackled with determination, it is still readable with pleasure, and will probably remain a favourite with specialists. Women, the novel which preceded it, has received less attention. It is set in the Dublin of 1814, with an interlude in Paris, and it shows Maturin in a surprisingly sophisticated vein of social comedy, aiming his satire at Calvinists and Methodists within a framework which is still, basically, that

that of the 'terror' novel of mysterious hags, concealed identities and tragic endings. At last we see the beginnings of a realistic literature about Ireland. 26

According to Craig, then, at least one of Maturin's novels reflects the changing pressures of Irish life which Flanagan suggests Maturin avoids and upon which he bases his dismissal. That Craig's book concerns itself mostly with architectural Dublin, and yet mentions Maturin's contribution to the city's social life as well as the realistic depiction of Irish settings in literature, provides a telling indictment of those literary historians who totally ignore him.

Deficiencies in the literary criticism of Maturin are intensified by a more serious problem than obdurate gothicism; that is, the dearth of primary materials, especially manuscripts and letters. Most of Maturin's books are genuinely rare because, with the exception of The Fatal Revenge, Melmoth, and Bertram, they have not been republished in the twentieth century. With the aid of contemporary copying techniques, however, and interlibrary loans, this paucity of books does not present a severe obstacle. The problem is not as simple with respect to manuscripts and letters.

Scott had intended to publish a collected edition of Maturin's writings; but before he could gather all the relevant letters and manuscripts, he encountered personal problems and abandoned his plan. There are two accounts of what happened to Maturin's correspondence and manuscripts after the failure of Scott's project. That with greatest

currency suggests that Maturin's zealous son, William Basil, destroyed all his father's papers in his possession. In A Gothic Bibliography,  
 27  
 Montague Summers records this common opinion. Scholten asserts categorically that "All Maturin's correspondence and manuscripts were destroyed...by his eldest son William....The story has not been proved, but it is in keeping with the Rev. William Maturin's determined, energetic  
 28  
 character...." The other theory is simply that the letters were

never collected, a view which the evidence tends to support. In their preface to The Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Robert Maturin, Fannie Ratchford and J. MacCarthy, Jr., suggest that Scholten's  
 29  
 conclusion is unfounded. Two factors support this view: first,

William Basil, the man who reportedly destroyed all letters and manuscripts, wrote to Scott in November 1824, saying that he was "annexing a list of my late Fathers unpublished Fragments...;" and concluded as follows: "With regards to the 'letters'...we should be de[lighted] to  
 30  
 publish, but know not in what [di]rection to apply for them...."

Although the family was desirous of publishing the letters, they could not, at this stage at least, gather them. The other factor which casts some doubt upon the theory that "All Maturin's correspondence and manuscripts were destroyed" is the survival of Scott's letters to Maturin and the posthumous publication of "Leixlip Castle" and "The Sybil's Prophecy" which  
 31  
 were clearly preserved. The debate and therefore the hope is not, as Scholten states, closed. The only known manuscript, that of Bertram, is to



be found in the Scott Archives at Abbotsford, where it was sent by Maturin himself shortly after publication of that play. Three collections of his correspondence -- Ratchford's, and those in the British Museum and the National Library of Scotland -- are valuable for a re-evaluation of Maturin. Although aspects of Maturin's personality are recorded in Ratchford's collection of his correspondence with Scott, some of his business correspondence is in the other two collections which reveal a hitherto neglected side of Maturin's personality; that is, the business enthusiasm which was so unfortunately combined with optimistic naiveté.

In addition to facts about his personal and business life emerging from his letters, information about Maturin's social life, too, is gradually crystallizing; and, after the success of Bertram in 1816, all three became integral with his writing ventures. As memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, and letters of his more flamboyant contemporaries are brought to light, Maturin is discovered to have lived in a context more specifically Irish, and more balanced and varied than his gothic critics have allowed. In Lady Morgan's Memoirs (1863),  
32  
he appears as a successful contemporary Irish writer, and as a contemporary and unofficially patronized writer in Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott (1839) and Moore's The Life, Letters and  
33  
Journals of Lord Byron (1829).

Other biographies in which Maturin is mentioned include those of Alaric Watts, John Murray, and Charles Macready, all men with whom  
34  
Maturin had some business dealings. These various sources reveal

Maturin as a person of many talents and many dimensions, not simply a gothicist.

The largest source of information is found in the newspapers and periodicals of the time. They are also, as Idman reiterates, the least dependable sources for biographical materials. They are, however, useful for putting Maturin's environment in focus; especially local contemporary Dublin papers. Reviews of all Maturin's fiction are to be found in the larger periodicals, save The Wild Irish Boy, which would have pleased Maturin, and The Milesian Chief. There are also contemporary continental assessments of Maturin, the most useful of which is Gustave Planche's Portraits littéraires (1836), in which he emphasizes the "Irishness" of Maturin's work. One form of reporting is particularly helpful in determining Maturin's social importance. His obituaries reflect not only his public consequence, but further and perhaps more important, they reflect the chaotic milieu in which he held his consequence, the milieu which he strove to define in his fiction.

Because critics have tended to ignore the impact of his social and cultural milieu, and have concentrated instead upon English literary traditions, Maturin has always been misunderstood. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, critics have tended to claim him as an international gothicist. They tend to describe briefly the evolution of the gothic side of romanticism, Maturin's susceptibility to the influence of gothic writers, and his place as the epitome of gothic novel writers. This approach hardly gives Maturin his due as a

social writer and thinker, and is perpetuated at the expense of understanding his own religious and social views.

The critics' general tendency to discuss the importance of literary influence on Maturin's writings is also misleading. In fact, the importance of literary influences either on or by Maturin is nebulous; the important area of investigation concerns an examination of the consistency of Maturin's moral and intellectual outlook as it exists in his work, an importance intensified because of his artistically significant isolation from England. Materials are available for a re-evaluation of Maturin, especially for the latter portion of his writing life (1816-1824). The earlier part of his life must, to a high degree, be surmised from his actual writings; but, it is still possible to do more than has been done by drawing upon Irish background material. In this way, it is possible to re-establish his cultural milieu from contemporary non-fictional material and then to trace parallels that exist between his personal interests and milieu and his work.

Maturin's novels reveal a clear intellectual purpose and they are founded upon definite nationalistic and religious ideals. He did not consider himself primarily a terror-novelist. He abhorred the unChristian abuse of power, particularly the way the English and most Anglo-Irish abused it in Ireland up to 1816; and later, the way the Irish Catholics and extreme Protestants could do likewise. He also abhorred the "vanities of human wishes" because of his professional and personal

vision of Christianity. Through his fiction, he sought not only to inform the English reader of the situation in Ireland, but also to expose the numerous methods by which man deluded himself.

# I

## THE FATAL REVENGE

### I

Significant dates in Maturin's life from his birth, September 25, 1780, to the publication of his first novel, The Fatal Revenge; or, The Family of Montorio in 1807, are few in number; and, although the exact chronology is debatable, the facts are not. In 1800, he graduated B. A. from Trinity College; and while a student, his main interests focussed upon theology.<sup>1</sup> It appears that the failure of his father's fortunes, which accelerated after the Union, finalized his determination to preach:

What induced Maturin to choose a profession in the earliest years of the century was, beside his intention of marrying, the declining state of his father's affairs. About the time of the Union the work of the postal establishment appears to have fallen into a decay, which sadly affected the Clerks of the Roads, who were paid in proportion to the frequency and quantity of their sendings. As early as 1802 Mr. William Maturin is found writing to the secretary of the Irish Post Office to complain of the distressing diminution of his income. 2

Maturin himself explains the reasons behind his entering the orders in this way:

I am still a very young Man, my father held a situation under Government that enabled him to pass 60 years of life in affluence and luxury, and he had high Connexions in the Church that induced him to put me into orders with the expectations of an ample provision. I married very young, and though my family increased rapidly, I continued to live with my father, as I had only obtained a Curacy. 3

We find, too, in his literary remains the following interesting fragments:

Unfinished preface to a Religious work, written at the age of Twenty at the request of the late Bishop of Meath and never published --

Essay written some years before, entitled 'the Evil effects ascribed to Christianity constitute no valid objection to its divine origin or beneficial tendency' -- 4

From these letters, we find that Maturin evinced an early interest in religious controversy; and further, that he appears to have had connections with the Bishop of Meath's interest. On October 3, 1803, a "License was granted...to solemnize a marriage between the Rev<sup>d</sup> Charles Robert Maturin... & Henrietta Kingsbury...." <sup>5</sup> Two facts emerge from this document: first, that Maturin was twenty-three years old and out of college when he was married; and second, that he had already been ordained by the license date. Ordained earlier in 1803, he was first appointed to a curacy near the west coast of Ireland, at Loughrea in county Galway. From here, it is probable that his wife's family's influence engineered his appointment to the curacy of St. Peter's in Dublin --a change which was to have profound ramifications within ten years, and where he was to remain for the rest of his life. The motives, likewise surmised, include Henrietta's influential family's being loathe to send their daughter to the wild western provinces of Ireland. Maturin himself could lose little in the move. In Dublin, reports from his parish could reach his superiors more easily than from Loughrea, making his chances for advancement greater, a factor

which could please Maturin, his wife and her family. Furthermore, in Dublin, they could live with his parents, and therefore in greater comfort; and finally, he could be closer to Ireland's literary activity, such as it was. From these surmises arise two important details: first, Maturin probably had ambitions as a clergyman within the Establishment fold; and second, he entertained ambitions as a writer. To fulfill the first, he could but hope; to fulfill the second, he composed The Fatal Revenge, a gothic romance.

In writing a romance in Maturin's time, the marked influence of one writer upon another was neither unusual nor particularly reprehensible; rather, the vital use of common material established a criterion of artistic success. When his critics suggest that Maturin is primarily a gothic novelist, they note elements of The Fatal Revenge common to Radcliffe's The Italian (1797) and Lewis' The Monk (1796),<sup>6</sup> among others. To Idman, for example, The Fatal Revenge resembles other gothic works because "The production of the Gothic Romance, owing to its limited range and peculiar character, naturally present obvious<sup>7</sup> similarities among themselves." The "gothic" classification suggests their common ancestry, one highly susceptible to imitation because there is a standard compendium of stock devices and formulae. These include an evil monk, helpless heroes, persecuted maidens, and venerable ecclesiastics, as well as themes of mistaken identities, usurpation, incest, and, of course, avarice. The gothic tale is further usually founded upon a discovered manuscript or a tale retold from

memories and dreams of the past. Ballads and poems provide emotional relaxation from the intensity of an unfolding intrigue. Further, the reader experiences atmosphere and setting by means of pathetic fallacy, often presented in a Mediterranean locale. These elements are shared, as his critics assert, by Lewis, Radcliffe, and Maturin.

Critics, however, often oversimplify Maturin's motives for using the gothic mode. Idman, for example, describes what he considers to be Maturin's reason in this way:

As for his first book, it was conceived from his own innermost inclinations. The Fatal Revenge; or, The Family of Montorio was written in the Radcliffe style, not because Maturin believed it to be the style best relished by the general public, but because he, at the time in question, relished it best himself. 8

Although Maturin probably did conceive this novel from his own "innermost inclinations", Idman's statement is incomplete because it does not account for the influence of the society in which Maturin lived and wrote. To understand Maturin's motives for his use of the gothic mode, it is necessary to examine the features shared by the gothic works of Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin, as well as to reconstruct the Ireland of his formative years and his own consistent responses to it.

The essentially different personalities of Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin, as well as their different environments, provide interesting backdrops against which to examine their treatment of gothic material.



Baker describes Radcliffe as a "quiet, homekeeping lady... who spun her romantic inventions out of an imagination dreaming over the works of her fellow-novelists and a few books of travel." She also drew heavily from the novel of sensibility, and "it is the acute susceptibility to the emotions of fear and awe" in her heroines which provides "the dominant note of her romanticism, the sense of wonder and suspense...." <sup>9</sup>

With Radcliffe, it is depictions of sublime landscapes which serve as the foundations for the development of her heroine's refined sensibility.

When the withdrawn Radcliffe was composing The Italian, she was a refined and mature woman; in contrast to her, when Lewis composed The Monk at the age of nineteen, he was caught up in Revolutionary enthusiasm and involved in London society. As opposed to Radcliffe's travelogues and outdoor settings, most of Lewis' narrative occurs indoors, either in a city-bound convent and its dungeons, or in castles, or in a robber's hut in a forest. His interests are neither in landscape nor in sentimental representations of environment. A guilt-ridden homosexual, Lewis' interests are in acting out violent fantasies. Radcliffe's essentially passive characters and her single evil manipulator give way to Lewis' male and female villains who ravish and murder their way to eternal damnation. In structural terms, too, their techniques differ: whereas Radcliffe re-integrates her heroic victims into society through a concluding marriage, Lewis destroys the innocent as well as the guilty. In most cases, Maturin's

work falls between these extremes.

In contrast to both Radcliffe and Lewis is Maturin, the minister of the Established church in Ireland, who is philosophically neither a sentimentalist nor a revolutionary. Like Radcliffe, he writes with a special and talented eye for landscape; but when he describes it, the awe it inspires is constrained. Like Lewis, he writes of violence and obsessive fantasies, but with greater emphasis than Lewis upon the psychological motivation for behaviour which leads to dramatic moments. Whereas Lewis' interests inclined toward self-indulgent fantasies and to actual participation in, rather than tracing the growth of, obsessions, Maturin delineates the growth and intensification of obsession with a remarkably acute intellectual detachment.

Maturin explains in his "preface" some of his intentions in

The Fatal Revenge:

I question whether there be a source of emotion in the whole mental frame, so powerful or universal as fear arising from objects of invisible terror. Perhaps there is no other that has been at some period or other of life, the predominant and indelible sensation of every mind, of every class, and under every circumstance. Love, supposed to be the most general of passions, has certainly been felt in its purity by very few, and by some not at all, even in its most indefinite and simple state.

The same might be said, a fortiori, of other passions. But who is there that has never feared? Who is there that has not involuntarily remembered the gossip's tale in solitude or in darkness? Who is there that has not sometimes shivered under an influence he would scarce acknowledge to himself? 10

As opposed to Radcliffe's examination of the physical stimuli of emotional reactions and to Lewis' descriptions of manifested fear and horror,

Maturin delineates the emotions themselves -- fearful emotions inspired by some memory of the past. His source of fear is the human psyche and its susceptibility to the influence of superstition; and, by developing obsessions, Maturin accentuates this fear. In this way, he departs from his two models; for, although both Radcliffe and Lewis indicate interest in unrestrained flights of the imagination, Maturin is more intrinsically convincing in his accounts of such flights. Into his technique is blended a Calvinistic sense of psychological predestination: "the first movement is voluntary, all that follow are consequential and inevitable" says one of his characters.<sup>11</sup> This theme of inexorable fate, one in which the individual's responsibility is to universal and not simply social forces and "laws", is common to all Maturin's work except The Albigenses. In the case of The Fatal Revenge, it lends to his novel a sense of tragedy which in Radcliffe's and Lewis' novels, degenerates into melodrama. Reasons for this unique character of Maturin's first novel must be sought from his own experiences, and requires, therefore, a plot summary and then a digressive sally into the background conditions against which Maturin composed his first novel.

Maturin's Fatal Revenge is a tale about a scheme of revenge and the resultant premature deaths of all parties. Set in sixteenth-century Italy, it revolves around one man's attempt to induce two sons to kill their father. The arch-villain, Schemoli, is introduced as

Orazio, a fiery young Italian nobleman who, spurred by his own brother, Montorio, irrationally suspects his wife's fidelity. Impetuous, he kills the alleged lover, and his own wife dies too. Soon after her death, he realizes his brother's lies, and determines to wreak exquisite revenge. First, he travels to the East to learn magic, mesmerism, and various occult arts by which to influence people's minds. By the time the story opens, he has returned to Italy, disguised as the monk, Schemoli, and becomes his brother's confessor, living in a remote part of Muralto castle. His altered features, manners, and frame of mind complement his disguise, and his mysterious and seemingly nefarious habits strike fear into the hearts of the castle inhabitants, especially Ippolito and Annibal, who are introduced as the sons of Schemoli's brother.

The castle is ripe for Schemoli's designs. His brother, who is superstitious and has long been subject to fits of guilty fear because of his past deed, eagerly embraces his new confessor. Ippolito and Annibal offer a less enthusiastic reception, and Ippolito soon leaves for Naples where he becomes fashionably dissipated and therefore popular. Annibal, a timid, melancholic, and suspicious individual, remains behind. Both, however, have earlier evinced a family passion for magic and the supernatural. It is upon this disposition that Schemoli lays his plans, and the story alternates between the letters Annibal and Ippolito send to each other describing current events in

their lives.

These two brothers complement each other psychologically: Ippolito is an extrovert, Annibal, an introvert. Neither is complete without the other. It is this psychological weakness which Schemoli exploits, by which he ultimately compels them to kill Count Montorio. Because each is incomplete, the revenge can only be accomplished if both participate. The revenge is ultimately achieved, and their psychological union symbolized, by their two swords meeting, sheathed in their victim's body. The full consequences of Schemoli's scheme are realized only during the recognition scene. At this point, it is revealed that Schemoli has destroyed his own sons, not his brother's, by making them kill their uncle. Schemoli dies of a broken blood vessel. His two sons passively resign themselves to the machinations of fate because of their disillusionment, and die in exile several years later. So ends Maturin's gothic romance, his first novel.

In his discussion of The Fatal Revenge, Idman writes that "in one vital point Montorio occupies an almost exceptional place within the Gothic Romance, namely, with regard to the highly tragical issue  
12  
of all its incidents." This approximation to tragedy is most obvious in the tale's conclusion, and suits Maturin's own Calvinistic bias. Most gothic romances, as Radcliffe's for example, are structured along lines similar to Shakespearean comedy as it is described by Northrop  
13  
Frye. In this structure, the plot unfolds from an initial thwarting of

the hero's goals by agents of the existing social order. Chaos descends and there are a variety of confused actions in which social identities are re-evaluated, suffer disintegration, and then are re-constructed. This results ultimately in the establishment of a new or remodelled social order into which the hero is re-assimilated. Both Radcliffe's romances and Lewis' The Monk follow this pattern. The obstructing influences of the old order are swept away; a new order is established; and the inevitable marriage of hero and heroine symbolically consummate this process. The Fatal Revenge does not allow the traditional compensation of a happy and essentially domestic conclusion to the heroes' quest. In this, as in all Maturin's novels except The Wild Irish Boy and The Albigenses, it is tragic in mode.

As opposed to the comic mode in which the hero is temporarily isolated from society until a new order is established, the tragic mode is one in which the hero, isolated from society, cannot be re-integrated either because of social or personal factors. In the case of The Fatal Revenge, the conflict developed is not between the old and new orders. Instead, it is between private reality based upon individualized fear and social reality based upon consensus. The heroes, Annibal and Ippolito, are, therefore, doomed to the perpetual isolation symbolized by their exile and death. Their eventual psychological destruction is a result of their entrapment in a private reality produced by their superstition. Even if they had desired and had been mentally capable of re-integration into the old

order, that order could not accept them because of their criminal act. This tragic impossibility of the heroes' re-integration is further accentuated by the absence of consistently delineated potential spouses. Radcliffe and Lewis manage to keep a marriageable character of the opposite sex in the action, a presence which leads inevitably to marriage or, at least, union. There is none in The Fatal Revenge. One of the more substantial female characters is, in fact, a picture of Orazio's dead wife who, we learn, left a daughter of identical features and looks. Annibal falls in love first with the picture and then discovers this lost daughter. There can be no union, however, because society does not condone incest. Ippolito, the other hero, fares no better with Cyprian. This symbolic lack of eligible spouses precludes the possibility of an ultimate re-integration into society.<sup>14</sup> The two heroes are thereby exiled until death.

Not only does Maturin's use of the tragic rather than the comic mode separate him from Radcliffe and Lewis, but he employs the standard gothic figure of the evil monk in an unusual manner. Typically intended as a target for the negative sentiments which were the common English response to Catholicism, the evil monk manipulates the various innocent and impotent heroes and heroines to further his nefarious, selfish, and anti-social plots. Because attention is most often focussed upon his exploits, he may be said to embody the plot itself. In The Monk, Lewis rivets the reader's attention to the swift

growth of Ambrosio from a consciously pious monk into a personification of a violent, anti-social force. The reader, aware of Ambrosio's swift seduction by evil supernatural forces, is lured into following his subsequent adventures. These, with a lengthy interruption of about half the novel, while Ambrosio luxuriates in his new-fallen state, comprise the remainder of the story. Whereas Lewis had more or less focussed upon the growth of evil forces, Radcliffe in The Italian divides her interests almost equally between forces of evil and forces of social cohesion. She withholds background knowledge of the development of her monk's evil nature until Chapter VIII of the final volume in her pursuit of suspense and mystery. Maturin takes this approach a step further, informing the reader but not the fictional participants about both the heroes' and the villain's motives and development. In place of Lewis' goal of excitement and Radcliffe's of suspense, Maturin attempts to reveal the superstitious natures of those over whom Schemoli gains power. That is, in both Radcliffe and Lewis, the psychological forces which inspire their villains' behaviour are of secondary importance; Maturin, however, details the reason for and the reasoning of his villain's behaviour. The real, albeit subtle, difference in treatment lies in Maturin's account of his monk's power.

Where Lewis lets his supernatural machinery support itself, and where Radcliffe presents feasible explanations for her supernatural effects, Maturin presents a scientific account in terms of mesmerism



and auto-suggestion. The inspired horror of the novel's supernatural forces is not accounted for by the author's manipulation of circumstances; rather, Maturin implies that these forces have their source in the characters themselves and that the atmosphere is merely complementary. Both the characters' actions as well as thoughts become the labyrinthine tangle of the plot. In approaching his themes from this perspective of psychological realism, Maturin is enabled to examine socially viable themes because it is not simply the characters' responses but their attempts to control their own environments which are explored. This, in turn, distinguishes him from Radcliffe and Lewis, and places this work closer to the social and metaphysical probings of Godwin's Caleb Williams (1794) and St. Leon (1799). In these works, Godwin emphasizes the analysis of evil, and not simply the presentation of evil for the sake of popular appeal. Godwin and Maturin both criticize certain social institutions. Godwin's Caleb Williams, for example, is a story of crime. Instead of enveloping the reader in ghastly details, Godwin analyzes the workings of both the criminal and the innocent mind. In terms of proselytism, Caleb Williams denounces a form of social tyranny, and embodies a review of some "modes of unrecorded despotism" by which "man becomes the destroyer of man" within existing and perverted social values. Godwin's theme is the inequality of justice. In Maturin's case, it is spiritual inequality based upon theological ignorance, superstition, and abuse of religious office which are the sources of social evil.

Compared with Radcliffe's The Italian and Lewis' The Monk, Maturin's Fatal Revenge contains a considerable amount of intellectual subject-matter which primarily concerns the dangerous effects of superstition on the individual. Lewis uses a monk as his justification for an indiscriminate condemnation of all religion, and also as a means of introducing gruesome scenes of Inquisitional torture. Radcliffe imitates Lewis' wicked monk, but in a much more theologically conservative fashion in that Schedoni is simply vaguely affiliated with an ecclesiastical body. Maturin's anti-clerical bias, however, involves more than exploiting a common theme, more than expressing philosophical inclinations, and more than establishing a background for a study in perversion, although these elements all appear. As a conspicuous member of the elitist Protestant minority in Catholic Ireland, Maturin wrote of Catholicism and of native superstition with a tone of genuine indignation. It is the cruelty and injustice of the Church as an institution, and not necessarily of its individual adherents, which compelled him to write negatively about Catholicism, a distinction substantiated by the inclusion of several unnamed priests and inquisitors in The Fatal Revenge -- and later, in Melmoth the Wanderer -- who possess unusual humanity and sensitivity. From this perspective, he wrote of the demoralizing influence which a superstitious religion could and did in Ireland inflict upon its followers. Therefore, at least some of Maturin's terror must be separated from any gothic formula.

As with the anti-Catholic bias, his use of terror must be examined in terms of real and contemporaneous phenomena, and some background material is necessary at this point.

## II

Although significant dates in the first twenty-seven years of Maturin's life are few, in these same years Ireland experienced painful and significant changes. In 1782, two years after Maturin's birth, Irishmen witnessed the establishment of Grattan's Parliament; that is, of Ireland's Parliamentary independence from Great Britain. This establishment lasted until the Union in 1800. During its brief ascendancy, it granted numerous concessions to the Catholics, most of which the British felt would undermine Protestant ascendancy. In spite of oppressive anti-Catholic legislation in force throughout the eighteenth century, Ireland, a land settled by the English upon confiscated Catholic property, remained eighty-per cent Catholic. After the French Revolution, England was at war with various Catholic continental countries, notably France, and feared the enemy's landing an invasion force in Ireland as the first step to invading England. Such a step could be executed with ease because the native Irish Catholic population would in all likelihood aid the invaders. Liam de Paor describes the general atmosphere in this way:

Fear of the 'rabble', or the 'mob', was very real and alive among the ruling classes of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the prospect of the millions of Irish Catholics, organized as a

political force which demanded and might receive equal political rights with minority groups, caused widespread disquiet among Protestants, high and low, in England and Ireland. 16

English and Anglo-Irish fears received support on December 1, 1796, June 2, 1797, and May 24, 1798: the first two dates mark the sailing of French fleets to invade Ireland; the last date marks the explosion of the Rebellion of '98, to the genuine and legitimate horror of the Anglo-Irish. A direct result of the fear of renewed rebellion, the Act of Union in 1800 was intended to arrest the Catholics' growing legal power as gained by concessions from Grattan's Parliament, although the Act itself had been presented as a prelude to immediate and full  
17  
Catholic emancipation. Based upon widespread censorship and billeted troops, an oppressive calm ruled post-Union Ireland's steadily flagging economy. As early as 1803, both the Anglo-Irish and the Catholics realized that the British promises were empty. Ireland experienced numerous outbreaks of violence. The two most significant of these were Emmet's rebellion in 1803, which was largely symbolic in effect, and the "Thrashers' "Rebellion in 1806 in the west of Ireland. In describing Dublin, Maturin's home, Idman states:

In the capital the social contrasts presented themselves at their sharpest. Beside the refined, gay and brilliant Dublin there was another, where the sullen murmur of discontent was never hushed, and which was constantly hovering on the brink of rebellion. 18

Overall, although his personal life appears tranquil, as a Protestant and a representative of the Church of England establishment, Maturin was both influenced by and responded to this tension between rich and

poor, between Protestant and Catholic. It is, therefore, the combination of his personal aspirations as a writer and clergyman as well as his environment which produced his curious gothic novel, The Fatal Revenge.

Maturin chose the gothic genre for his first novel because to write explicitly about conditions in Ireland was dangerous and had tempted few Irish writers. For one thing, it was thought too easy and too dangerous to incite the native Catholic population to rebellion; and for another, there was strict censorship to stifle such material. Any criticism of the unpopular Union or its aftermath, or any evocation of sympathy for the Catholics' cause, therefore, was considered at least suspect, and at most treasonable. Lionel Stevenson describes some immediate deterrents to writing of contemporary matters:

For the silence of nationalist authors there was good and sufficient reason. While the Act of Union was being passed the right of Habeas Corpus had been suspended, to give the Government a free hand in dealing with any one who differed from their views; and the abortive rebellion of Robert Emmet was yet a more recent warning. The Castle authorities had a stranglehold on Irish publishers by a system of combined patronage and inquisition. 19

This stance of the British Government accounts for the small number of Irish novels produced by Maturin's contemporaries. The core of the publishing problem lay in the instability of the status quo, and in the constant threat of insurrection. In his book On Local Disturbances in Ireland (1836), George Lewis describes the situation<sup>in</sup> this way:

The Union...only affected the surface of the Irish community; the undercurrents of society still flowed in their former directions. To the peer or landholder, who lost his place in parliament; to the barrister, who found his profession inconsistent with a seat

in an English House of Commons; to various persons who were concerned in the management of parliamentary majorities, the distribution of places, and the exercise of ministerial influence; the loss of (what was termed) national independence must have produced mighty change; but to the Munster or Connaught peasant, who still was forced to pay rent and tithe, to the same persons, at the same rates, and under the same laws, the change was only nominal. 20

That is, for eighty per cent of the population, there remained the same complaints, the same problems, and the same basic hate for and distrust of the establishment. To them, it was all one: English as well as Anglo-Irish meant simply British oppression. To this huge majority of the Irish population antagonized by the presence of British "foreigners", works which articulated grievances against the newly established order would lend weight to their claims, and could easily incite rebellion, especially in a country which had so recently and so continuously evinced a propensity toward insurrection. The core of this tension is succinctly expressed on the eve of the Union by the then Attorney-general of Ireland:

We ought not to deceive ourselves. Ireland must be either a Catholic or Protestant state -- let us choose. But he is a Utopian who believes he has discovered a nostrum by which it can be both, or either. 21

It is this sense of hopelessness about conciliation which became the basis for a generalized fear within the English and Anglo-Irish community.

Irish writers were well aware of these limiting factors. Recalling the conditions at the time of publishing The Wild Irish Girl (1806), Lady Morgan explains the intellectual milieu in which this, her most famous work, was composed:

At the moment The Wild Irish Girl appeared it was dangerous to write on Ireland, hazardous to praise her, and difficult to find a publisher for an Irish tale which had a political tendency.... Graves were then still green, where victims of laws uselessly violated, were still wept over by broken hearts; and the bitter disappointment of a nation's hopes, by the recent and sudden desertion of Pitt, the most powerful champion of Catholic Emancipation, which gave to ascendancy new power, and sunk Catholicism in deeper despondency, was only slowly yielding to the benign influence of a new and liberal administration of Irish affairs.... 22

In this intellectual climate, any criticism of the newly imposed and unpopular British order left Irish writers two choices: they could either support it uncritically, or write of non-Irish matters. Although generally asserted by his gothic critics that Maturin selected the latter, the fact is that through his unique treatment of the gothic material in The Fatal Revenge, Maturin was able to make a disguised statement about Ireland. His adoption of the tragic mode and the analysis of psychological motives all contribute to his original treatment of this genre. Together, they indicate that Maturin's interests lay elsewhere than in writing a straightforward thriller. Similarly, in two other standard gothic features -- setting and poetic interlude -- Maturin's originality bespeaks a larger purpose.

Maturin wrote chiefly to express his understanding of Catholicism's pernicious effects, and the most convenient vehicle was the gothic novel. He saw the anti-social nature of Irish Catholicism as the root of the current internecine chaos within Ireland. The growing tension between Ireland and England and, internally, between Protestant and Catholic, tore at the very foundations of Irish society. In

"The Carders" (1825), E. Eyre Crowe presents a shrewd double-edged criticism of the self-perpetuating Irish tensions in a brief allusion to gothic romanticism:

Mrs. Radcliffe, in a country like...[Ireland] actually filled with the fiercest desperadoes, as well as with no small quantity of wraiths, benshees, fairies, and hob-goblins, was far too terrific to be agreeable. Still she was read, and her works had the effect of magnifying much...the Captain Rocks, or, as they styled themselves, the Captain Carders of the neighbourhood, whose name and exploits were beheld in a light far otherwise than romantic by the country magistrates. 23

What could pass for romance in England was, in Ireland, cold reality. Because Maturin felt he could write nothing which would challenge either the British Government or the huge Catholic majority, he transferred the conflict to the Mediterranean coast. The standard Mediterranean setting of the gothic, as Idman suggests, "possessed the special merit of admitting the introduction of the Inquisition with all its horrors, and affording an opportunity of penetrating the walls of a convent." 24

There are two further reasons for this use of the Mediterranean. The first is its inherent charm to a northerly audience as evidenced in the circulation and popularity of travelogues and descriptions of nature's sublimity in the Mediterranean countryside. 25 The second, and the more important one, is the general Protestant distrust of Catholics, a distrust with political as well as theological and emotional roots. 26 In this, Lewis, Radcliffe, and Maturin all followed a standard gothic procedure. By using various kinds of sinister settings, they strove to create an atmosphere designed to intensify the mood of



general Protestant resentment toward Catholics who themselves, at this time, strove for Emancipation within Britain and Ireland. Lewis, for example, envelopes his principal actors within atmospheric messages from Hell in his efforts to accentuate and to elucidate the nature of Ambrosio's experiences. This atmospheric intervention, however, is limited by the type of physical settings he uses -- church, convent, houses, monasteries -- all city-bound -- as well as vaults, huts, and castles. The internalized nature of Ambrosio's experiences is emphasized by these and by the conspicuous absence of land and sea-scapes. Radcliffe, on the other hand, has her hero and heroine roam open and sublime landscapes. Here, they experience storms which not only reinforce the villain's threatening actions, but further maintain the chaotic social standing of his victims. This device, as used by Radcliffe and Lewis, reinforces the emotional pattern of the plot. In both, atmospheric conditions complement and extend social conditions.

Maturin, however, uses natural settings as more than a gothic device by which to enhance the emotional turmoil of his characters. He attempts, for example, to highlight the sense of the inevitability of death by aligning the seasons with his heroes' declining fortunes. In one episode, Ippolito flees a malignant "force" which nonetheless persistently pursues and haunts him. Symbolically, his impotent flight is from an inevitable and ultimate confrontation with

death in that this episode occurs as autumn pursues nature's vitality.

Later in this pursuit, Ippolito's and Annibal's deed is scheduled for three months in the future -- properly predetermined, in terms of the

27

plot, for the dead of winter. It is not only by storms, therefore, that the reader is intended to sense the heroes' conflicts and terrors; benign but non-sublime environments plus more subtle aspects of seasonal change likewise intensify the characters' ultimate tragedy. By his symbolic use of setting, therefore, Maturin reinforces the otherwise conventional device of pathetic fallacy.

Although Maturin made a conscious effort at artistic cohesion in The Fatal Revenge, he was nonetheless an impatient writer, and the urgency with which he explored aspects of superstition and fear is on occasion structurally disruptive. This disruption is manifested in topical digressions which are seldom integrated with the narrative flow of the plot, and indicate Maturin's didactic desire as a writer to educate the reader with the least possibility of misunderstanding.

Although ballads and long narrative poems are characteristically part of the gothic format, Maturin's questionable contribution to poetry in The Fatal Revenge attracts attention because he includes an Irish ballad within a seventeenth-century Italian setting. Such an inclusion achieves two things: first, it draws attention to the current vogue of Irish antiquities; and second, it obliquely illuminates Maturin's attitude toward the general neglect of Ireland.

By making his ballad recognizably Irish, Maturin forces the reader to consider poetry as it exists in nineteenth-century Ireland from a seventeenth-century Italian perspective. He heightens the jarring effect of this intrusion by providing the following footnote to his poem "Bruno-Lin, the Irish Outlaw; A.D. 1302":

The subject of the following lines was taken from a note on a poem, . . . 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel.' It is lamented that the scenery of this ballad is so topical, that whoever has not been in Ireland can scarcely read it with pleasure; whoever has, will not be sorry to think again of the ruins of Melik, and the waters of the Shannon. Bruno-Lin, or Bryan-o-Lin, as he is sometimes called, is a chieftain still famous in the memory of Irish song. 28

The ballad itself is recited after a lengthy discussion which ostensibly contrasts seventeenth-century Italian poetry and "the poesy of the heretic English". Describing the differences, Ippolito states:

there is a spirit in their poesy, quite different from that of the continental; a simple appeal to the strong and common feelings of our nature, often made in such language as the speakers of common life clothe their conceptions in. . . . From their dramas and poems remote and heroic adventures are almost banished, and they turn with more emotion to the indigent peasant, weeping over her famishing babes; to the maniac, who shrieks on the nightly waste; to age, pining in lonely misery; to honest toil, crushed in the sore and fruitless struggle with oppression and adversity, than to the raving princess or declaiming hero. 29

When removed from the impossible context of seventeenth-century Italy, the debate, one which recurs in The Wild Irish Boy, The Milesian Chief, and Women, is ostensibly between the merits of English neo-classical poetry and English romantic poetry; but it is more specific than that because it draws attention to Ireland's claim for recognition as an independent nation.

To drive his criticism of poetry further, Ippolito makes a case for an older form of romantic poetry, one which projects Irish poetic endeavours to the forefront of the reader's attention:

They have also a species of poesy among them...which contributes to maintain this taste; the traditionary tales of their ancestry, the rude chronicles of a bold and warlike people, of which the language is wild and peculiar even to the ears of its admirers, from a kind of quaint and antique rhythm, which irresistibly associated in the minds of the hearers with the thoughts of times long past, with melancholy and awe-breathing remembrances. 30

The land of this ancient and noble tradition from which contemporary sophisticates could learn something is, however, anonymous:

There is a nation of people wild and little known, in a western island, whose national poetry is still richer, and whose harmony is said to be more melting than that of the English; I have forgot their name; but of a people so endowed the name will not be always obscure. 31

It is, of course, Ireland and the Irish. Such a discussion of the arts was not subject to censorship, as a discussion of political, social, and religious problems would have been. Irish poetic traditions which, in quality outromanticized those of the English themselves, are bound to draw Ireland from its present anonymity and to project it to its rightful place among the nations of the world. By including this digressive discussion of Irish poetic traditions, Maturin creates an entirely foreign atmosphere for the reader by switching involvement from an emotional plane to an intellectual one, so that the reader could intellectualize the relation of Catholic Ireland and its woes to Catholic Italy of the seventeenth century.

In his preface, Maturin begs the reader to compassionate his

weakness as a novelist because he is an Irishman and therefore isolated from current literary trends and because he is an inexperienced writer. That he included a ballad, a standard gothic feature, aligns him with other gothic writers. However, the inconsistency of the narrative in using a distinctively Irish ballad, instead of an Italian one, attests to his inexperience. Both the ballad and its immediate context of a rational discourse upon modern poetry seem out of place in a novel which purports to examine the degrading and tragic workings of fear upon the superstitious. If considered within the context of contemporary publishing problems in Ireland, however, his digression suggests at least that his chief concerns while composing the novel were with Ireland. It is not unreasonable to assert, therefore, that in making a topical, albeit hedged, allusion to the future identity of Ireland as a nation, Maturin is using that which he sees as the weakness of the Irish Catholic character as the bases for his heroes' tragic actions. In this case, Ippolito and Annibal both act out the tragedy of Catholic Ireland, a tragedy of superstitious individuals whose very natures are part of their flaw. But the tragedy involves more than the heroes; there is an institution quite willing to exploit the natives' propensity toward self-destructive superstition; that is, the Roman Catholic Church establishment in Ireland and the world.

As a gothic novelist, Maturin imitated all the important conventions used by Radcliffe and Lewis; and, in this, his critics are correct in classifying The Fatal Revenge as a gothic novel. However, while it cannot be denied that Maturin enjoyed the gothic romance, to equate enjoyment of a genre with a writer's immediate and main

interests is tantamount to loading the critical dice. One should keep in mind, too, that Maturin wrote five other novels, four of which are founded directly upon Irish subject-matter. Even in The Fatal Revenge, his treatment of gothic conventions and his didactic discussion of poetry suggest that his sensitivity to the Irish situation influences the way in which he uses them. In the preface, he qualifies his selection of this genre by stressing his "Irishness", the obvious implication being that the gothic mode was the most convenient genre through which he might burst upon the English literary scene. His motives, therefore, for making his first novel gothic, extend to considerations more varied than personal taste. They are, at least in part, determined by the fact of his being an Irish clergyman and citizen who had to repress his inclinations to write directly about Ireland. It is likely that if his environment had been more secure, more able to absorb and even to benefit from criticism, his first novel would have been more explicit about Irish problems.

All Maturin's novels reflect contemporary tensions in Ireland, and most refer directly to some areas of this tension. In The Fatal Revenge, he describes Catholicism in gothic terms which also reflect his own environment. In his second novel, The Wild Irish Boy, he abandons the gothic mode for one that is more realistic and direct. He describes a young Anglo-Irishman's education in the realities of a tense post-Union Ireland, and his attempts to find an alternative to the irresponsible Anglo-Irish gentry who ruled it. In the preface to this novel, Maturin claims that although his true concerns are for Ireland

and its problems, he has consulted public tastes. As his subject-matter, therefore, he chooses the contemporary fashionable follies of the upper-classes, but the upper-classes as they exist in or influence Ireland. In The Fatal Revenge, Maturin's social isolation and literary inexperience are major contributing factors to his writing in the gothic mode, unique though his approach be. In the second novel, circumstances and opportunities combined to allow him to write unrestrainedly about his country.

## II

### THE WILD IRISH BOY

Maturin sensed not only that his numerous personal problems resulted from Ireland's confusion but that they in some ways reflected it. Describing to Scott the degenerating state of his father's and his own fortunes, he states:

he has made numberless applications for Redress, but while the Country is struggling for Existence, she has little leisure to attend to private complaints -- in the Battle for life and death we are now fighting, the Cries of the wounded can neither be heard or pitied. 1

This identification of his domestic difficulties with those of a nation is significant because it accounts for the thematic direction of The Wild Irish Boy. For one thing, the publication of The Fatal Revenge at his own expense had failed to give him the financial independence and literary fame he had anticipated, and it was not until 1810 that Scott<sup>2</sup> even reviewed this -- as he termed it -- "neglected novel". The birth of his first son, William Basil, in 1807 further strained the budget. Instead of panicking, a response typical later in life, Maturin determined upon his own survival. This resolve is mirrored not only in the behaviour of The Wild Irish Boy's hero, Ormsby Bethel, but also in the disastrous aesthetic conflict evidenced in the novel itself caused by hasty composition. In both cases, it appears that by dint



of a self-help attitude, Maturin accepted these deterrent circumstances, and attempted to weave them into an opportunity.

Maturin felt he had much valid and corrective criticism for Ireland's leaders; and, to this end, he directs his second novel to illustrate both the problems and his own solution. However, if his ideas were to receive wide distribution, they had to be written in a way which would be popular. Conscious of his limitations, he states in the preface to The Wild Irish Boy his dilemma:

This novel from its title purports to give some account of a country little known. I lament I have not had time to say more of it; my heart was full of it, but I was compelled by the laws of this mode of composition to consult the pleasure of my readers, not my own. 3

In spite of his full heart, he intends to sacrifice his own primary interests in order to accommodate himself to his conception of the public taste, a conception that he defines later in the preface:

The fashionable materials for novel-writing I know to be, a lounge in Bondstreet, a phaeton-tour in the Park, a masquerade with appropriate scenery, and a birth-day or birth-night, with dresses and decorations, accurately copied from the newspapers.

He who writes with an hope of being read, must write something like this. 4

Maturin claims he has subordinated his concerns for the problems of Ireland to this fashionable material; yet (and this is typical of him), the immediacy of the Irish situation reversed his good intentions. As a result, he spends much more time describing Ireland's political, legal and social problems than he does copying newspaper accounts of fashionable life.

His reasons for this reversal of his intentions are complex, and some background material is necessary at this point.

One fact that pressed upon Maturin's consciousness was the unhappy relationship of peasant and landlord. The basis of this relationship was established in the reign of William III (1689-1702) when he imposed the Williamite settlement upon the Irish and when both native Irish aristocrat and peasant lost their civil rights, including the right to own property.<sup>5</sup> The new Irish aristocrats and, therefore, landlords were English Protestants who evinced little sympathy for the dispossessed native Catholics, and who were, in any case, protected by a newly imposed legal system. Lewis describes their characteristics and type:

The Irish landlord, during the rigour of the anti-Catholic code, was subjected to all the temptations arising from the possession of irresponsible power. Not only did he become harsh and tyrannical to his inferiors, but reckless and sensual in his habits of living, profuse in his expenditure, violent in his quarrels, intolerant in the assertions of his religious opinions, corrupt and partial in the exercise of his official duties. 6

The Catholic peasant, having no recourse to any law larger than that of his Protestant landlord, had no alternative but to submit to his landlord's whims. Furthermore, the rents he paid were exorbitant, but any efforts towards improving his tenured land's productivity or his own living quarters resulted only in higher rents. There was no incentive for the peasant to discard his old customs and to develop into the civilized and grateful creature that his rulers in England desired

him to become. Although this type of landlord survived well into the nineteenth century, many Irishmen recognized the need for a fundamental change. In The Wild Irish Boy, therefore, Maturin concerned himself with defining the new type of Irish landlord which Ireland required, one which would be neither exclusively British nor exclusively native Irish Catholic.

Two other principal Irish writers of the time, Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan, had presented their views about Ireland in Castle Rackrent (1800) and The Wild Irish Girl (1806). Edgeworth describes the various forms of degeneracy perpetuated under the pre-Union Anglo-Irish gentry; but implicitly, she evinces the hope that the post-Union gentry would mend its ways, and she seems content with the political situation in the post-Union period. As Horatio Krans describes it in his Irish Life in Irish Fiction,

while she strove to correct the social evils of her country and to establish good relations between landlord and tenant by exposing all that tended to estrange them, she shows...no sign of discontent with the existing order of things, and carefully avoids referring to the most important causes of Irish misery -- the religious and political. 7

Krans further accounts for her reticence regarding these problems by explaining her position as follows:

She was quite aware of the faults and vices of Irish society and the national character, -- idleness, rackrenting, middlemen, and the other fruits of absenteeism, -- but she never points to the state of the laws as responsible for their existence and continuance. 8

Considering existing censorship laws and practices, Edgeworth contented

herself quite realistically with living in terms of the post-Union structure by describing and pruning the excesses of pre-Union Ireland. On the other hand, Morgan's The Wild Irish Girl is a novel in which a young English gentleman, whose father is one of Ireland's numerous absentee landlords, falls in love with and is accepted by native Ireland. Morgan intimates that although the English will inevitably rule Ireland, they are capable of ruling with sensitivity and appreciation of the native culture. These two popular novels suggested to Maturin how he might write about Ireland in a more direct fashion than he had in The Fatal Revenge.

Closely connected to Maturin's conception of the problem of Ireland's rulers was his idea of the role of the Church of England in Ireland. The Irish had many legitimate complaints against this establishment. Some focussed upon the abuse of privilege through such practices as tithes, pluralism, and absenteeism -- all within and apparently condoned by the Church hierarchy. The main contentious issue, however, lay in the virtual spiritual monopoly claimed by the Established Church. The Catholics -- eighty per cent of Ireland's population -- could not worship openly, and therefore, had to provide totally for their own churches and clergy. This monopolistic situation was aggravated, moreover, by the fact that this majority of the population had also, by law, to maintain what they considered a foreign church, and that they had no recourse to either

its or the British minority's resources. Legally, they had no civic or national identity: they had no political representation either at Dublin Castle or at Westminster; they had no opportunity for a recognized education; and they had no church but the Church of England. In spite of this monopolistic situation and the native Catholics' understandable antipathy to it, Maturin felt that the Church of England in Ireland was both justifiable and necessary. To him, it provided the only viable and rational alternative to the superstitious and potentially political Catholic Church, and in The Wild Irish Boy, this belief is embodied in the ideal behaviour of the curate Corbett.

Maturin, therefore, could not write the same sort of book as either Maria Edgeworth or Lady Morgan. He neither condoned the new structure imposed by the Union, nor could he believe in Ireland's romantic past as a means of uniting the warring factions. Rather, he saw the native Irish Catholics as a political and spiritual threat to any reasonable social order. He believed that the essentially different racial characteristics precluded Morgan's compromise; and that history had proved that, although the British had tried since Spenser's time, Ireland could not be ruled from Westminster. To him, Ireland's ideal ruler would be an understanding Anglo-Irishman who would be responsive to the Church of England Christianity represented by Corbett and who could deal equally effectively with both the childish native and the self-indulgent Anglo-Irish gentry. The first

step toward achieving social stability was to define the identity of the new Irish rulers, and it is in The Wild Irish Boy that he delineates the struggles of a community caught in the midst of subordination to either British or Catholic interests. In this novel, he takes upon himself the responsibility of outlining the qualities of the ideal future rulers of Ireland.

The one factor which appears to have assuaged Maturin's fears about explicitly describing Ireland is the fact that Morgan's Wild Irish Girl had evoked no negative reaction. Maturin felt, therefore, that he likewise could write about Ireland, although his preface registers his uncertainty about the marketability of Irish subject-matter. Contrary to the early nineteenth-century idea that Maturin's novel is a copy of Morgan's Wild Irish Girl, the sole influence of Morgan's novel on Maturin's Wild Irish Boy rests in the title -- but that is significant. Maturin wrote his analysis of the Irish situation and, instead of veiling it with the gothic mode as he had The Fatal Revenge, he cloaked this analysis with a title similar to Morgan's own limpid romance. He achieves something far different in terms of a realistic appraisal of the political stalemate of the Irish situation.

The Wild Irish Boy is essentially a polemical treatise. On the title-page, Maturin includes an extract from Spenser's View of the State of Ireland (1596), presumably to underline the theme of his novel. The quoted portion is a criticism of the unfulfilled potential of Ireland

from the perspective of a biased sixteenth-century British gentleman and colonist:

But if that country of Ireland... be of so goodly and commodious a soil, as you report, I wonder that no course is taken for the turning thereof to good uses, and reducing that nation to better government and civility. 9

By quoting Spenser, Maturin reminds the British that in spite of the two hundred years between Spenser's work and his own, and in spite of Union promises, Britain has failed to "reduce" Ireland "to better government and civility." Although its style is oblique, the novel itself is direct in intention and optimistic in outlook. In it, Maturin criticizes the British, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, and the Catholics. He concludes that the British should not merely exploit Ireland's resources, but should make an effort to improve the quality of life of the Irish people. The <sup>Anglo-</sup>Irish Ascendancy too should attend to their responsibilities on behalf of Ireland, because then the native Irish would modify their own behaviour in terms of their good example. The implication is, however, that the British government had never allowed the Anglo-Irish sufficient independence to act autonomously, even during the brief life of the "Protestant Nation."

The Wild Irish Boy concerns the education of one of the new Anglo-Irish rulers, Ormsby Bethel. Maturin describes Bethel's evolution from a naive and romantic young man to an informed and practical Anglo-Irishman who rejects British policies and determines

to act independently. As opposed to Morgan's characters acting solely within Connaught where they experience only archaeological native Ireland, Maturin uses four settings which introduce the reader to various aspects of the problems of contemporary Ireland. These settings include the English Lake District, Connaught, Dublin, and London. Each is significant: the Lake District had by 1808 come to be known as a land of utopian dreamers because of the poets Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, and Maturin depicts it in these terms. In Morgan's The Wild Irish Girl, geographical Connaught had been described as a savage, elemental, and provocatively sublime area, an area in which many of the noble qualities of the native Irish survived. Maturin treats Connaught in the same way and transports his hero to it early in his education. But while Ormsby's Lake District training enables him to appreciate the beauty of Connaught, it is insufficient to enable him to appreciate Ireland's potential, and he must travel to Dublin -- a shell of the one-time capital of Ireland which now had only dissolution to recommend it -- and to London, the seat of government and fashion. Only when Ormsby has gleaned and augmented his understanding of the world's ways in these parts of the empire can he return to Connaught with the prospect of properly ruling. These four settings become representative of several motifs important to Maturin and his hero, and might be described in terms of Dream, Encounter, Exposure, and Realization, respectively.

Ormsby's trek through the four settings begins in the Lake



District, where he boards with his tutor, Parson Adams. It is here that he dreams of governing a potentially ideal people. His hitherto unknown father requests that he join the rest of the family, who, likewise he has never met, as it regroups in Connaught. Arriving there, his Lake District dreams of the Irish are rudely shattered. Here he meets his dissipated father, a Milesian who has relinquished his Irish ancestry and nationality in favour of the benefits of an English identity. He also meets both relatives and people of the community: the cast of characters includes his father's mistress Miss Percival, a woman who worships French rationalism; his Milesian uncle De Lacy; his nefarious cousin Deloraine; his sister, and several local and ignorant Anglo-Irish gentry of his father's generation including Orberry and Roschamps. Of greater significance to this tale is Ormsby's encounter with three distinct character-types. First, there is a mysterious, sensitive, and anonymous specimen of Anglo-Irish culture. Secondly, there is a type found in all Maturin's works from The Wild Irish Boy through to The Albigenes: the ideal Anglo-Irish Church of England clergyman, the curate Corbett. Finally, there is the head of the self-exiled Westmoreland family, who embodies the English political force in Ireland. Ormsby's Milesian uncle senses that Ormsby has the potential to be his successor and sends him to Dublin to continue his education. Ormsby's life in Dublin epitomizes the dissipation of the idle Irish men of fashion. He incurs huge debts, is saved by his uncle De Lacy, and returns to Connaught to marry the daughter of Westmoreland and his wife, Lady Montrevor.

The scene then shifts to London, as Ormsby attempts to enter English political life. By this point, Ormsby has developed from the idealistic Lake District reformer to an aspiring politician who seeks to reform Ireland through the English political process. Thwarted, however, by the self-protective nature of British interests, he returns to Connaught, a broken and famililess man, for his wife has abandoned him because of various misunderstandings in London. It is in Connaught that he finds the prospect of fulfilment. His enemies who are also the enemies of social order in Ireland destroy each other, and he is re-united with his wife, mother-in-law, sister, and newly identified father who was the mysterious and sensitive man met during his first visit to Connaught. Finally, here, for the first time, he sees his son, in whom the future hopes of Ireland rest. Thus Ormsby has been exposed to the goals of the Irish nation and has come to realize that it is not from Britain that the Anglo-Irish can expect guidance and aid. His thorough education prepares him for fulfilling his original Lake District dreams of governing a perfectible race through the agency of independence and domestic felicity.

In an early stage of his education, Ormsby dwells in the Lake District under the tutelage of Parson Adams. <sup>10</sup> Here, he tells us, he <sup>11</sup> "became an incurable visionary" and dreamt of "some fortunate spot, some abode peopled by fair forms, human in their affections, their habits, in everything but vice and weakness; to these I have

imagined myself giving laws, and becoming their sovereign and their

12

benefactor. " To make his vision more mundane, he includes some flaws of character which, however, could easily be remedied by proper legislative discipline:

I therefore imagined them possessed of the most shining qualities that can enter into the human character, glowing with untaught affections, and luxuriant with uncultivated virtue; but proud, irritable, impetuous, indolent, and superstitious; conscious of claims they knew not how to support, burning with excellencies, which, because they wanted regulation, wanted both dignity and utility; and disgraced by crimes which the moment after their commission they lamented, as a man laments the involuntary outrages of drunkenness. 13

Acting as Maturin's spokesman, Ormsby depicts the native Irish as a redeemable race at this stage. His dream is based upon the belief that they are willing to respond to responsible leadership. The British had sought to reduce "that nation to better government and civility", but Ormsby suggests that only an understanding guidance will succeed.

I imagined a people that seemed to stretch out its helpless hands, like the infant Moses from the ark, and promise its preserver to bless and dignify the species. 14

Upon describing this dream to his tutor, he is told that he "had accurately

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described the Irish nation. " But he has yet to test this theory in Ireland itself, and one of the first obstacles he must encounter concerns the prevalence of a false religion.

Maturin saw two equally destructive and socially myopic religious forces at work within Irish society. These forces, Calvinism and Catholicism, were respectively highly unreasonable and highly superstitious, and both tended to place themselves above law and society in their

pursuit of truth. The first group Ormsby confronts at Trinity College, Dublin, and he outlines both the faults and the appeal of Calvinist societies in Ireland:

A youthful mind in its first pursuit of religion, neither inquires for evidence, nor wishes conviction; it demands something that may fill to the utmost its capacity of the marvellous; something under which its faculties may succumb in mute, acquiescence; something that requires not the labour of ascent; but the passiveness of prostration. To such demands the Calvinistic system is abundantly adequate. 16

Adherence to its evangelical principles, a theme expanded in Women (1818), is basically unintelligent. Its addiction to the marvellous causes it to be as antipathetic as Catholicism to economic progress and social justice in Ireland. However, since the Catholics are a much larger group in Ireland, they are potentially more dangerous. Ormsby discusses the Catholic Church's destructive characteristics at a post-prandial harangue with a British Parliamentary minister during his visit to England. By this stage, his realizations concerning the state of Ireland are becoming articulate:

I spoke of the country as deteriorated by a religion, which, in every country where it prevailed, had extinguished all spirit, but the spirit of superstition -- a religion alike unfavorable to morality, industry, and improvement -- a religion, which by establishing an internal principle of operation superior to law or government, must be intrinsically and invincibly hostile to law and government, and compounding for the duties of a divine system by a prescription of its forms, destroyed the very essentials of religion. 17

In his vision of the natives, Maturin had likened them to drunks whose inebriation impaired their social viability. This intoxication, together with their other negative qualities -- indolence, superstition, lack of

dignity and utility -- all stem from their religious beliefs. The important point is that it is their religion and not their individual characters which must bear the responsibility for their unprogressive characteristics. This consistent but misunderstood stance was expressed by Maturin in every novel from The Fatal Revenge through to The Albigenses. In order to civilize Ireland and its natives, this religious system had to be outlawed. It was a false religion and, therefore, fundamentally subversive to social tranquility.

In its place, Maturin recommended that the native Irish should adopt the religious system preached by the Church of England which he saw as neither superstitious nor rigidly doctrinaire and which could, therefore, provide the basis for a new and progressive Ireland. In The Wild Irish Boy, Maturin's spokesman for the enlightened religious attitudes -- that are the very foundations of social structure -- is the curate Corbett, the first of a series of idealized Church of England clergymen in Maturin's novels. Ormsby describes the exemplary Christianity embodied in Corbett's behaviour:

The Christianity he preached, was such as a man would preach, who, abstracted from the influence of prejudice and habit and self-wisdom, had sought his system in revelation alone, and found and formed it there. It was neither a frame of doctrinal niceties, curiously constructed and totally unfit for use; nor a formulary of habitual observances, at which the constant attendance of the body may excuse the absence of the mind. It was a system, of which the principles were operative, in which opinion held its due relation to practice; Christianity was described as a dispensation exhibiting certain facts to the belief; and the belief if subdued by these facts, suggesting the most important and active consequences to our minds and our lives. 18

In this discussion, Ormsby dismisses the Calvinist's "doctrinal niceties" as well as the Catholic's "formulary of habitual observances" as being equally unfulfilling because impractical. They simply bear no relation to Ireland's future. Ireland's hope as a nation lies in the reasonable yet chastening tenets of the Church of England as the spiritual foundation for the new Irish identity. This realization and articulation, however, does not complete Ormsby's education. Until he can reconcile his religious precepts with his contemporary social environment, he is but half a man and less than a leader.

Ormsby realizes that the religious issue is but a part of the larger cultural conflict between the Anglo-Saxon and the native Irish or Milesian. The next stage in his education, therefore, is to define the characteristics of each race, and to determine their respective qualities and values:

An Englishman at sixteen is a more sober, selfish animal, with more desire of his own indulgence, and more skill in combining that indulgence with his interest, than an Irishman at any age of the world; yet an Englishman is a better family-man. The Irish are more ardent lovers, the English better husbands. The Irishman is more exhilarating in society, the Englishman's comforts are more domestic. One is formed to give more delight, the other more tranquil and rational happiness to life. 19

In their pure state, neither is perfect. The English need loosening; the Irish regulating. By delineating the social qualities of each, Ormsby hopes to weld the Englishman's sobriety with the vitality of the Irish to form the basis of a national, rather than racial, identity. One of the ways in which this national identity could be formed would be

within a single church, that is, the Church of England. Having outlined the religious basis for his new nation, Ormsby must now examine the contemporary leadership within his country.

During his efforts to find the sort of individuals who could be the leaders of his new Ireland, Ormsby encounters numerous types of contemporary Irish landlords. The two types which figure prominently in The Wild Irish Boy are the native nobility represented by Ormsby's uncle, De Lacy, and the Anglo-Irish gentry represented by Orberry and Roschamps. De Lacy at one time understood and still tries to fulfill his social responsibilities; Orberry and Roschamps understand nothing but their own immediate pleasure. On the one hand, De Lacy, a Milesian, is a native of Ireland and a Catholic. He is compassionate and generous with his impoverished tenantry. More importantly, he takes pride in his station and evokes a respect and loyalty from his dependents which reaches almost to the point of idolatry. But his perception and behaviour, as his dress and manners, are fifty years behind his immediate situation. Although he has an historical claim as a Milesian to rule Ireland, he does not have a contemporary one. His preoccupation with his Milesian ways precludes his successfully coming to terms with contemporary Ireland. Perhaps the most tragic figure in the novel, he dies without issue; more important thematically, he dies with the knowledge that his ways no longer suit contemporary Ireland. He insists, therefore, that his name -- and

hence the family's Milesian claims -- die with him.

A variation on the type of Irish Catholic landlord represented by De Lacy is Mr. Bethel, Ormsby's supposed father. Originally a native Irish Catholic and the son of De Lacy's son, Bethel had in his youth renounced his religion and ancestral traditions and taken a new name. He did this in an effort to conform to and adopt the ways of the English. The result, of course, is a mockery of both Milesian and English manners. He has rejected a part of his natural self by rejecting his Milesian ancestry in favour of more immediate social gains as an Englishman. His viability as an Irish landlord, therefore, is lessened because his rejection creates a distance between himself and his country. The result is a sterile life, and he too dies without issue because Ormsby, it turns out, is not really his son.

Orberry and Roschamps represent the second type of Irish landlord, a type who "behaved and were treated as if they were at war  
20 with their dependents." Both Protestants, they are completely insensitive to their tenants' problems. They abuse their privileged  
21 status and intimidate their dependents in the name of sport. Their sense of honour is based, not upon Ireland's traditions or upon any concept of nobility, but rather upon a code of hedonism by which they  
22 shamelessly exploit Ireland's human and material resources. Contrary to De Lacy, who lives exclusively for his dependents, Orberry and Roschamps devote much of their time and rents to living in London,



visiting their Irish estates only for sport. Not only do they remove currency from the Irish economy, but they are essentially destructive even when living there.

A variation of this type of Protestant absentee landlord is Westmoreland, who is distinctly British. He epitomizes the absentee Irish landlord who uses Ireland solely to further his personal goals. Westmoreland's only reason for visiting his Irish estates is to avoid the consequences of political scandal in England. His very name indicates that his interests focus more upon the exploitation of the land than upon the responsibilities attendant to it; and, indeed, his behaviour confirms this attitude. While in Connaught, he gives lavish parties and dinners for the local gentry while his tenants dwell in squalor. He seeks the gentry's support at the polls, and in no way tries to alleviate the circumstances of his tenants. In fact, he exerts himself to avoid contact with Irish problems and intends to leave Connaught as soon as the English political climate permits him to do so. As in the case of Orberry and Roschamps, he in no way tries to correct the Irish social problems which, because of his social status, are his responsibility.

In his search for the qualities of the ideal Irish leader, Ormsby discovers the two broad categories of landlord represented by De Lacy and by Orberry and Roschamps. This part of his education is crucial because from these encounters, Ormsby begins to create the image of

the ideal leader who is a composite of their better qualities; and further, he becomes aware of the flaws as well as the strengths of the past. He concludes that landowners of his uncle De Lacy's calibre are fast becoming extinct either through defections, as in the case of his alleged father, or through a lack of heirs; and further, that landowners of the Orberry-Roschamps type are increasing and fully supported by the English establishment. It is Ormsby's intention to define a suitable replacement for both types; one which would combine the worldliness of the Orberrys and the Roschamps with the understanding and earnest desire to assuage the native's plight found among the Milesian landlords. The resulting confrontation with the realities of the Irish situation are fraught with frustration for Ormsby; however, he possesses a vision which could be the basis for a new order. His belief in the possibility of achieving this vision wavers, but the vision itself does not alter.

By means of proper education and of self-discipline, Ormsby can become a third and ideal alternative to the existing types of landowner. His education must be based on an awareness of contemporary conditions; his self-discipline must be rooted in the Church of England and her tenets. To Ormsby, contemporary landowners of the Orberry and Roschamps kind offer a worldliness without principle on the one hand; and, on the other, De Lacy's kind offers principles without awareness of post-Union Ireland's social and political complexity. Their

examples are insufficient. Ormsby feels he can combine moral principles with knowledge of the demands of contemporary life, and base his strengthened vision upon the socially and theologically sound teachings of the book's Church of England representative, the curate Corbett. However, he has yet to test his theory against current political realities.

As Ormsby learns more about the Irish nation and character, his vision falters before his growing awareness of the awesome complexity of Irish society. Yet his conviction that a new type of leader would solve the problems remains firm. He must, however, continue his painful analysis, and this time, outside of Ireland. During an after-dinner conversation in London with a parliamentary minister, Ormsby communicates his evaluation of contemporary Irish society:

I was ambitious to shew him that Irishmen were not the degraded beings that England has a right of concluding from their scandalous desertion of their duties and their country; I was ambitious to shew him an Irishman was not destitute of information, or dead to national feeling and spirit. I spoke of Ireland, her depressed trade, her neglected populace, her renegade nobility, her dissipated, and careless, and unnatural gentry. 23

In his speech, Ormsby describes the machinations and avaricious motives of British-oriented Anglo-Irish and English aristocracy in their selfish manipulation of their Irish "interests", but to no avail. Enlarging his scope, he illustrates in detail the precarious position of the Anglo-Irish in the face of a Catholic hostility on the one hand, and by British self-interest on the other; again, to no avail. From this point, Ormsby is shunned by British parliamentary ministers. Soon after, his wife deserts him, and he is left alone to extricate himself from the

snarcs of London's fashionable society. He returns to Connaught with the painful knowledge that Ireland's future lies neither with its current landlords nor with the British government. Rather, Ormsby must himself make the changes (never clearly defined by Maturin) which will allow his vision to become Ireland's reality. And he must do it alone.

The main problem with The Wild Irish Boy lies in Maturin's efforts to cloak his Irish criticism with an acceptable romance form, and this limitation rests upon Maturin's naive conceptions of popular subject-matter, not upon any inadequacy of his understanding of Irish society. Idman states that its claim to being an Irish novel is severely limited for this reason:

Anything finished or complete these Irish ingredients do not form... Of the attempts to treat of Ireland, her past and present, only some diffuse discussions remain here and there, without being naturally introduced into the story. 24

This lack of unity results from the novel's hasty composition. However, given this theme of Ormsby's education, a plot structured by his wanderings makes symbolic sense and provides Maturin with his prototypical hero, for the wanderer is a key figure not only in Melmoth, but also in every one of his novels from The Fatal Revenge to The Albigenes. Ormsby first imagines his ideal community when he lives in the Lake District, and it is here that his vision is linked with the potential destiny of Ireland and the Irish. From this introduction to the Irish content and to the Irish identity problem through to the final

pages of the novel, Ormsby becomes a personification of all that is anti-social in both English as well as Irish society. In fact, he epitomizes an increasingly painful self-indulgence. It is only at the end of the novel, by means of the understanding and helpful nature of his wife and the curate Corbett as well as through the impact of his Milesian uncle's self-sacrifice, that his idealisms and dissipations alike are chastened.

Idman's criticism of The Wild Irish Boy, in many ways valid, focusses upon the unwild nature of the wild Irish boy: "He call's him-  
self wild, but wildness is merely an embellishing name for weakness...." 25

But this is Maturin's point. Almost all the characters, including Ormsby until the end, are weak and anti-social; that is, wild.

Ormsby, throughout his development in Ireland and London, is at odds with socially exercised concepts of duty. On his search through both society and his own psyche, he experiences and describes various retrogressive forces encountered by those wishing to serve Ireland first, and themselves second. Most of these stem from inadequate education as, for example, the education offered at Trinity College and by the

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Calvinistic community. Some of these retrogressive forces, however, are a matter of the fossilized and obsolete life-styles found among the dwellers in the Lake District, among the Anglo-Irish and English absentee landlords, and among the books of various libertines. Ormsby sees in these approaches one common flaw; they all embody a concept

of duty which is personally, not socially, directed. Each represents but a part of a useful and necessary education. By the end of his wanderings, Ormsby is able to separate the positive from the negative aspects, and to base his and Ireland's future upon only the positive. The narrative opens with a love-sick visionary of uncertain birth-right, and concludes with a self-reliant, Protestant, and thoroughly educated youth with a birth-right which aligns him with Ireland's most noble traditions. By the conclusion of the narrative, he is no longer anti-social, no longer wild. But he is alone. Ireland's social fabric continues to fray. The reader is left with Ormsby's understanding of the Irish situation; that is, that only the informed and dedicated Anglo-Irishman can alleviate Ireland's post-Union quandary.

Of even more importance, The Wild Irish Boy contains the elements of all Maturin's novels. First, we have the general background of social chaos, specifically or obliquely related to contemporary Ireland. The basic forces within this environment are on the one hand superstition and on the other a selfish aristocracy. Wandering through this perilous landscape is a hero who is learning his way in the world and a Church of England clergyman whose peace of mind and essential rightness of life serve as the ideal the hero must attain. These elements, most obvious in his later novels, provide the basis for The Wild Irish Boy. One feature which does change in the later novels, however, is the optimism of the hero and the successful resolution of

his quest. Up to this point, Maturin held the hope that the Union promises might yet be fulfilled. In the following four years, as his own life faltered and Ireland's prospects dimmed, Maturin's vision of an ideal Ireland dissipated. In his next novel, The Milesian Chief (1812), Maturin dramatizes the violence that is inevitable if the British fail to ameliorate Ireland's problems.

### III

#### THE MILESIA CHIEF

One characteristic of Maturin's writing, which makes him a valuable example of early nineteenth-century nationalism, is that his plots refer to or are based upon contemporary, not historical, events. In The Fatal Revenge (1807), for example, he comments upon the promising vitality of Irish literature as well as upon the hope for a legitimate Irish political identity, although these comments are incongruously placed within a gothic framework. In his next novel, The Wild Irish Boy (1808), he discusses the seven-year old Union and the consequent state of the country, including Emmet's abortive and romanticized rebellion in 1803. These references underline his discontent with the Union as a solution to Irish problems. Implicit in that novel is the realization that Emmet's rebellion was political in nature, and that the Irish nationalist had learned from both the Rising of '98 as well as the Union that political independence was not to be had. His hero, Ormsby, ultimately realizes that the real issue for the nationalist is the creation of a cultural identity different from the English one and yet not simply that of the native Irish. By 1812 and the emergence of French military prominence, the significance of the Irish Catholics and their memories of a glorious, albeit faded, cultural inheritance could no longer be



ignored. Furthermore, by 1812, the Union had become a fact of life, and it was apparent that the British would do little about Ireland's internal and nationalistic problems. Maturin, therefore, based The Milesian Chief upon various recent rebellions in order to show some of the reasons for the seemingly continual violence in Ireland and to help the reading public understand some of the forces at work in Ireland.

Maturin's vision of Ireland's future had altered by 1812 and the theme of his third novel is very different from that of the second. Thus, The Wild Irish Boy's potential conciliation of English and Irish cultures, and the specific re-integration of the hero into a purged Anglo-Irish society is replaced by The Milesian Chief's images of the inevitable and violent death of Irish culture and the specific and total segregation of the hero from any living society. This drastic change in tone results from various events of both a personal and a political nature that occurred in the years between 1809 and 1812. It is to these events that we will now turn.

Several changes of lasting personal significance occurred to Maturin during the years separating The Wild Irish Boy from The Milesian Chief. His father's income and security remained uncertain from 1802 to 1809 when, in November of that year, he was dismissed from his position in the Post Office. As a result, the responsibility for supporting his family fell totally upon Maturin's shoulders. He rented a house at 37 York Street where, in spite of numerous threats over

the years of ejectment for non-payment of rent, he remained until his death in 1824. His own income as a curate was insufficient for supporting his family and, in an effort to attain self-sufficiency, he boarded pupils to prepare for Trinity College, a taxing and competitive business which, contrary to Idman's surmises, he found unfulfilling and frustrating.<sup>1</sup> Critics and biographers, drawing chiefly from Idman but also from contemporary character sketches, are incorrect when they indicate Maturin's income as being approximately £ 80 or £ 90 per year. Bleak though his financial prospects were, they were far healthier than was realized prior to the publication of The Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Robert Maturin (1937).

Writing to Scott in 1813, for example, he summarizes his resources: "my entire personal income amounts to £ 175 a year, and that derived from my pupils is so fluctuating that last year [1812] my income was nearly £ 1000, and this year very little exceeds £ 500."<sup>2</sup> Although significantly more substantial than Idman records, this sum is misleading because, in 1810, Maturin had acted as security for an unidentified person who defaulted and left him in debt for nine years. Abjectly begging Constable for an advance against Melmoth the Wanderer in 1819, he wrote:

if my distress arose from my own extravagance or folly, I think I should not dare to make such a request, but I am paying for the cruel and offensive extravagance of my own Brother, and the only consolation I have is that the present claim is the Last that can ever be urged against me on that unworthy account.<sup>3</sup>

Between the publication of The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief, therefore, and despite his diverse efforts to alleviate his increasing personal burdens by preaching, teaching, and running a boarding establishment, Maturin's sense of personal entrapment increased. This sense accounts not only for the attempt at another novel, but also is reflected in the theme of the novel itself. In The Milesian Chief, his own fading hopes for fulfilment of his personal potential coincide with his fading hopes concerning Ireland's future.

In addition to penury and insecurity, two other factors influenced the writing of The Milesian Chief: first, Scott's compassionate review of The Fatal Revenge in the Quarterly Review in 1810; and second, the growing threat both of Catholic domination of Ireland and of Catholic confrontation with the British. Scott's review gave Maturin hope as a writer in spite of the failure of the first two novels; the Catholic organizations gave him a compelling reason to write.

The Milesian Chief reflects the growing tension between the Protestant landlords and the Catholic natives who desired autonomy. The Protestant fear of Catholic domination and reprisal was widespread and very real. In 1807, for example, Daniel O'Connell became the leader of Catholic Ireland. His organization, the Catholic Association, aroused sufficient alarm in England as well as Ireland to lead to its suppression in 1812. Apart from Maturin's new financial burdens, the fear generated by Catholic unanimity does a great deal to account

for the vastly different tones of The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief. In the first, he describes his hopes for the reformation of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, while in The Milesian Chief, his new concern with the increasing power of the Catholics is shown by his shift of focus from the Anglo-Irish to the native Catholic leadership. In Maturin's opinion, this leadership can only lead Ireland to disaster because of its allegiance to an obsolete order. It is interesting to speculate on his various spellings of Connal ("Connel") in that it is perhaps an allusion to Daniel O'Connell who, in Maturin's eyes, is a well-intentioned but dangerous leader of the Catholic Association in Ireland.

The novel begins by introducing Armida Fitzalban, a popular and talented society woman in Naples. She publicly expresses a sophisticated classical taste, and yet her personal inclinations include a propensity for the "sombrous imagery and luxurious melancholy" of Ossian. Her father, Lord Montclare, brings her to Ireland, an ideal setting for the fostering of her romantic imagination. On her arrival, she meets and falls in love with Connal O'Morven, a Milesian chieftain whose hereditary demesne is now owned by Armida's English father. Connal's only inheritance is a ruined watchtower on his ancestral property in which he and his insane grandfather live. In this tower, the old man clings to the memories of his family's ancient glories in pre-Elizabethan days. Here, old O'Morven plans a rebellion for Gaelic Ireland's liberation, a rebellion which provides

the physical and emotional setting for the narrative. The naive Connal, whose education was limited to ancient Irish culture, is to assume leadership of the rising. In spite of his unalterable allegiance to the old order, Connal realizes the suicidal nature of strict adherence to it in the face of Ireland's political and economic weakness in relation to England and the continent. He therefore determines to dissolve the conspiracy in which his personal fate is so firmly bound.

Meanwhile, the progress of Armida's and Connal's affair both parallels and is inseparable from the course of the rebellion. When Armida's fiancé, Wandesford, arrives, he is jealous of her attentions to this "Irish savage". Because Wandesford has obvious claims upon Armida, and because he is an English officer, he and Connal come to represent opposite extremes. Armida is caught between these two conflicting forces. There can be no compromise. She ultimately decides upon Connal and the Irish cause, and therefore must experience the Irish fate.

Tricked by Wandesford into pursuing the insurrection he had intended to forsake, Connal and his band are routed in the first encounter. The O'Morven tower is destroyed, and the insurgents take refuge in a nearby mountain for the winter. Throughout this winter, Armida learns more of Connal's background and character from Mary, an Irish peasant woman wronged by Wandesford, as well as from Connal himself, whom she meets frequently. Connal unsuccessfully seeks amnesty for the rebels and, as a result, begins a retreat to

islands off the Connaught coast. They are accompanied by Armida, who rejects her luxuries, and by Cormac, the O'Morven bard. After battles and hardships, they reach the islands. Here, the rebel organization, cut off from its heritage, continues the disintegration begun with the burning of the O'Morven tower. Connal again seeks amnesty, and this time travels the breadth of Ireland to Dublin. Not only does he witness, at first hand, the pernicious results of the insurrection, but his quest for amnesty is futile. During his absence, his lieutenant, Brennan, assumes command and turns the men against Connal. His motives are entirely personal and completely unrelated to the goal of Gaelic liberation. He lures Armida to a cave in which Connal's grandfather lives. Completely insane by now, the old O'Morven tries to kill Armida, whom he believes to be Elizabeth I, and whose death, he imagines, will free Ireland. Connal returns at this moment, kills Brennan, and saves Armida from his grandfather. The damage, however, has been done. Connal cannot regain control over his followers, and the British army moves in.

Before the final British and Gaelic conflict, and the defeat of the rebels, Armida is returned to her castle. Here, she becomes a victim of her Italian mother's determination to win the castle for herself. To this end, she tries to make Armida marry Connal's brother, Desmond, the heir to the castle, in spite of the fact that Desmond has already been married by a Church of England clergyman, St. Austin, to Ines, Armida's sister. To avoid her mother's schemes, Armida poisons herself. Connal, meanwhile, surrenders, is flogged, and released. He shoots

Wandesford during a chance encounter and is finally executed by the British army. Desmond, now ensnared by the rebellion, and driven to desperation by Armida's mother, likewise is shot, and Ines dies. The sole survivors are St. Austin and his daughter, Rose.

In the dedication to The Milesian Chief, Maturin describes the religious, political, and social gulf which separates the Anglo-Irish from the Catholic natives. Summarizing his own emotional affinity to his pessimistic plot, he states:

If I possess any talent, it is that of darkening the gloomy, and of deepening the sad; of painting life in extremes, and representing those struggles of passion when the soul trembles on the verge of the unlawful and the unhallowed. 4

Maturin's critics frequently quote these lines to support their contention that he was primarily a gothic novelist. But Maturin, in the lines immediately following the above excerpt, states unequivocally that his intentions lay in a different direction:

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. 5

Maturin had only to think of Ireland as he saw it around him, and not necessarily of the gothic, to be plunged into sadness. His interests are neither in gothic nor in the romance for their own sakes. This is made clear by his treatment of the hero (see pp. 32-34 above). The typical romances of the day end in reconciliation and in the social re-integration of the hero.

Connal, on the other hand, is flogged and then executed by a firing squad as a common rebel. The "scenes of actual life" refer, in fact, to an

amalgam of two well-known post-Union rebellions, that of Robert Emmet in 1803, and that of the "Thrashers" in 1806, as well as the general agrarian violence that was common in Irish society after 1760. As Maturin acknowledges, there is no need to romanticize extremes, or to create them solely from his imagination. Extreme polarities and separating tensions are, in fact, the mundane affairs of an Irishman's life. It is these extremes of which the English are ignorant and of which Maturin wishes to inform them.

Idman asserts that Maturin's applying his talents of "darkening the gloomy" to "scenes of actual life" is "not attended to in The Milesian Chief." <sup>6</sup> Pursuing this line of reasoning, he ignores the Irish qualities and symbols in this novel and thoroughly describes the way Maturin develops his characters. In view of Maturin's careful delineation of insanity, jealousy, and love, Idman's interest in Maturin's analysis of emotion and behaviour is justified. But this approach is only partially valid because it overlooks Maturin's obvious attempts to dramatize his understanding of the debilitating effects of the Irish native's uncritical allegiance to an eclecticism of Gaelic cultural relics. Acknowledging Maturin's use of "the political state of the country and the insurrection", <sup>7</sup> he dismisses this context as incidental background. Yet the novel's conflict is within this specific context and accounts not only for the tragic issue so contrary to the romance conventions, but also for the sustained symbolism of Irish relics. When, for example, describing the use and abuse of characterization, Idman states: "Connal's journey



to Dublin is so long as to be a digression, and not particularly  
 8  
 interesting...." But on this journey, Connal experiences every class  
 of Ireland's chaotic society, exposing various attitudes to rebellion from  
 such types as estate agents, native farmers, magistrates, and the poor;  
 and, in Dublin itself, he describes the fashionable society which had the  
 theatre for its focus as well as the squalid side of Dublin, the ghetto  
 existence of prostitutes and beggars. Connal's journey, therefore,  
 provides an opportunity to describe the huge gap which separates Ire-  
 land's wealthy from its poor, and to point out that it is the Protestants  
 who are wealthy and the Catholics who are poor. In other words, he  
 shows a country ripe for rebellion.

An important element in this country is the old Catholic Irish  
 landowners, a type represented in The Milesian Chief by Connal's  
 grandfather, O'Morven. These landowners are described by Charles  
 Lever in the preface to The O'Donogue:

Between the great families -- the old houses of the land and the  
 present race of proprietors -- there lay a couple of generations  
 of men who, with all the traditions and many of the pretensions of  
 birth and fortune, had really become in ideas, modes of life, and  
 habits, very little above the peasantry about them. They inhabited,  
 it is true, the "great houses," and they were in name the owners of  
 the soil, but, crippled by debt and overborne by mortgages, they  
 subsisted in a shifty conflict with their creditors, rackrenting their  
 miserable tenants to maintain it. Survivors of everything but  
 pride of family, they stood there like stumps, blackened and charred,  
 the last remnants of a burnt forest, their proportions attesting the  
 noble growth that preceded them.

What would the descendants of these men prove when, destitute  
 of fortune and helpless, they were trown [sic] upon a world that  
 actually regarded them as blamable for the unhappy condition of  
 Ireland? Would they stand by 'their order' in so far as to adhere

to the cause of the gentry? Or would they share the feelings of the peasant to whose lot they had been reduced, and charging on the Saxons the reverses of their fortune, stand forth as rebels to England? 9

Maturin is one of those who blames the condition of Ireland upon this class of native, but it is the question of loyalties which is important: would the native aristocracy join with the Protestant aristocracy when their property and privileges were threatened, or would they be ruled by an allegiance to Irish tradition which preceded their duties to the Crown? Although in The Wild Irish Boy Maturin had blamed a selfish Anglo-Irish landlord class for Ireland's social misery, he did include an example of native Irish leadership. De Lacy remains loyal to class and privilege, but his type of leadership is no longer sufficient. In old O'Morven of The Milesian Chief, Maturin gives a fuller and more realistic picture of this class. The Anglo-Irish aristocrats, although wealthy, were alienated from their Catholic tenants. On the other hand, the Catholic landlords were largely impoverished but retained the ancient loyalties of the Catholic natives. This was obviously a potentially dangerous situation, for the native Irish Catholic landlord could become the centre of a native armed rebellion. Maturin felt that such rebellion would be useless because he saw the Catholic landowners dominated by obsolete dreams of Ireland's past glory. Connal and his grandfather live in a ruined tower full of emblems of the old order, while the Anglo-Irish live within the Castle itself amid luxury. The tower is ultimately the focus of the rebellion. Also, in comparing

Connal to Emmet, Maturin makes pointed allusion. Although Emmet was a Protestant, he held romantic notions of re-instituting Ireland's culture, and his efforts were disastrous. Maturin's interests focussed, then, upon the impossibility of Gaelic liberation as sought by the whole of Catholic Ireland. In order to clarify the thrust of Maturin's depiction, and the complexity of the conflict, it is necessary to indulge in a rather long historical digression at this point.

The most widespread rebellion after the Union was that of the "Thrashers" in 1806, an uprising which led Lewis to report the following:

At this time, 'the entire province of Connaught, with the exception of one county, and two counties on the north-west circuit (Longford and Cavan) were overrun by insurgents so formidable, that the king's judges upon a special commission could not move through the country, except under a military escort; so formidable, that the sentence of the law could not be executed in one particular town till a general officer had marched from a distant quarter, at the head of a strong force, to support the civil power'. 10

This and similar events provided Maturin with his material. He used these events to explain to the British reading public how and why rebellions of this kind could and did flourish in Ireland. The Irish had known them since at least the 1760's.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Irish Catholic population was increasing dramatically while that of the Protestant remained

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constant. This increase upon a relatively fixed land-supply left the peasant more vulnerable to the landlord's power, principally because, as the competition for land increased, landlords rented to the highest

bidder. This resulted in even harsher abuses of the tenuous rights of the natives. However, population increase also worked to some degree to the advantage of the Catholic peasantry in the long run. As conditions worsened, the Catholics became more united and more conscious of their grievances, and this ultimately led to the foundation of the Catholic Association in 1807.

From this gradual formation of a social identity grew activists who sought to coerce landlords into better treatment of tenants. After 1760, therefore, agrarian violence became a way of life for tenant and landlord alike. These activists -- known as, among other things, "Whiteboys"-- became more prominent as a result of the social pressures of peasant life. Their main tactic was physical intimidation. Terrorized landlords, instead of attempting to discriminate the Whiteboys from the innocuous majority of begrudgingly loyal tenants and peasants, retaliated against the peasant class as a whole. Furthermore, the terror-tactics used by the Whiteboys against both landlord and dissenting peasant alike compelled, at least, the peasant to accede to their demands.

Predictably, the social result of the Whiteboy activity was negative. One reason was, as Gwynn says, that "the mass of Catholic Ireland had no political education, no organization except that of the Whiteboy league, and scarcely any political consciousness." That is, until Daniel O'Connell organized them first in 1807, they had a purpose, but no unified direction to pursue, a factor which made them

all the more incomprehensible to their antagonists. Their motivation, succinctly stated by Lewis, was "the deliberate association [to seek] by cruel outrage to insure themselves against the risk of utter destitution and abandonment." <sup>13</sup> This type of seemingly directionless violence caused endless anxiety for the Protestant minority. The British government responded to this threat against its interests by sending troops. These troops battled the symptoms, but left the actual and complicated causes unattended. By the end of the eighteenth century, the peasants beheld an example of organization which horrified both the British and the Anglo-Irish; that is, the French Revolution.

The French Revolution drew both Catholic and Protestant attention to many weaknesses in the status quo. Irish Catholics were roused from generations of submission to foreign oppression <sup>14</sup> and they began to articulate-- although agrarian violence continued -- their grievances against the Protestant minority. Their sense of injustice resulted from an increasing awareness that they formed the contemptible base of a system of privilege more abused in their own country than in other European nations and that, as a result, their own culture was being oppressed in their own land. <sup>15</sup> The Rising of '98, Ireland's own version of the French Revolution, gave the English their opportunity to subdue forcefully Ireland, and to fragment once again its Catholic forces.

The Rising of '98 was largely blamed on the Catholics and,

as a result, it retarded their emancipation efforts by re-inforcing  
 the Ascendancy's fear and distaste of them.<sup>16</sup> The aftermath, too,  
 produced as much discontent as had the actual rebellion:

The country was still very disturbed. The peasants continued their burnings and murders, the soldiers their floggings and tortures.... The extreme Ascendancy party were vehemently anti-Catholic. The Revolutionaries were vehemently anti-Ascendancy. The moderates had lost their power. The masses were in a state of desperate exasperation. 17

To put the warring parties back into controllable slots, the Union was both the easiest and the quickest method. But it was designed to ease the burden of the British as governors, and not to ease the situation of  
 the Irish Catholics who were the vast majority of the population.<sup>18</sup>

The Union strengthened Protestant control of property, and the situation for the native remained as it had been since Elizabethan times:

The Protestants had never succeeded in holding the peasant mass in thrall, but in many ways landlordism was the Union and the Union landlordism. Here lay much of the trouble. Ostensibly the Union had offered Ireland justice between the factions. So bound up with the Orange side, however, did the British government come to be -- partly by design, partly because of disloyalty among the greenites, and partly through the force of circumstance connected with the overwhelming respect for property felt in London -- that the Union soon came to represent nothing but existing grievances writ larger for the Catholic majority, not only in political, but in economic and social matters as well. 19

The Union not only re-confirmed the native's case against British injustices, but intensified his sense of distinctiveness from the Protestants. Essentially cut off from reform through British systems, and fragmented as a political force, the Catholics had two ways in which to seek recognition: first, through the type of Whiteboy violence which had prevailed

in the eighteenth century; and second, through the exploitation of his own traditional Gaelic identity which was being popularized rapidly by the British themselves. The Union, in fact, had achieved nothing except to weaken the position of the Anglo-Irish because it strengthened the native's grip upon his own distinct culture, a culture which gave him a focus by which to project his hatred of his oppressors. It is the brooding hostility of the peasant, and the emerging self-consciousness of Gaelic Ireland which Maturin dramatizes in The Milesian Chief.

Maturin wrote of contemporary native culture because he thought it had yet to be adequately defined. Irish writers like Morgan and Moore had presented the native Irish in the guise of the noble savage. Their perspective failed to account for the realities of Irish life -- the questions of law and religion, the brooding hostility and social chaos, the filth of Dublin, the military presence, or even the character of the native. For Maturin, contemporary fictional presentations of native culture were not so much realistic portrayal as mollifying projections of what the English reading public wanted Ireland to be. Maturin sensed his own position too keenly to add to this type of literature, although he does introduce his tale in the fashion of his contemporaries.

The Milesian Chief shares several features with Lady Morgan's The Wild Irish Girl. Both present a popularized picture of traditional Irish culture by means of a plot which describes a foreigner's introduction to Ireland. Morgan's insipid and innocuous tale concerns a

bored young Englishman's visit to his father's land in Connaught, land which had been confiscated from the Prince of Innismore by the hero's ancestors in Cromwell's time. He becomes infatuated with the untarnished Irish culture, and is ultimately wedded to it by marrying the Prince's daughter, Glorvina, a melancholy and self-consciously

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idealized portrait of Lady Morgan herself. The tale reveals many of the shallow and contradictory emotions that found expression in early nineteenth-century nationalism; but, as Flanagan suggests in his Irish Novelists: 1800-1850, it was as intense an expression of nationalism as the reading public -- especially the English reading public -- was prepared to accept:

That her patriotism was a nebulous pastel over which some Ossianic coloring had been daubed was, if anything an asset. Ireland had drunk the first, bitter wine of the Union, and was experiencing a sense of deprivation so sharp as to resemble the apprehension of death. 21

Her novel combines a wistful melancholy for the lost past, described in Ossianic terms, with a hope for the colonizing aristocracy's ultimate recognition and support of that past. Her use of Ossian is significant because, as Flanagan indicates, the Ossianic poetry "had not been, after all, an heroic poem but a long, luxuriating sigh for the past." In other words, Morgan's treatment of the Gaelic identity is highly idealized and unrealistic. Nevertheless, she found this device helpful. She realized that patriotism was the first and perhaps only refuge for the native Irish. She further perceived that after the Union, they needed

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"re-assurance that somewhere in the past lay the fragments of a lost  
 glory and the vague promise that it could be somehow revived." <sup>23</sup>

Implicitly, she also realized she was not championing contemporary native culture. She was aware of the anarchy of the present and offered the consolation to Irishmen that the causes of this anarchy were not the result of division and flaws inherent in the native Irish identity; rather, the fault resulted from the fact that the English were insensitive and unsympathetic to the Irish culture.

Maturin's treatment of Gaelic culture was more realistic than that of Lady Morgan. He too utilized both the Ossianic device and the popularized Irish culture, the first in the immature Armida before her exposure to real native behaviour, and the second in the O'Morven family. But he develops this unreflective sentimentality into tragedy. He wrote to edify the Ascendancy and the English reading public, not simply to pander to their prejudice. Unlike Lady Morgan who attempted to console the native Irish through the romance genre, Maturin attempted to illustrate the fatuity both of living in the insane world of ruins and of irretrievable history as well as of viewing Ireland from the perspective of romance. He stressed, therefore, the retarding effect upon those who tried to live in terms of this popularized culture. He also attempted to elucidate its fragmentary and brittle nature. To him, those Irish who did live in terms of the vague promise of a Gaelic cultural revival were irresponsible and self-deluding precisely because

they grasped tenaciously to the hope of a re-introduction of the imaginary society of the long-dead, pre-Elizabethan past.

Maturin's intentions in The Milesian Chief are misinterpreted by Idman when he apparently aligns them with the general pattern of Irish novels which he describes as follows:

[A] person of eminence arrives in Ireland; he (or she) possesses every qualification for a rich and interesting life, yet nothing noteworthy has ever happened to him, and he is full of spleen until, once there, he is dragged into a whirl of undreamt-of adventures; his former habits, prejudices and ways of thinking suddenly give way to an all-absorbing passion; which irresistibly hurries him towards bliss or destruction.... In the predilection of Irish novelists for an intrigue of this description there... is the revenge of a subdued and oppressed country upon her masters. In the field of fiction the conquered becomes the conqueror, and the first come in as the last. 24

It appears that Idman patterns Maturin's novel after Lady Morgan's The Wild Irish Girl in which native Ireland assimilates the hero into its society. In The Milesian Chief, however, the situation is more complex because both the native Irish and the foreigners are destroyed. Armida, the counterpart to Morgan's hero, is ultimately killed, not by Ireland, but by her foreign, although Catholic, mother. She does, however, fulfill most requirements outlined by Idman. The hero, Connal, who represents heroic Ireland itself, is destroyed by the prevailing attitudes of both the English and the Irish. In this novel, no one survives but a Church of England clergyman and his daughter. In any case, there is no reconstruction of society, and, therefore, no integration into it, in spite of both the hero's and heroine's

efforts. In this, The Milesian Chief is neither a romance nor a typical Irish novel in Idman's sense. Rather, Maturin introduces a romantic view of Ireland and opposes it to what he saw as the political and social destiny of Ireland with much of the responsibility focussed upon, not the hero, but upon the fragmentary nature of Gaelic culture, and, less obviously, upon superstitious religious beliefs.

When Maturin's foreign traveller, Armida, arrives in Ireland, she immediately determines to view Ireland and its natives in terms of her own romantic inclinations. She therefore replaces her classical training with a self-indulgent and total immersion in romantic Ireland -- the landscape, the ruins, and also, the modern representative of ancient Gaelic culture, Connal. Her unreflective attitude is highlighted when she changes her confidante's name from "Rose" to one she  
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selects from a romance, "Rosine". As she becomes irretrievably drawn into the vortex of rebellion, her romantic notions are rudely dispelled. Her utter horror at both her and Connal's involvement with rebellion results from her realization of her total ignorance of the Irish political situation, and her fantasy is at length obliterated by the intrusion of a bleak, death-oriented reality. That is, she, like the English and even Connal at first, underestimates the depth and irrationality of Irish culture. At first, she had thought the natives colourful, quaint, and harmless. With the rebellion, however, she realizes that her perceptions had been wilfully inadequate. The overall

implication is that Ireland and her woes are not the subject of romance, and cannot be dreamed away; neither can its problems be concealed for long beneath the cloak of culture.

In The Milesian Chief, the O'Morven tower symbolizes the fortunes of the Gaelic cause. Standing in partial ruins on the edge of O'Morven ancestral land now occupied by an Englishman, Armida's father, this tower is the repository for the remnants of Irish culture. In it dwell old O'Morven and his collection of ancient manuscripts, weapons, and uniforms as well as his eclectic memories of ancient glories, all of which provide the basis for his hopes for their re-introduction. It is a significant irony that O'Morven's home is described as a "watch-tower"; that is, a lookout to provide advance warning of English invasion. In the context of the action, there is nothing left to watch for because the English already inhabit the castle. The tower itself is mostly in ruins, and therefore not worth capturing. That is, it is no longer a watch-tower, but only a refuge for the remains of a moribund culture. The insanity of O'Morven and the ruins of the tower are images of the impossibility of the schemes for Gaelic liberation. As long as the tower stands, however, it symbolizes the hopes of the Irish and their rallying point. With its destruction, the Irish culture it embodies and symbolizes is once again dissipated and the rebels can use only their dead -- with whom they communicate through their bards -- as a rallying point.

When describing the first battle between the rebels and the

British, Maturin associates the scene with two earlier and famous Irish risings:

Intelligence had been sent to Dublin to apprise the government of the state of the country...; but they had not yet been able to discover that any disturbance had existed in adjacent counties, or that there was any connexion between this and the rebellion of 1798. It seemed like Emmet's insurrection, the isolated and hopeless attempt of a single enthusiast. 26

This association lends a realistic touch to the plot and to the "scenes of actual life". It also suggests that the rebellion is as hopeless as Emmet's with which it is associated.

The first battle between the Irish and the British takes place around the tower of old O'Morven. Wandesford announces the failure of the rebels in these words:

He announced that on the tower where the O'Morvens lived... a formidable body of rebels, well armed and disciplined, had appeared to defend it, but as their efforts were more directed to preserve the building than to assail the troops, they had been quickly routed, and the tower reduced to ashes. 27

Unlike Emmet's rebellion, which attempted to achieve political goals, Connal's rebellion is basically idealistic and is directed toward the preservation of native Ireland's cultural icons, in this case, the tower and its museum. In spite of their discipline and weapons, therefore, the rebels are routed because their chief concern is to defend the tower, not to defeat their enemy. Because the tower is burned as they retreat to the mountains, the focal point for their identity is destroyed, and their discipline, their reason for rebelling, and their very identity disintegrates. It is only by the efforts of their leader, Connal, that

they themselves escape annihilation;

Every express brought accounts of the heroism with which the rebel leader kept his little band together in the centre of a bleak mountain, amid winter, famine, and the foe; of the conduct with which he had hitherto repelled the approach of disciplined troops; and the humanity with which, amid all his hardships, he protected the peasantry from the aggressions of his fierce and mutinous forces. 28

The "well armed and disciplined" rebels who defended the tower are by this stage "fierce and mutinous forces". Their uncritical allegiance to and dependence upon tradition has left them incapable of responding as a group to a new set of circumstances which they themselves created.

By the final stages of the rebellion, the Gaelic social force represented by Connal and his men has lost purpose and direction, and Maturin presents their only destiny as death. With the destruction of their tower, the symbol of their cultural presence in nineteenth-century Ireland had vanished. As they retreat toward the west, they retreat symbolically to the land of death. Their final stronghold, an island in the western seas, is symbolically and literally a warriors' paradise. Significantly, it is the burial-ground of Connal's ancestors, isolated alike from Ireland and from the present. By this stage, their cause has been forgotten, and their very existence is a social threat. Maturin describes the threat they have come to be when he describes Connal's return from his unsuccessful quest to Dublin for amnesty:

He had left them a few brave men, generously penitent for their crime, and anxious to merit the mercy of government: he found them... a numerous and ferocious band, mutinous to their leader, hostile to government, and formidable to the country.... His courage, his vigilance, and his resolution, were in vain opposed to the inflamed

passions and unruly habits of a rabble made for rapine, and intoxicated with the success which had hitherto attended their incursions. 29

In terms of their former culture and idealisms, they are now dead because they now live for themselves alone. Here is no heroism, no romance. Their one point of contact with their past is death.

In addition to their ruined castles and towers, one large feature of Irish culture, as Maturin saw it, is the role of the Gaelic bard.

Through Connal, Maturin indicates the contemporary status of Irish music:

"It is the fate of the Irish language and Irish music...to be degraded into the language and music of the vulgar, and when we hear it from their lips we forget that it has been the language of the hero, the noble, or the poet." 30

Irish music no longer represents a viable, noble, Gaelic culture.

Furthermore, the fate of Gaelic Ireland has been inextricably bound up with the degradation of its music, for it is through the music that the Irish retain their intimacy with the past. Through Cormac the bard's three appearances, Maturin characterizes the decline and fall of Irish culture; these three appearances highlight the progressive disintegration following the tower's destruction.

In The Milesian Chief, Cormac's music is associated not with love and youth, and not with heroic warriors, but with the curse of death. When, before the rebellion, Connal asks for a song about Armida, "the sweetest song that ever was inspired by love and beauty," Cormac prepares himself to oblige:

At that moment the old man bent over his harp in a trance of feeling; a loud blast of wind swept across the strings, and the sound, deep

and mournful, resembled a human groan as it passed along the heath. 31

The Irish cannot sing of love and beauty because these parts of life no longer belong to their culture. Cormac can sing and prophesy only of death:

'The hand of death is on my harp!...there is a spirit in the air -- the voices of other days strike my ear -- there is a spirit in the air!...he whispers, "No song of youth or love!" O'Morven, he bids me sing of woe and death!...

'Heed him not,' said Connal; 'it is the wind that sweeps the strings of his harp.'

'It is not the wind,' said the old man; 'it is not the wind that bids me utter these sounds.'

And with the inspiration, the solemn fury of a prophet, he struck the chords that for centuries past had summoned the funeral procession to the grave of an O'Morven, and echoed the dreadful cry that was raised over the corse. 32

Personal inspiration and cultural necessity clash, and the latter triumphs. In spite of the presence of love and beauty, Cormac and the Gaelic cause cannot rise above their inevitable fate.

After the first battle and as the rebels retreat to the islands off Connaught, Cormac is stimulated by the march, and inspiring thoughts of departed heroes swell in his breast. He responds to the inspiration of the moment, but hears the lesson of history:

There was no sound but the heavy tramp of numerous feet on the dry heath, and the quick and eager voices that called out to avoid the precipices in their descent, except when old Cormac, who still marched by Connal's side, under the impulse of enthusiasm, which neither age nor fear could quell, struck a martial chord on his harp, and then sighing at its lonely hollow tones sunk into silence. 33

As with his love song for Connal and Armida, Cormac's feelings cannot alter the fact that Gaelic culture symbolized by his music is impotent in



the face of contemporary social reality. His attempt to align Gaelic music with love and beauty had failed. This second instance, an opportunity to be inspired by heroism and imminent war, fails also.

Cormac's final attempt to articulate the vitality of Gaelic culture foreshadows its destiny. Connal's troops occupy the islands, but they roam and attack the mainland. They are now undisciplined and wild, severed alike from their people and their cause. Divorced from their past, Connal's men are now outlaws. Upon his return from his final unsuccessful plea for amnesty, he witnesses his band's savage massacre of some English soldiers. One English officer is being cut down in spite of Connal's orders to spare him:

Connal instantly flew to his assistance.

As he passed the heath like lightening, the old harper who was sitting on the ground, and who knew his step, called to him to save the unfortunate young man.

'He cried to me to shoot him as he flew past,' said he: 'it was not death he feared, but to be torn to pieces alive with the claws of those cannibals.

'Oh! there will be a curse on such doings, and on all concerned in them.' 34

Cormac needs no music by this stage. His harp had failed his inspiration twice before when he had tried to sing bardic songs of love and war, and could sing only of death. Cormac can no longer revitalize the past or unite it with the present. In the face of agony and conflict, the harp is useless.

The tower, Connal the warrior, and Cormac's harp are all images which are totally useless as foci for Irish culture in the nineteenth century. The ruined tower, a symbol of Irish self-consciousness,

belongs to the dim and distant past. When the Irish natives attempt to impose this consciousness on the remainder of Ireland, it is destroyed by the forces of the new order. When Connal, symbolic of the hero-warrior, discovers the viciousness of his followers, he deliberately divorces himself from the cause of Gaelic nationalism. Similarly, when Cormac the bard attempts to transport traditional Gaelic songs of love and war into contemporary reality, he can communicate only death. The tower, Connal, and finally Cormac's harp, three distinct emblems of Irish nationalism and culture, are all overwhelmed by the power of the new order over the old.

The fundamental flaw in the native Irish scheme for Gaelic liberation lies in his belief that because the English offer them no understanding, they can remain aloof from British influences. He fails to realize that he cannot live in isolation. Connal begins to understand the dilemma when he explains his grandfather's plans to Armida as well as to Rosine: "it was impossible for Ireland to subsist as an independent country; impossible for her to exist without dependence on the continental powers, or a connexion with England--".<sup>35</sup> For its own defence, England, of course, could allow no Irish "dependence on the continental powers". The Irish, therefore, were stuck with the British. Yet British insensitivity to Irish interests made the union unpleasant for both parties, but especially for the Irish.

Maturin blamed the British presence in Ireland for fomenting the cultural antagonism which existed there, and he condemned the

distance that the British wilfully imposed between themselves and the native Irish. His articulate and sensitive spokesman for the Irish cause, Connal, explains his reasons for avoiding English society in Ireland when he refuses Armida's invitation to attend a dinner party in his ancestor's castle:

I hate those revels. The very air you breathe is the sighs of her racked and wretched tenantry; the luxurious heat you inhale is purchased by their resting, after a day of toil, on the naked floor of their hovels; the only light of their wintry nights is borrowed from the glare of the torches that conduct you to her feast. I hate those revels when folly is contrasted with misery, its colour darkens into guilt. The country is bleeding under ignorance, poverty, and superstition, and we cast over its wounds a gay embroidered garment of voluptuousness, beneath which the heavings and shudderings of its agony are but more frightfully visible. 36

The extremes of wealth and poverty are everywhere apparent, and because the British flaunt their advantages and privileges, conflict is inevitable.

The most provocative blow to the Irish, however, comes from their increasing awareness that the British are not ignorant of this difference; Wandesford, in fact, articulated the gap with evident delight. In spite of his principled refusal, Connal is drawn to Armida's dinner party, where he encounters Wandesford. Wandesford drinks "till his spleen fermented into something like courage, and he began to pour forth a torrent of abuse against Ireland, her natives, and her national character. " 37 His remarks upon these subjects are con-

cluded as follows: "I suppose your country, like its ancient inhabitants, 38 is the happiest, freest, and richest in the world. " Although powerless

to retaliate, Connal points out to Wandesford that the British first destroy a nation's "character", then desecrate its current condition, and finally wonder why their victims have no viable culture around which to rally. It is the British, in fact, who are to blame. Connal's defence of Ireland's fragmented and vulnerable position is, therefore, an eloquent reminder to the British, not only of their inconsistent Irish policy, but also, that they have to take the initiative because the Irish have no native aristocracy.

In both The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief, Maturin depicts native Irish leaders who, because of an English leadership void, must attempt to guide their people. The proper leader has to acknowledge the imminent end to Milesian influence. In the former, this responsibility is acknowledged by De Lacy, and the result is that Irish suffering is limited only to him. In The Milesian Chief, Connal's grandfather's insanity obstructs his perception. He will not acknowledge this responsibility, and Connal himself recognizes this necessity too late to limit the suffering to himself alone. He is tricked by Wandesford and the British into hopeless rebellion, in spite of his understanding. The result is mass suffering. It is the old O'Morven's schemes, however, which set the tragedy in motion.

The old O'Morven is completely isolated from contemporary social and political fact, and Maturin describes him in this way:

Implacable from pride, fierce from want, and intoxicated by solitary grandeur, and the loyal homage of his remaining followers, he shut himself up in the old tower on his ancient demesne, and listened to the tales of his bards and the songs of his harpers, who told him he was the sovereign of the western isles. 39

The idea that he is "sovereign of the western isles" links him with Morgan's Prince of Innismore, but Maturin's treatment of him is significantly different. In The Wild Irish Girl, her Prince can still function because he deliberately ignores English incursions into his territory, thereby offending no one. The old O'Morven, however, who likewise thrives upon the songs of his harpers, and upon ancient Gaelic culture in general, determines to impose his wishes not only upon the Irish but upon the indifferent English as well. When Connal describes to Wandesford the Irish situation in terms of a parent's "infirmities", he is implicitly acknowledging not only that it is symbolized by his own grandfather, but that the hopes of the cultural revival will die with his grandfather. It is Wandesford, then, and the British in general, who taunt the native Irish to respond to British provocations violently. The fault for the Irish troubles lies not only with the Irish allegiance to a dying heritage, but also with the British indifference as far as helping them find a viable alternative to their poverty, ignorance and superstition.

The main thrust of Maturin's analysis in The Milesian Chief is the inevitable destruction of the old order, a structure for which the Irish themselves can develop no replacement. When the

rebellion is violently concluded, there is no restructured society into which survivors might be reintegrated. For this void, both the British and the native Irish are responsible. While Maturin devotes most of his attention to this overall cultural problem, he devotes little attention to what would later become his chief theme: the question of the proper religion for Ireland. This theme, however, is inherent within The Milesian Chief, and Armida's education in the difference between romance and reality concerning Irish cultural matters parallels her education in the true meaning and purpose of religion.

During the rebels' retreat after the first British victory, Armida has an opportunity to ponder the nature of religion. Earlier, while trying to impress Connal with her sensitivity and responsiveness, she expressed her conception of the basis of religious feeling:

Religion with me must be the religion of feeling, the impulses of an hour like this, caught from 'commercing with the skies,' the ocean, the moonlight, and the dead, since the living have no feeling. 40

This concept of religion underlines a fundamental reason why the English fail to respond to the Irish situation. Unimpressed with this selfish and vague type of sentimentality, Connal responds: "Oh! your's is the language of a mind too much at ease." He cites the starving and the blind who could never appreciate the world as she saw it: "and shall those who cannot gaze on nature be denied the consolations of religion? Religion is for the wounded in spirit, whom the world cannot heal...." By the time of the retreat, Armida's view of religion

has come closer to Connal's. Although she wants him to be "heaven's favourite", she senses otherwise: "I feel a boding, an inward and un-uttered prophecy of a heart inspired by grief, that murmurs talents and virtues are in vain, and heaven has determined mankind shall receive  
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 the example of his sufferings, not his virtues." By this stage,

Armida has begun to realize what sort of religion it is that the Irish could respond to. This view is strengthened by Connal's eventual concept of divinity: "As we approach death, we are lost in the idea of the divine immensity, and our own existence, proud as we are, ceases to have importance in our eyes....we are insects struggling in the flood of time; it passes on, and our struggles do not even create a dimple in  
 43  
 this tide." Connal's sense of divinity comes closest to expressing Maturin's own, and it is significant that with this view, Connal has in fact transcended the conflict of racial identity. In his eyes, man's ultimate conflict is with his destiny. This final concern with the Infinite initiates Maturin's pre-occupation with this subject in his later novels. In The Milesian Chief, however, he tackles the problems of Ireland's immediate destiny within a context shaped by sixty years of native violence and British bullheadedness.

In both The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief, the Church of England and its ministers represent the only socially purposeful characters within a chaotic Irish society, but their treatment differs in each case. In The Wild Irish Boy, Maturin has described the example

of curate Corbett's Christianity as the distinguishing feature in Ormsby's education as a new type of social leader in Ireland. Corbett, aware of Westmoreland's and the Anglo-Irish landlords' political and economic opportunism, provided Ormsby with a rational and unselfish discipline based upon the tenets preached by the Church of England. Because Ormsby had no preconceptions about how to act, Corbett's influence elevated him above his tumultuous peers. In The Milesian Chief, the Church of England minister, St. Austin, has no direct influence upon Connal because Connal has been trained thoroughly and exclusively in the Gaelic tradition, and has irrevocably aligned his fate with its. Unaware of what St. Austin represents, Connal must die with his obsolete order. Although St. Austin and his daughter Rose do not participate in the heroic action of the narrative, they do supply both a moral and a rational foil against which the other characters' actions must be judged, and an intellectual or physical retreat from their otherwise passionate lives. Rose, for example, warns Armida against responding to Connal and his mysterious destiny for the sake of fulfilling romantic fantasies, but Armida rejects this advice and must die. Likewise, St. Austin performs the marriage ceremony and provides a honeymoon retreat for Desmond and Ines. These two acts give Desmond and Ines idyllic albeit brief repose from their otherwise frantic lives. In doing these things, St. Austin and Rose try to alleviate some of the needless anguish which the other characters cause for themselves by their immediate and



irrational responses to events and circumstances around them. Furthermore, it is significant that neither St. Austin nor Rose is drawn into the turmoil. Because they live in terms of sound and unselfish Christian principles, both remain aloof from the main conflict. They, alone, survive. This type of character -- the selfless Christian represented by St. Austin and Rose -- recurs in all Maturin's later novels: Asgill and Eva in Women; Immalee, and the minister of "The Lovers' Tale" in Melmoth; and Genevieve and Pierre in The Albigenses. In all these cases, they provide the tranquil and rational core of society in the midst of the chaos caused by various types of opportunism -- political, economic, and even theological.

Unlike his first two novels, The Milesian Chief was well-received, a factor which was to complicate Maturin's life. Although there are no contemporary reviews available, several early biographers record that it not only "had considerable circulation," but that it  
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"received encomiums from many of the leading critics." Only one critic mentions the political ramifications of this novel, and this evaluation recurs in the introduction to the 1892 edition of Melmoth the Wanderer:  
"Except in the descriptions of scenery the influence of Mrs. Radcliffe is slight. Maturin's political bias is strongly marked in the delineation  
45  
of Connal the hero." This bias, although not mentioned in earlier reviews, perhaps accounts for its local fame. The biographer in the

New Monthly Magazine implies that although Maturin published his first three novels under the pseudonym of Dennis Jasper Murphy, it was The Milesian Chief which exposed Maturin -- at least locally -- as being the writer. That Maturin made money from this novel was timely, in view of his financial situation. However, the fact that he had become known as a writer led Maturin to fear that his chances for preferment were doomed forever. This fear paralysed further efforts at novel-writing for six years. The Milesian Chief, then, marks the end to the first of two stages of novel-writing. Later, he was to compose three more novels. Each, in some way, reflects one of the first three; that is, The Fatal Revenge is a limited prototype for Melmoth the Wanderer. The Wild Irish Boy anticipates Women, or Pour et Contre, and The Milesian Chief anticipates The Albigenes. Maturin's attention to tensions within Irish society in particular in the first three novels gives way to a depiction of tensions within mankind's religious aspirations in the last three. But in each case, the latter three reflect contemporary Irish society. The change in his goals and in his approach to fiction results from a partial resolution to the conflict within Maturin himself; that is, should he strive to be a clergyman or a writer. We must now examine the six chaotic years which separate The Milesian Chief from Women.

#### IV

1812 - 1818

#### From The Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott and Charles

Robert Maturin (1937) edited by Fannie Ratchford and William MacCarthy, it becomes apparent that between 1812 and 1818, a period in which he published no novels, Maturin was partially educated in the craft of practical living by Sir Walter Scott. Up to 1812, Maturin had been sensitive to his prospects for advancement within the Church of England, and had tried to hide the fact that he wrote fiction, a pursuit which he felt the Church condemned. But he also felt compelled to express his understanding of both Ireland's social and spiritual problems as well as his idea of religion. In other words, he attempted to be a loyal servant to an identifiably English institution first, and to comment, under the pseudonym of Dennis Jasper Murphy, as a concerned and informed Anglo-Irishman, upon Ireland's problems. Up to this point in his career, he used Ireland's social problems as his subject-matter, and relegated criticism of Ireland's religious problems to a minor position in his work, except, of course, in The Fatal Revenge, where the religious issue is disguised by the gothic form. When he began his correspondence with Scott in 1813, he had already determined to augment his income by writing, even if it meant

dismissal from his curacy. Scott, however, consistently advised against precipitating the loss of his only certain income by antagonizing his superiors. Maturin therefore started several projects, but failed to complete any of them. It is during this six-year lull in his novel-writing career that Maturin's sense of identity as a controversialist was regularized, a factor which in 1818 enabled him to begin publishing analyses of both the social and spiritual problems that he found in Ireland. The result is clearly discernible in the change from the primarily social emphasis of his first three novels to the primarily theological emphasis of his second three. Maturin's correspondence as published by Ratchford and MacCarthy makes it possible to reconstruct the events as he experienced them in the six-year period which separates the publication of The Milesian Chief in 1812 and that of Women in 1818.

To support his family, Maturin intended to keep his curacy in the Established Church, although his hopes for advancement had dwindled, and to augment his income by tutoring students for Trinity College. Nevertheless, he strove diligently to establish himself in episcopal favour. Until he began corresponding with Scott, however, most of his actions were wasted because they appeared offensive to his superiors.

His tutoring plan appeared very promising to Maturin. First, he was convinced that his own academic accomplishments qualified him

pedagogically for the task. Further, as an established member of a "grave" profession, he fulfilled the social requirements. And finally, since clergymen in general pursued this career, he felt that the Church Establishment could take no offence. But, because he felt "compelled to support the appearance of a Gentleman in... person and family in hopes of not repelling those who might employ... [him] as a tutor...",<sup>1</sup> this plan proved to be initially expensive. His tutorial career began shortly after the loss of his father's support in 1809, and hovered between modest success and outright failure until 1816, when it ended abruptly. In the meantime, because he sensed that his tutoring was to be temporary,<sup>2</sup> although he hoped otherwise, he sought other teaching positions without success.

By 1813, his tutoring plan insufficiently profitable, Maturin sought further employment in addition to tutoring and preaching. He wrote to Scott, saying, "The Lord Lieutenant has many situations in his disposal both Clerical and Lay, which my settled Residence in Dublin would enable me to avail myself of."<sup>3</sup> He then indicated his general inclinations and qualifications:

There is no situation however humble and laborious which I would not Chearfully undertake with the prospect of independence, I am an accurate accountant, by no means destitute of a general knowledge of business, and my Character, I will proudly say, it can bear the most invidious scrutiny. There are situations in the Castle of small Emolument to which I would most willingly devote my time, as my Clerical duties are principally confined to Sunday. 4

But Maturin's efforts toward professional advancement, additional work or even a new career, were constantly thwarted. He gave Scott one

example:

I am able and most, most willing to labour in the useful Capacity of a teacher, is it not a shame to my Country that I should be left to starve. I solicited for a school with an Endowment of £ 300 a year (a mine to me) in a remote and cheap part of the country, and it was given to a young Man, much my junior, without wife or child, and whose character for scholarship could bear no Competition with mine -- yet I cannot complain of persecution or opposition, I have no Enemies, but I have no friends -- in a word I have no interest, and unexceptionable character and acknowledged academical talent are feeble aids against it. 5

This lack of "interest" was to continue until 1816.

Maturin deliberately sought to avoid affronting his superiors, but his efforts, whatever he himself thought, were judged to be those of an irresponsible man. His first mistake was to remove himself from the curacy in Loughrea, which family interests had found for him, to St. Peter's in Dublin in 1805. He had moved to be closer to the island's literary scene, sparse though this was. His superior vowed to interest himself no more in this impatient ingrate who, he assumed, wanted to step immediately into the limelight and possible advancement. Another obstacle, to which Maturin assigned varying importance, was his espousal of Calvinistic tenets. In this case, however, Maturin was occasionally aware of his status, as he explained to Scott: "I am a high Calvinist in my religious opinions, and therefore viewed with jealousy  
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by Unitarian Brethren and Arminian Masters --".

Scott soon realized that obstructions to Maturin's bids for advancement stemmed not from the rumour that he aspired to literary fame but from his carelessly expressing his religious opinions. His consequent

advice was directed toward tempering Maturin's penchant for antagonizing his superiors. Maturin had told Scott what he considered must be the Bishop's attitude toward him:

--I had the honor of being in the Bishop of Meath's diocese for upwards of a year. He knows me well, and can and will I am convinced bear most favorable attestations to my Character, conduct and abilities --...there is no one to whom I would more readily appeal for a Confirmation of all I have presumed to say of myself. 7

But Maturin had already forgotten that his Calvinism was viewed as being undesirable in a curate of the Church of England. The Bishop, however, remembered these things.

Scott had appealed to the Bishop in Maturin's favour. In replying, negatively, the Bishop described Maturin as "one of those much to be pitied young Men to whom nature has given talents, but not the discretion or the prudence to turn them to profit." He mentioned that "With the religious tenets he professes he cannot look for preferment in the Church of England," he wrote in 1813, "nor ought he, in conscience, to seek employment in it, which he continues to do as a Curate...." 8 The Bishop's practical response appealed to Scott, and although his "interest" had failed, Scott's earlier impression that it was Maturin's Calvinism, not his writing, which endangered him, was confirmed. He therefore sought secular employment for him, this time through "interest" with Lady Abercorn:

There is at Dublin a man of great but eccentric genius named Maturin. His father held an office of emolument in the Post Office, but...lost his situation....The son -- in whom I am interested,

merely from his high talent -- was a clergyman in the diocese of the Bishop of Meath, who tells me that he behaved remarkably well, but held tenets too Calvinistic for the Church, and which were likely to prevent his progress.... Two of his novels fell into my hands and struck me as evincing a strong, though very wild and sombre imagination, and great powers of expression... I think this man really deserving of patronage from his talents, and capable of serving the Duke of Richmond's administration by his pen, should it be thought worth to inquire after him.... If your ladyship can turn the eye of any great person upon him, who may be willing to patronize, I cannot, from the account I hear of Mr. Maturin from the Bishop of Meath, suppose it will be ill-bestowed. 9

But Lady Abercorn was unable to help, and Scott had to be content to guide Maturin through, rather than to release him from, his difficulties.

Scott sensed early that Maturin wanted to forsake his only security, his curacy, in the hope of prosperous and full-time writing. In his first letter, Scott advised him that "the only way to make literary compositions profitable is to be independent of the income they may occasionally produce and to write only when you please and as you please." Stressing a practical approach to life, Scott continued:

"This is only to be attained by the assiduous cultivation of some other profession in the course of which it usually happens that literary reputation honourable & justly acquired will incidentally by [sic] serviceable  
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to the possessor." His advice in future years was consistently that Maturin should keep his curacy and, if possible, should try to advance to greater security through the Church hierarchy. But Scott also advised that Maturin should write as he wished.

Scott first became involved with Maturin in 1810, when, although deploring the type of novel it was, he compassionately reviewed The



Fatal Revenge (1807). By 1810, Maturin had written two novels and felt that at least his first had some strengths. Scott's review encouraged him in this belief. After The Milesian Chief's modest success in 1812, Maturin wrote to Scott in order to assure himself that Scott really believed that The Fatal Revenge displayed some talent. Armed with Scott's confirmation, his ambitions far outstripped his judgement. He prepared to assault the reading public in a variety of literary genres. Each project, however, was to some extent dependent upon Scott's ratification.

In order to retain his curacy and yet earn some extra money, Maturin adopted Scott as his censor. He requested an introduction to "the Editors of a Review, or some periodical work". Scott discouraged  
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 this course. Maturin then described to Scott a romance he was writing:

I am writing at present a poetical Romance, a wild thing that has a Chance of pleasing more than Regular performances... -- tales of superstition were always my favorites, I have in fact been always more conversant with the visions of another world, than the realities of this, and in my Romance I have determined to display all by diabolical resources, out-Herod all the Herods of the German school, and get the possession of the Magic lamp with all its slaves from the Conjuror Lewis himself. 12

In spite of his extreme intentions, the project came to nothing either because he remembered the fate of The Fatal Revenge or because he feared the Church's reaction should his identity become known. He then broached to Scott the idea of compiling some sermons; but again,  
 13  
 Scott vetoed this project as he had the reviewing scheme. Poetry was

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next, but nothing was sent to Scott. Finally, Maturin forwarded him a  
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 play entitled Bertram. Scott approved of it and was instrumental in  
 assuring its successful presentation and publication. Scott had en-  
 couraged poetry, romances, and drama, because of their ostensibly  
 16  
 secular nature, and had vetoed reviews and sermons because he sus-  
 17  
 pected that their theology could be potentially controversial.

Maturin's motives for wanting to publish his sermons were  
 contradictory. In June, 1813, he wrote to Scott that publishing was his  
 only immediate source of income: "I have nothing by me in a finished  
 state, except my sermons --". Maturin's motive in this case was two-  
 fold: first, he needed the money; and second, he hoped to gain some  
 recognition as a writer capable of various kinds of work: "I know  
 they are a drug, but the divinity will please the Calvinistic readers,  
 and the novelty of sermons by the author of a Romance will perhaps pro-  
 17  
 cure more." Scott advised against this project because he knew  
 Maturin had to retain his living; and further, he knew the views of  
 Maturin's Bishop. He phrased his advice with incredible delicacy:  
 "the Bishop of Meath spoke in very handsome terms of your character  
 in every respect, with a tincture of regret at your having entertained  
 [sic] sentiments differing from those of the Church establishment."  
 He embellished his remarks by again suggesting a more worldly approach;  
 this time, to doctrinal matters: "As for myself I think all Christian  
 creeds good which convey the Christian morality in purity and do not  
 18  
 much trouble myself about their abstract doctrines." Nonetheless,

he held out the prospect of interesting some publisher.

Maturin acknowledged Scott's advice by altering his approach. Instead of enticing the public with the novelty of sermons and romances by the same author, he claimed he wanted to demonstrate to his superiors that he was a capable clergyman: "I would indeed be glad to print them [the sermons], if it was only to prove that I can do something beside write Romances, and never did that voluntarily." <sup>19</sup> Although he had evidently forgotten the possible doctrinal objections to his sermons in his enthusiasm to placate his superiors, Scott had not; and in his subsequent letter of September 1, 1813, Scott cautioned: "to publish any thing at this moment which might give rise to bigotted or interested persons to represent you as in any respect differing from the received opinion of the majority of the Church of England would be imprudent to say the least...." <sup>20</sup> As an alternative, Scott offered to try to interest influential people in Maturin's tutoring establishment. Because these hopes were limited, however, Scott emphasized Maturin's dependence upon his clerical position, a status which was constantly deteriorating. Again, in November, Scott felt obliged to admonish him:

In the mean while for Gods sake take care of giving further offence in matters of doctrine, for although your own opinions are stuff of the conscience & not to be interfered with, yet I should think no speculative point of religious belief ought to be imprudently brought forward. <sup>21</sup>

In order to help Maturin avoid dismissal from the Church, Scott encouraged him to concentrate upon writing romances.

In 1814, Maturin offered Scott a drama, one which Scott felt had potential. Maturin, however, disappointed by Kemble's indifference to it, asked Scott if he thought it could be published together with some poetry.<sup>22</sup> He had contemplated having it produced in Dublin but decided against it. He based this decision upon his professional anonymity: "I...formed the intention of offering it to the Dublin manager,...but afterwards reflected that it might be injurious to my character, as a Clergyman and still more as a teacher, one of my pupils having been removed on the bare report of my having written a play."<sup>23</sup> He felt certain that to be recognized as a writer would have removed the only two incomes -- his curacy and his students -- since The Milesian profits. Scott, however, did not see recognition as a danger and, to assuage Maturin's fears, suggested that the play be produced in London. In this, Maturin concurred. Scott therefore showed it to Byron. Byron was enthusiastic and, after numerous revisions, had it produced at Drury Lane.<sup>24</sup>

At first glance, Scott's advice to Maturin not to publish anything containing anti-Establishment religious sentiments appears as helpful as his advice to publish romances, poetry, and drama appeared harmful. Maturin abandoned both the projects vetoed by Scott and those Scott had encouraged. Occasionally realizing that his superiors found his religious opinions distasteful, he remained convinced that advancement was blocked because of growing local knowledge of his literary aspirations. The Church's reaction to Bertram suggests,

however, that Scott's perceptions were more astute than Maturin credited.

Bertram disturbed the Church Establishment not so much because a curate was the author, as Maturin had feared, as because it expressed sentiments which the Bishops viewed with suspicion, as Scott had feared. The Honourable George Lamb, a director of Drury Lane, wrote to Maturin on June 15, 1816, to assure him that secular society supported him:

I am extremely sorry that you should be so unjustly harrassed merely for exercising those talents which it would be a crime to suffer to lye dormant.

I have instantly made applications that will, I hope, tend to avert the censure you anticipate....25

Lamb wrote to Lord Palmerston who, together with Murray, Scott, Lamb, and others, interpreted the Establishment's reaction as serious. Palmerston wrote to Peel and, enclosing an account which Maturin had sent to Lamb, explained:

-- Pray if you possibly can, exert yourself in behalf of this poor gentleman: I do not ask you to read his Tragedy which however is really the production of a man of considerable genius. But do mollify the Hibernian Bench of Bishops....26

The controversy continued, and on July 4, the Morning Chronicle printed this information:

A private letter from Dublin states, that the Rev. Mr. Maturin, the author of Bertram, is likely to be deprived by his Bishop of a small living which he now has, in consequence of his having written that tragedy. It was considered a harsh and bigotted proceeding in the church of Scotland, which is more strict than that of England, to have degraded Mr. Home, for having written the tragedy of Douglas. 27

By this date, the issue had become confused. It was not so much that a clergyman had written Bertram as that the play itself had been  
 28 deemed immoral. Regardless, the results of the publicity were positive. In view of Maturin's insignificant position in the Church hierarchy, the Establishment's threat of dismissal was deemed excessive. This threat was rescinded, and Lamb responded to this news which was sent to him by Maturin himself:

The receipt of your letter and the news contained in it of the omission of all censure at the visitation has given me the sincerest pleasure. I have no doubt that some intention hostile to you has been entertained.... Having been omitted at this visitation, I think it impossible that the subject can be taken up on any future occasion. 29

Lamb was correct, and by the end of 1816, Maturin had achieved sufficient independence to enable him to write as he wished and without fear of dismissal.

After the Church clarified its position, Maturin's writing career took a positive direction. In addition to gaining immunity from either dismissal or advancement in the Church, he rapidly acquired both social and business experience. The first evolved from both his first visit to  
 30 London and his assimilation into Lady Morgan's Dublin coterie. The second, of even greater significance, developed from his increasing business acumen in dealing with publishers. Using both facets of this social maturity, Maturin created conditions favourable to accommodate his writing ambitions; this resulted in the four most productive years of his life -- 1817 to 1820 -- after which only The Five Sermons and The Albigenses appeared.

Expressing his intense desire to be a recognized and popular writer, in 1808 Maturin wrote in his dedication to The Wild Irish Boy: "No man covets obscurity, yet I would not willingly emerge from mine, till I am called forth, and feel that I deserve to be called forth, that society owes me something, and is solicitous to repay me, that I have  
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a place and a name on earth." Although it took eight years, Maturin's invitation to London to witness Bertram's success appeared to be the exact fulfilment of those stated conditions. Yet his brief appearance in London was a disappointment for him. For example, describing it to Scott, he explained: "I quitted London (where I staid only a week) on the first of June, indeed I know not why they pressed my going over with such importunity; Kean I had seen often before, and the rest of the Corps dramatique remind me of Shakespeare's wilderness of  
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Monkies --". Further disappointments accrued when Murray failed to reprint Bertram with Maturin's dedication to Scott and other corrections. But the problem went deeper. Maturin's sense of security had once again been assailed because he remained uncertain of what had been expected of him by London society. On June 22, 1816, Murray received an explanation:

I am given to understand, from all sides, that I have not been so well treated as I ought in another quarter. I know not how to act.... I have still some gratitude left, to send my best respects to Mrs. Murray, and to assure you that to your friendly and hospitable attention I am indebted for the only pleasant hours passed during my sojourn in London. 33

Two months later, writing again to Murray, Maturin remained uneasy:

I am infinitely obliged by your having the goodness to assure me that the impression I made was favourable, but I confess I want all the evidence of your testimony to prove it. I went over, not expecting much, and came back receiving nothing, not even common civility, which in certain quarters I surely was entitled to as an invited stranger. 34

Although Maturin sensed Murray's assurances were exaggerated, his actual visit allowed him to observe and to experience fashionable life personally, and he no longer had to gather his impressions and materials from newspapers. His new-found literary popularity and his economic and professional status with the Established Church encouraged an audacious self-assurance of which he had never before been capable of exploiting. Furthermore, Scott now changed his attitude to Maturin 35 somewhat and encouraged him to think of himself primarily as a writer. Not only did he hint that Maturin's early novels might be reprinted because of his current popularity, but when Maturin again needed money, Scott suggested he write for periodicals: "I am sure John Murray would be happy of your aid to give a literary article for the Quarterly....

You have the choice of your own subject & of your own mode of treating 36 it...." Although in 1813 he had discouraged writing for periodicals as a source of income for Maturin, by 1817 the time was ripe because

37 "You have a name... & that is a great deal --". But he knew

Maturin's propensities, and advised: "They are zealous high-church 38 folk & therefore you should not take a controversial article --".

Although Maturin honoured Scott's advice, Murray considered him an incompetent writer and, after much rewriting by the publisher, only



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two articles appeared.

The following year, Scott changed in a similar way his advice in regard to the publication of Maturin's Sermons (1819). In 1813, Scott had vetoed the scheme as he had the idea of contributing to periodicals. By 1818, however, Maturin's hitherto delicate situation

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had changed. Determined to capitalize upon the recent success of Women, or Pour et Contre (1818), published by Constable, he not only offered that publisher the opportunity of buying the Sermons, but he tried to get him to outbid Murray for them, a technique he later tried -- unsuccessfully -- with Fredolfo. Further, he advised

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Constable how to deal with them to greatest mutual advantage:

I have lately thought that publishing my sermons some of which have been admired here -- just at this juncture might have a good effect -- sermons I know are drug jobs, but coming right [?] along with a work of imagination by [the] same author, and proceeded by a sma [il] biographical sketch they might do something --42

Constable agreed to publish them for £ 100, with minor but significant alterations in the preface. Scott again appealed to Maturin's neophyte's sense of practicality:

Constables [sic] partner... showed me a passage in the preface.... Frankly I do not like it for several reasons. In the first place the public will, with their usual malignity, set down your complaint to disappointment, and no man would willingly be said or supposed to harbour such a motive for censuring the establishment he belongs to. 2ndly The same complaint applies to all professions.... Lastly, I hope before I die to see you a good jolly Dean, or something better, and there is no need to publish a diatribe which you may in that case be sorry for. They are all very true, but the truth is of that kind which need not be spoken -- 43

Maturin retracted the offensive statement, and the Sermons sold suf-

ficiently well to be republished in 1821.

From 1818 until Maturin's death in 1824, Scott continued to encourage him to write, and to edit Maturin's directly anti-Establishment statements. Maturin had not only tasted success, but he thought he had found a way to influence his publishers, a technique which will be examined in Chapter VI. <sup>44</sup> The fact that he had gained a "name" after Bertram's success gave him the confidence to write novels again. Two of his final three novels he intentionally designed to antagonize some segment of the public, although, with Scott's help, he avoided directly affronting the Church Establishment. For these reasons, and counting upon his popularity, Maturin foisted his peculiar vision of life upon the reading public with relative success until his death.

V

WOMEN, OR POUR ET CONTRE

I

Maturin's theological security and new-found self-assurance, both of which resulted from the success of Bertram in 1816, coincided with a change in the general situation in Ireland itself. Until 1815, the Union was actively resented by the majority of Anglo-Irishmen -- including Maturin -- for several reasons: Britain's "divide and rule" policy was retained, a policy simplified by the exodus of Anglo-Irish political leaders to London and the subsequent economic recession. The resultant civil chaos led to censorship and, because of sporadic outbreaks of violence, to a British military occupation. In 1815, however, England's victory at Waterloo marked the end of the Napoleonic Era and, therefore, of the threat of a French invasion of Ireland. Further, it led to the "disbandment of the (largely Catholic) militia"; that is, to the symbolic disarming of the native Catholic population. The result was that "Protestant interests, high and low, felt their position to have been made secure."<sup>1</sup>

This general sense of security is significant when considered in relation to Maturin's novels. His well-defined status within the Church of England establishment gave him the liberty to write fiction for the first time. Furthermore, the altered situation in Ireland

forced him to change his subject-matter. He no longer sought to describe Ireland's various destinies, because, with the events of 1815 and 1816, his role as a commentator on Irish culture and on the specific identity of the proper Irishman had vanished. From this point, his chief concern was with man's individual destiny.

Two of the most important features of Maturin's life at this juncture were his sanguine expectations as a writer and the fortunate circumstances under which he composed Women. Bertram, of course, stood as the key to his future, because, by it, he had earned a "name".<sup>2</sup> As well as achieving his ecclesiastical independence, this notoriety accomplished three things of immediate importance. First, his second drama, Manuel, was produced in 1817 and, although it failed in the theatre, Murray published three editions of the play in 1817. Second, each of the two major London theatres ordered or agreed to accept a play from him.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Maturin's new fame drew the attention and generosity of a Canterbury bookseller named Smith. Maturin explained this last encouraging circumstance to Scott: "I had almost forgot to mention that a most friendly and liberal man . . . , to whom I am totally unknown, has written to offer to sustain the expence of printing any work I may send to the press as far as £ 50 or 60 which I imagine will cover the expence<sup>4</sup> of De Courcy." Maturin, of course, availed himself of this offer. There are, however, more significant events surrounding the production of Women, events which influence his treatment of the

subject-matter.

In a letter to Archibald Constable, the publisher of Women, Maturin accounted for another side of his new-found self-confidence and for the generally propitious circumstances for writing Women: "I am not vain of the very humble talents I possess, but I am conscious that I can furnish my publisher with plays, novels [,] contributions to a periodical work, or more serious productions if required." His plays spoke for themselves. Several of his "articles" had, reluctantly, been accepted by periodicals.<sup>5</sup> It was the "serious productions", however, for which Maturin found most encouragement at this point in time.

While anticipating the publication of Women, Maturin also persuaded Constable to publish some of his sermons. These had been "inscribed by permission to the Dean of Derry [,] brother to the Attorney General...."<sup>7</sup> As this inscription indicates, Maturin's position within the Church of England establishment in Ireland was becoming more secure; more important, however, is the undertone of encouragement for him to write of religious matters. It is necessary at this point to delve into the religious background to clarify Maturin's intentions in both the writing of Women and the publishing of some of his sermons.

By 1816, the two chief religious factions in Ireland -- Roman Catholic and Protestant -- had become four: the Catholic establishment remained as it had been for centuries, but the Protestant party fragmented into Anglican, Presbyterian, and Evangelical Methodist, this last being

known also as "Black Presbyterian". The Presbyterians operated largely in the north-east part of Ireland, well out of Maturin's way. The Catholic clergy had become more restive as emancipation efforts gained momentum, but they posed no immediate threat at this time. The Methodists, however, fragmented the religious balance of power because, in 1816, their evangelical party severed an uneasy connection with the Established Church, and left only a minority of "primitive" Methodists in communion with it. To many Anglo-Irish Protestants, this splinter group posed a considerable threat to Protestant religious security.

The actual threat rested in the different programmes for the conversion of the Catholics espoused by the Evangelical Methodists and the Anglicans. The Established Church operated under the assumption that conversion of the Catholics was inevitable in view of the intellectual and social advantages of the Anglican brand of Protestantism. The Evangelicals, however, preferred a more direct and active programme:

The evangelicals were concerned with individual souls, to them it was theological treason to leave their neighbours in ignorance of the truth. Catholicism, with its array of false doctrines, its crafty clergy, and neglect of the scriptures seemed to Irish evangelicals a great barrier between the bulk of Irishmen and real Christianity. And if anything was needed to reinforce their theological loathing for Romanism it was their conviction that it was responsible for retarding the country's economic progress. 8

This combination of theological and economic fervor led to a vigorous drive, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, to convert the native Catholic population:

During the first thirty years of the century no fewer than five

national societies for supplying the spiritual needs of the Irish people were set on foot, the Hibernian Bible Society (1806) which in twenty-three years circulated 209,000 bibles, the London Hibernian Society, the Irish Society (1818) for educating the Gaelic-speaking Irish and distributing bibles, the Religious Tract and Book Society (1810) which in ten years distributed 4,400,000 tracts, and the Sunday School Society for Ireland (1809) which in twenty years distributed 260,000 bibles and half a million spelling books. 9

This upsurge of religious and theological activity on the part of the Evangelicals disturbed the otherwise complacent Established Church, especially when, in 1816, the Evangelicals broke away and became a rival body.

This portentous separation provided Maturin with ideal material for a novel. He was more or less independent of ecclesiastical censure, and yet he sought ways to ingratiate himself with his superiors. He could be topical, and topicality had been a feature of his first three novels. Perhaps more important, he could write of what he considered true religious direction and feeling. Combined with his new self-confidence was the public encouragement to write, and the Dean of Derry's tacit approval of his theological interests. These circumstances produced ideal conditions for composing a novel about contemporary Ireland. In 1817, therefore, in the midst of a recession and a minor famine in  
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Ireland, he began his fourth novel, Women.

The plot of Women has a direction and unity new to Maturin's novels. The story begins on a November evening in 1813. A coach from a remote Irish province breaks down five miles from Dublin. One of the passengers is Charles De Courcy, a seventeen-year-old young man

of property who is on his way to the "University of Dublin" to finish his education. He determines to walk the remainder of the way. On the outskirts of Dublin, he is passed by a carriage from which he hears the cries of a girl in distress. He gives chase and, after a lively confrontation with a fanatical Irish peasant woman in whose cottage the kidnapped victim had been placed, De Courcy restores the girl to her guardian, Mr. Wentworth of Dublin. The exertion, however, leaves Charles ill, and he is nursed to health by Montgomery, a Methodist friend.

During convalescence, De Courcy accompanies Montgomery to a Methodist chapel, and there he encounters Eva, the girl whom he had saved from the Irishwoman. They recognize each other, and De Courcy realizes that he is now in love with her. He is invited to visit the Wentworth household which consists of Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth, and Eva. Mr. Wentworth, a former businessman, devotes all his energies and efforts to the Methodist cause; Mrs. Wentworth, a warm and kind woman, is also deeply religious, and she is responsible for her husband's recent conversion to Methodism. Eva is their timid, delicate, and genuinely religious niece. Because of his amatory interest in Eva, Charles becomes a constant visitor, but in his courtship he has a trying time of it. Mr. Wentworth and his cronies violently debate theology. Charles becomes extremely frustrated in this atmosphere and cannot seem to communicate with Eva because she devotes most of her energy to her religion. He withdraws within himself, becomes ill, and is again nursed



by Montgomery.

During his fever, he raves about his unrequited love for Eva. Montgomery, who also loves Eva, struggles with his own aspirations, and finally decides to act in Charles' interests. He therefore approaches one of De Courcy's guardians, an aging Church of England clergyman, Asgill, who informs the Wentworths of De Courcy's passion. Mr. Wentworth is impressed with De Courcy's prospects, and the marriage negotiations are successful. Charles is now accepted as Eva's suitor, but because he is only seventeen, and Eva but fifteen, Mr. Wentworth imposes a three year delay on their wedding plans. Upon learning of his guardian's endeavours, Charles begins to regain his health. During his second convalescence, he once again becomes a constant visitor to the Wentworth household.

In the ensuing several months, Charles tries to learn more about his intended mate, but still remains as frustrated in his intentions as before. Wentworth determines to convert De Courcy to the family's religious views, and all discussion focusses upon this goal. During these months, Charles learns more about the unsystematic and anti-intellectual religious persuasions of his fiancée's guardians than he does about Eva. He is a budding young man of the world, and Eva's unworldliness and her gentleness, combined with her religious sincerity, eventually dampen his ardour. He attempts to broaden her awareness of the world by introducing her to literature and the arts. In these efforts, however, he

fails. He grows more frustrated and restless every day. In the meantime, Mme. Dalmatiani, Europe's foremost singer and actress, arrives in Dublin to give a series of concerts. Alienated from Methodism by Wentworth's bullying, from Eva by her reticence, and from their house by its cloistered atmosphere, De Courcy determines to visit the theatre. He visits the theatre with Lady Longwood, his second guardian's wife, and her two daughters, and becomes personally acquainted with Zaira, as Mme. Dalmatiani is known to her friends. Zaira's habits of life contrast sharply with those of the Wentworths, and he is irresistibly drawn to this luxurious and sophisticated woman who is very much what he had tried to educate Eva to become. Zaira is no common actress. She is independently wealthy as well as being a consummate artist. She lives by her own moral code of behaviour. Her intellectual and social life appeals more strongly to Charles' immediate desires than does Eva's restricted religious life. His visits to the Wentworths' house, therefore, grow less and less frequent as his adoration of Zaira increases. De Courcy and Zaira are constantly together and, on one excursion to the Wicklow mountains, they encounter the same fanatical Irishwoman who was involved with Eva's abduction. The wildly colourful old woman feels that Zaira is vaguely familiar to her, although nothing immediately comes of this suspicion. Meanwhile, news of De Courcy's infatuation with Zaira reaches Eva's ears.

Through a variety of coincidences, she visits the theatre and witnesses Zaira's powers and attractions. Eva

concedes that she has lost Charles. At this stage, Zaira's performances come to an end, and she decides to visit Paris. Impulsively, De Courcy determines to accompany her and to forsake Eva. After a struggle, Zaira agrees, but she imposes the restriction that they are to forestall marriage for one year. During this period, she intends to "develop" Charles' "soul" with literature and science.

They arrive in Paris in May, 1814, on the eve of Waterloo and at the height of the social season. In spite of Zaira's efforts to entertain and to educate Charles, he begins to tire of living in her shadow, and finds amusement in the company of beautiful and less intellectual women. Not only does his adoration find a new outlet, but he learns several shattering details about Zaira's background: she has been married for many years and is said to have had a child. Charles' image of Zaira as the perfect woman is destroyed, in spite of her manifold efforts to recombine the fragments. At this juncture, too, Montgomery appears with the news that Eva is dying of grief because of her love for De Courcy. In an impulsive fit of repentance, De Courcy determines to leave immediately for Ireland.

De Courcy hurries to the Wentworths' house and encounters Eva in the garden. However, she swoons and is carried away. In spite of his many letters and supplications, De Courcy is not permitted to see Eva again. He does realize, however, that she had, in fact, loved him and that her love -- selfless and unpossessive -- had really been stronger

than that offered by Zaira. But this realization comes too late because Eva is mortally ill. In despair, De Courcy also becomes seriously ill.

In the meantime, Zaira's only tie to life has gone with De Courcy's departure. Her desire to perform deserts her, and she finds no consolation in philosophy. Yet she is not entirely abandoned for she cannot convince herself to commit suicide and she fails to respond to the ideas of a French philosopher of atheism, Cardonneau. However, she remains incapable of experiencing religious regeneration. She ultimately follows De Courcy to Dublin where she can only seek relief in an environment of physical poverty which somehow approximates her own spiritual dearth. It is in the squalid section of Dublin that she comes closest to religious life by performing acts of charity. Here she encounters the fanatical old Irishwoman who had abducted Eva and had felt that she recognized Zaira. This woman is dying, but she recovers sufficient sanity and strength to provide an explanation to her actions.

This old woman confesses that she is Zaira's mother who had tried to educate Zaira in the Catholic religion, but had been expelled from her home by her husband. Zaira's profligate father, who tolerated no religion, had Zaira trained in all the arts, especially music, for which he hired a talented Italian musician. Zaira and this teacher were secretly married, and she gave birth to a girl. Outraged at this immorality, Zaira's hypocritical father evicted the music teacher, Zaira,

and their daughter. Zaira's husband compelled her to give the child and some money to an Evangelical family in Dublin. They then went to Italy. In the meantime, Zaira's mother, by now insane, determined to seize Zaira's daughter and to raise her in the Catholic religion, but had been foiled by De Courcy. Zaira's daughter had, then, been brought up by the Wentworths. Her confession complete, the old woman dies. Zaira now knows who her daughter is, and hastens to the Wentworth household. She arrives at the moment of Eva's death, a death for which she feels responsible. At Eva's funeral, she stands across the casket from Charles, but they do not communicate. Charles dies shortly after this. There are now no consolations for Zaira in society, and she cannot achieve the religious love of Eva. She can only live out her life in a loveless and faithless vacuum.

In order to understand the theme of Women, it is necessary to consider the novel's structure. Some critics state that the narrative is divided into two parts which focus, respectively, upon Eva's life in Dublin and Zaira's in Paris. Idman, for example, explains the structure as follows:

The book can be divided into two principal parts, the first of which comprises the events happening before Zaira's journey to Paris with De Courcy, while the second is devoted to the analysis of her mental sufferings after her separation from him; the experiences of De Courcy in the French metropolis, and the closing scenes in Dublin, are allowed comparatively little space. The description of the struggles of Zaira clearly is of secondary importance for the development of the plot, where it thus makes a hiatus of extraordinary length. 11

Idman bases this criticism on the assumption that De Courcy is the principal actor, and Women <sup>12</sup> concerns only the development of an understanding of his character. But when Maturin told Scott that "the whole interest <sup>13</sup> [of Women] depends on the Catastrophe"-- that is, to Zaira's adventures in Dublin after her return from France,-- it appears that Zaira is the principal character. In other words, the catastrophe completes Maturin's analysis of Zaira's character as it is developed in the rest of the novel.

Women can be divided into three principal parts -- Eva, De Courcy and Zaira in Dublin, Zaira and De Courcy in Paris, and Zaira in Dublin -- and each section elucidates a part of Maturin's theme. In the first part, Eva epitomizes the naturally religious personality which depends for its strength upon the principles of behaviour derived from the Bible. By contrasting, in this section, her unobtrusive piety with the factitious religious behaviour of the Evangelical Methodist community in Dublin in which she lives, Maturin establishes the criterion by which the Methodists must be judged. In the second section, Maturin draws the reader's attention to Zaira who epitomizes the social personality which depends for its strength primarily upon the intellect and upon art. As in the case of Eva, Zaira becomes the criterion by which social behaviour must be judged. But Zaira's triumphs must also be measured against Eva's, because Zaira ultimately seeks the same comfort in religion which Eva experiences. To dramatize this concern Maturin

devotes the last section to Zaira's spiritual tragedy, a tragedy highlighted by her inability to attain the same consolation in religion which Eva attains. Maturin, however, is not interested in the tragedy for itself, but in the reasons behind the existence of such a tragedy. To this end, he describes, in this final section, the inadequacies of Zaira's education, the fact that she had been trained exclusively in the arts which prepared her for society and that any study of the Bible had been excluded. If we believe Maturin's statement, therefore, that the meaning of Women is dependent upon the conclusion, then each section is an important stage in the development of his theme. In other words, it appears that Women is not simply an analysis of jilted love as Idman<sup>14</sup> and Scholten indicate. Rather, Women is a story about the tragedy of the education which Zaira had received, an education which prepared Zaira for social but not for spiritual life.

Maturin's concern with education in Women finds parallels in several sermons which he gathered and wrote during the novel's composition. From these, we learn that he classified education in two main categories: that founded upon the principles of morality and behaviour derived from the Bible, and that derived from worldly knowledge and opinion. As far as Maturin was concerned, education must be founded unequivocally upon the Bible, and where the Bible is ignored, education of the personality is incomplete. In a social education, for example, "The world is made to shout all its intoxicating, seductive, maddening tones in one ear, while eternity is scarce suffered to whisper in the

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other...."

In Women, De Courcy is the one character whose education is obviously incomplete, but it is not the process of his education which Maturin is interested in so much as the limitations of his models. On the one hand, Zaira attracts him toward the world, and Eva, on the other, beckons him toward the life of the spirit. When Maturin poses the question, "What in the language of the world is a good education?" and provides this answer: "The union of human learning, external accomplishments,  
16  
and the manners of the world," we immediately think of Zaira. Zaira's course of life is also implicit in Maturin's next question: "is this a good education for immortal beings, that confines their thoughts, their cares, their hearts to this world entirely, and leaves not a moment's time, nor an atom's space, for one thought of God, the soul, or eternity?" Zaira's fate and Eva's example provide the fitting answer, which is a rejection of pre-occupation with the cares of this world: "Will you be humble, pure, self-denying, holy, heavenly-minded, as  
17  
Christ your master was?" For both male and female, the choice looms: "If the Baal of Fashion be God -- worship him: but if the Lord be God -- worship him." Ultimately, Maturin believes that "the world will make you renounce the Bible, or the Bible will make you renounce  
18  
the world", and this is precisely what is involved in the contrast of Zaira and Eva.

Maturin establishes the religious theme of Women in the first



section through his depiction of the personality of Eva, and he describes the extent of her education as follows: "She could speak but of the books she had read; those were few, and the habits of her life reared an impenetrable barrier against her acquaintance with others. To her, one book, her Bible, seemed to contain the substance of all others; all other prose was futile, all other poetry falsehood." <sup>19</sup> Although her knowledge is limited, she is guided in life by the Bible; and from it, she had imbibed the very spirit of scriptures: "With her religion seemed to be an instinct, a part of her pure nature...." <sup>20</sup> In other words, she is "humble, pure, self-denying, holy, heavenly-minded," as Maturin felt the true Christian must be.

Eva's education had prepared her to live "above the vicissitudes of life, both from passion and fortune." <sup>21</sup> Her humility is founded upon her sincere love for God; and, as a result, she has neither desire nor time for socializing, or for ostentation. She lives, rather, to serve those less fortunate than herself -- instructing young orphans in Christianity at her own school, or visiting and sharing her faith with old, garrulous, and neglected women. Her faith is inherent in her personality. Thus, when Charles, who loves the image of Eva as he creates it, examines her familiarity with the arts, Maturin explains: "They differed on almost every... subject, but to Charles even this opposition had a charm; for what would have been mere obstinacy in any other female, had in her the attraction of a virtue. It was not for opinion, but for principle, she

contended...." The fruits of her early training are further depicted when De Courcy brings her a book of sketches of "the ruins of Athens". Eva looks briefly at the architectural ruins, and begins to copy the flowers. She perceives De Courcy's disappointment, and justifies her choice:

'These are the work of God, this is the work of man: ... These pillars remind me of nothing but man's efforts to immortalize a temporal existence; to tell the living, in the voice of vanity, that man has been; -- but these flowers will be renewed as long as existence can continue, and are scattered on the grave as a memorial of a life sometimes beautiful, but always transitory, as them.' 23

De Courcy, who at this stage seeks a less ethereal woman, responds:

'And does nature, then, ... only speak to remind us of the infelicity and short duration of life? Why should we not then turn to those brilliant monuments that dignify existence, and give immortality on this side of the tomb? Flowers may fade, but the memory of genius survives many flowers, even the laurel that is strewn on its grave.'

'I love these flowers,' said Eva, answering her own thoughts, not those of Charles; 'God made the country, but man made the town.' 24

Eva herself cannot reply to De Courcy's question because in her frame of reference, it is unanswerable. One chooses either social dicta or the Bible as the basis for life. Eva instinctively selects the Bible and, by extension, venerates God's creations. To Maturin, therefore, Eva represents a living example of the properly educated personality. It is the quality of her life as derived from her Biblical training which makes her character difficult to dramatize because it is unobtrusive and undramatic. Yet these same qualities provide Maturin with the platform upon which to build his satire of less principled and more opinionated Christians, the Evangelical Methodists who frequent the Wentworth

household.

Maturin uses Eva's sincere and socially helpful Christian attitudes as the background against which to explore the religious and social inadequacies of her guardian, Wentworth, and her spiritual director, Macowen. Whereas Eva had early responded to the spirit as well as the letter of the scriptures, neither Wentworth nor Macowen respond to the spirit.

Wentworth had retired from a successful business, had "found his mind utterly vacant", and had been converted totally to his wife's religious views. When De Courcy first meets him, he says of Wentworth: "His manners were repulsive, his understanding narrow, and his principles inflexibly rigid; his mind rather tenacious than strong; what little he knew, he knew thoroughly, and what he once acquired he retained for  
25  
ever." Two acquired things which he retained were his amoral business habits and the tenets of his adopted religion. When De Courcy's guardian appeals to the Wentworths with the news that his ward is pining away because of his desire for Eva, they at first refuse to entertain any such idea because Charles is "of the world". However, upon learning that Charles has an income of £ 3000 per annum, Wentworth begins to think:

Mr Wentworth stood his ground impenetrable. Then she [Mrs. Wentworth]...mentioned Charles's splendid prospects and the temporal advantages that would accrue from the union; but before she could finish the sentence, her conscience checked her, and she suddenly stopped. But this argument, though urged with no strength, (for Mrs Wentworth was truly conscientious,) had more effect than she wished to be aware of on the hearer. Mr Wentworth instantly became silent; his worldly feelings recurred; but a moment after (like a man who mistakes the reverse of wrong for right) he assumed the look and tone of authority which weak minds substitute for argument.... 26

The prospect of Charles' income opened two doors for Wentworth's consideration: first, it made him a worthy target for conversion and, second, it was a characteristic of the Methodist community to aim at marrying sect members to money for the financial improvement of the evangelical cause. This trait is described by Maturin in reference to Macowen, a Tartuffian preacher who "held in the family something like the office of director in a Catholic continental family...."

There is, among the evangelical people, an establishment something like the Court of Wards, abolished under James the First: a determination to dispose of wealthy unmarried females to distinguished professors or preachers, who are not equally favoured by fortune; and the families of the former conceive themselves not only honoured, but benefitted by the exchange. Thus the evangelical system is rapidly assuming the aspect of the papal, and, by the union of intellectual influence with actual wealth, bids fair to rival it in power as well as in pretensions. 27

But it is the way that Macowen had insinuated himself into the family, and the odious and hypocritical nature of his position which Maturin lampoons most thoroughly.

Macowen, it seems, had been an Irish Catholic peasant who had rapidly become the type of spiritual opportunist which Maturin felt the Methodist system encouraged. Charles describes his first impressions of Macowen:

He was tall, but very ungraceful; a strange consciousness of importance mingled itself most uncouthly with his coarse figure and awkward manners...; his voice powerful, but not melodious; most repulsively softened when he addressed females, to whom...he paid obvious attention...But his manners, his habits of disputation, and even his pulpit oratory, powerful as it was, were strongly tinged with the original vulgarity of his origin and nature. 28

His background is next described by Maturin:

He was the son of a poor labourer, the tenant of a wealthy gentleman in Cork, whose wife was evangelical; she instructed the children of her husband's tenants in her own system.... The good lady..., discovering in this lad, maugre his fierce red hair and bare broad feet, evident marks of his being 'a growing and gracious character;' and astonished at the fluency and eloquence with which he repeated his acquired creed, and gave the word of exhortation to his ragged family...proposed a subscription among her friends to enable him to enter the university, and be qualified "to minister at the altar." 29

Maturin never revealed much admiration for the Irish peasantry either in life or in his novels. For an Irish peasant to rise in the world, in Maturin's view, meant that he had to exploit duplicitous and contradictory talents. In Women, Macowen typifies Maturin's view of the basely motivated Irish peasant. Completely ignoble, Macowen can only respond to his own anti-social and partial inclinations:

Macowen entered College; but when once there, his views, as they were called, expanded so rapidly, that no Church Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent, had the good fortune precisely to suit his sentiments on orthodoxy of system, or purity of discipline.... In the meantime, it had been suggested to him that many evangelical females, of large fortune, would not be unwilling to share his fate. This hint, often repeated and readily believed, threw a most odious suavity into his manner; his over-blown vulgar courtesy was like the flowers of the poppy, all glare and stench. Under these circumstances, he had become the intimate of the Wentworth family; and from the moment he beheld Eva, his feelings were what he could not describe, and would not account for even to himself, but what he was determined implicitly to follow. His system took part with his inclinations, and in a short time he believed it a duty to impress her with the conviction that her salvation must depend on her being united with him. 30

As in the case of Wentworth, Macowen's view of religion is divorced from the truly humble and self-denying spirit of Christianity as Maturin saw it. To Macowen, religion is a self-serving proposition; and because

true self-scrutiny is unimportant to him, he is able to divert his earthly feelings for Eva into a religious emotion. When his plans concerning Eva are thwarted by De Courcy, Maturin has Macowen revenge his injured ego on Eva. He prays to the Deity, and uses evangelical religious jargon to cloak his spite:

One night... Macowen... was requested to give 'a word of prayer'. He complied; and whether he now despaired of his prey, or was willing to display his precatory eloquence at her expence, the whole of his supplication was addressed to the Deity through her; he implored the mercy of Heaven for a wanderer who had strayed from the fold; for one 'who had forsaken the guide of her youth, and forgotten the Covenant of her God; who had loved strangers, and after them would go.' And as he went on, aided by the sympathizing murmur of the audience, his memory supplying him with images, and his passions with eloquence, there was not a single metaphor in the Old Testament descriptive of the apostasy of the Jews from their God, that he did not apply to Eva, who, compelled to kneel out this martyrdom, wished to sink into the earth to escape it. This cruel holding her up as an object to a numerous circle, was the most painful trial she had yet experienced. Wentworth thought it excellent, and expressed much hope from the strivings of that godly man in her behalf. Mrs Wentworth thought very differently; her feelings were so much outraged, she could hardly remain on her knees; and when her husband soon after proposed Macowen to be of a party that was to meet at their house, Mrs Wentworth strenuously declared, 'He should not come into their city, nor shoot an arrow there.' And Wentworth was not displeased with her opposition to his wishes, because it was couched in the language of Isaiah, whom Macowen had taught him to call the fifth evangelist. 31

The manner and direction of Macowen's prayer are offensive in their own right; but further, they underline Maturin's own criticism of "extempore prayer". Wentworth's reaction to this brutal assault upon Eva's propriety underlines his own insensitivity to anything but his consciousness of form. The point is especially poignant because Eva had at that moment just returned from instructing her orphans. Maturin

presents here an instructive contrast of values as Macowen lusts after Eva's body and her wealth, while Eva performs good acts in a Christian sense without ostentation and with real Christian charity. Her sense of charity and Macowen's injured ego become Maturin's way of illustrating the wide divergence between the self-indulgence which Evangelical Methodism seemed to encourage on the one hand, and the more reasonable and less aggressive approach of a true Christian on the other. Maturin is making three points here: first, he explores the contrast within the Methodist community by having Eva act in terms of true faith; second, he reveals how "extempore prayer" can be diverted from religious to egoistic purposes; and third, he contends, by implication, that true religion and religious feeling are divorced from business, from social approbation, and from selfishness. Maturin felt that his depictions of Macowen and Wentworth, as representatives of Evangelical Methodists in Dublin, were valid in their own right, in view of what he felt to be their anti-social and irreligious behaviour. However, in terms of the whole novel, they are representatives of only one form of false religion which was as far removed from true religion as was Zaira's way of life.

Zaira is the other major representative of a false religion which results from an incomplete education. At her first appearance, she is an actress who is about to give her final public performance in Dublin. She is totally dissociated from any specific religion. De Courcy reads

about her intended performance while he is visiting the Wentworths. He already knows something about her, and is excited at the prospect of witnessing her perform:

She was a Siddons, a Catalani, a Gabrielli, a La Tiranna, with all the terrible Medea-graces of Cumberland's description. She was all the muses, and all the graces embodied, in the beautiful slender form of a female about 20; but the talent that excited most wonder was her perfect knowledge of the English language and literature, and her marked preference of the characters of English tragedy, which she played alternately with those of the Italian opera. 32

These allusions to Zaira's "Medea-graces", and to her embodiment of "all the muses, and all the graces" are significant because Zaira, like Medea, slays her child, and because the graces were Venus' attendants, while the muses presided over all the arts and sciences, music, and poetry. It is also significant that Zaira is immediately associated with classical mythology or, in terms of her religious pursuits, with pagan mythology. The passage is further significant because Zaira's youthful form deceives De Courcy into believing her to be younger than she really is. Also mentioned is her penchant for tragic acting. These various associations gather significance as the novel progresses and as its main theme is developed.

The inter-relationship between Zaira, Eva, and the Wentworths begins to emerge when De Courcy determines to attend the theatre. Wentworth declaims against it as an iniquitous place:

He cursed stages, stage-players, frequenters and abettors, from Thespis down to Mr Harris and the committee of Drury-Lane, lamp-lighters, scene-shifters, and candle-snuffers inclusive, not forgetting a by-blow at De Courcy for visiting those tents of Kedar.



'What is a theatre?' said he; 'a place where the name of the Deity is never heard but in execration or blasphemy; where, contrary to the commandment of the Lord, (see Deuteronomy, chap.xxii. ver.5.) the women wear men's garments, and the men women's; and where Satan gains so many souls for five pieces of silver a-night, that I suppose he now repents of his prodigality in giving thirty for that of Judas.' 33

When De Courcy leaves the house, Wentworth turns his anger on his niece, Eva:

'And this is the chosen partner of your life! -- these be thy gods, oh Israel! -- A clog upon the wheels of your soul, to drag them back into perdition. I should not be surprised if one day he had the confidence to propose your visiting that temple of Satan along with himself; but first I would see you visit your grave.'

'And are all plays, then, so wicked?' said Eva.

'I know nothing at all about them' said Mr Wentworth. 'I thank Heaven I never read one of them, and trust in his grace I never shall.' 34

Because he is fond of the theatre and the arts in general, De Courcy cannot dismiss this side of life with Wentworth's felicity. He witnesses Zaira's first performance: 'She was in the character of a princess, alternately reproaching and supplicating a tyrant for the fate of her lover; and such was her perfect self-possession, or rather the force with which she entered into the character, that she no more noticed the applauses that thundered round her, than if she had been the individual

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she represented...." It is her "perfect self-possession" which both allures De Courcy and constitutes her fatal flaw. She has no depth of character. She is "sublime and sculpture-like perfection". She is refined intellect and intellectual love, a re-incarnation of "Venus de

36

Medici." De Courcy becomes enthralled by her acquired graces,

and deserts Eva and Dublin for Zaira and Paris.

As Eva provides a yardstick for measuring false religious values, so Zaira provides the social norm for considering worldly accomplishment. When Zaira visits the theatre box of Lady Longwood after her first performance, the latter is ecstatic. The contrast between Zaira's social grace and Lady Longwood's crass motives delineates the latter's inadequate self-possession and her lack of a true sense of decorum:

She advanced, and paid her respects to Lady Longwood...; her language was at once elegant and polite.... Lady Longwood in vain tried to collect her habitual politeness to meet a woman whose claims in society appeared as high as her own, united with such extraordinary talents. She wished to parade as a patroness, and found herself no more than an equal; and as for the Miss Longwoods, not only Italian and French, but all English failed them; -- they bowed and sat in timid awkwardness, consoling themselves by registering every item of her costume in their heart's core, yea, in their very heart of hearts. 37

Zaira's performance and her private graces so overwhelm Lady Longwood that her politeness fails her. Her socialite daughters also find themselves unequal to the task before them and Zaira's fluent knowledge and awareness, both intellectual and social, contrast sharply with the patronizing attitude of Lady Longwood. Lady Longwood's and her daughters' dependence upon novelty and social routine are limitations which Wentworth and Macowen share in a different environment. Like Wentworth and Macowen, the Longwoods are unnatural. When a situation requires spontaneity, they are incapable of responding. At a party for Zaira, the following night, Lady Longwood and her daughters act the parts of social malaprops, in glaring contrast to Zaira's awareness of, yet kindness towards, their

limitations. Dublin's social life appears to be comprised of only social buffoons, but Zaira continues to provide a social norm when she and De Courcy arrive in Paris. By this stage, however, Maturin is no longer satirical; rather, he is delineating social refinement as realistically as possible.

The depiction of Zaira in Dublin is essentially positive because Maturin is not only satirizing the city's socialites, but also drawing attention to the intellectual poverty of the Methodists. But by describing Zaira as all-powerful in a particular social context, he also sets the stage for depicting her inadequacies in the larger and more important religious context. When she and De Courcy arrive in Paris, Maturin describes them as being "intoxicated revellers at life's short banquet  
38  
determined to quaff the poison, and believe it nectar." Their abilities prove to be inadequate to their desires; their life becomes as directionless and as mindless as that of the Longwoods in Dublin because they act as if the present were eternity. Their attitude to life is depicted by Maturin as morally wrong. De Courcy thought "Paris...the city of  
39  
the Gods", and Zaira acts on his impression and tries to convince him that they can find immortality there through intellectual accomplishments. Together, they were "to blend in one delicious draught all that nature, genius, antiquity, and society can offer, and drink...the amreeta cup of immortality, that unites human existence to the divine by the only  
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power that they have in common, the power of the mind." But her plan fails for two reasons: one, she leaves God and religion unaccounted

for; and two, she overlooks De Courcy's personality.

When they arrive in Paris, Zaira forestalls De Courcy's desire to marry immediately by imposing a one year delay on that possibility. Her imposition is not arbitrary; rather, "She wished to develop his character, to mature his intellects, to fix his feelings, before she could entrust her happiness to them." <sup>41</sup> When she tries to accommodate him to her theology and to train him to appreciate her talents, he tires of his secondary role and deserts her. Thrown upon her own devices, she begins to understand the limitations of her intentions and her own character. Her social ego is destroyed, and she appeals to religion for support. But she has not been educated to face these circumstances because she understands nothing of the spirit of religion. In this, her limitations are but a sophisticated version of Macowen's and Wentworth's.

Her newly exposed predicament is contrasted to that of Eva, who is now dying. Each has been stripped of social comforts. Eva, however, clings to her Bible, because the hymns, prayers, and company of the Methodists bear no relation to her own religious feelings in her final hours. Zaira likewise cannot respond to the solace she had hitherto found in the trappings of society or in books, painting, and music; but, <sup>42</sup> in her case, she is ignorant of the Bible. She has, therefore, nothing to depend upon but her intellect. At this stage, when Eva is rejecting Wentworth's offers of theological pamphlets and is reading her Bible instead, Zaira encounters the professed atheist, De Cardonneau. Like Eva with Wentworth, Zaira ultimately rejects modern

opinion as a source of solace. In terms of the theme and structure of the novel, the worlds of Dublin and Paris are now united; in fact, they are the same, and Maturin describes De Cardonneau as "a Macowen  
43  
under a different dispensation." Zaira then examines her religion,  
44  
and finds it has been a "fairweather religion, fit for the happy...."

As she continues her self-analysis while wandering in the woods, she encounters a figure of Christ on the Cross:

As Zaira gazed on this figure, it seemed to live, to speak to her...  
-- 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' She obeyed the call thus echoed from the bottom of her heart; she prostrated herself before the cross. Her spirit was bowed down along with her body, as she exclaimed, 'Oh, my God! accept a heart that has wandered but longs to return to its saviour. Purify it, regenerate it, fill it with the love of you alone. Had it known no other but yours, it had never been almost broken. Let your Spirit descend on it, and aid me to struggle with that image, for which all its pulses have beat, which has been wrapt in its very core. You alone are worthy of that place, which a mortal has too long usurped. Vindicate it for yourself, and set me free. Deliver me into the glorious liberty of the children of God, unconscious of any presence, incapable of admitting any image, but your's; dead to the world, and absorbed in God alone.' 45

This, her first truly religious experience, lasts only a moment before thoughts of De Courcy re-occupy her mind. But this momentary vision is important because, from it, she becomes aware of her religious predicament:

"I cannot make myself religious -- I cannot create the love of God in my soul -- my heart is stone -- my conscience is seared -- the heaven above me is brass, the earth beneath iron. I am cursed with a curse -- not one being, divine or human, in the illimitable creation, can touch my heart with a sentiment of affection." 46

Her inability to love anything not of her own creation or foreign to her immediate environment has limited her to loving worldly things alone.

Maturin, less interested in the fact of her new awareness than in the reasons for her spiritual poverty, explains the background of her entrapment in this way: "An atonement must be made either for us, or by us; and those who have not been taught to look to Calvary, or have looked, and in their pride turned away, must construct a kind of substitute out of their own sufferings",<sup>47</sup> and this is what happens to Zaira. She begins to reconstruct her various ideas of religion, but accomplishes only a fallacious and masochistic blend of Calvinism and Roman Catholicism.<sup>48</sup> Both Calvinism and Catholicism lack the intrinsic spirituality of Eva's religion; and, to finalize the contrast, Maturin makes Zaira return to Dublin.

In the final section of Women, Maturin completes his examination of true and false religion -- analyzed in the first two sections -- by depicting how both Eva and Zaira "die to the world". In the first section, he delineated Eva's responses to society based upon her Christian principles in spite of the example of the false religion espoused by the Methodist community in general and Macowen in particular. In the second section, he dramatized Zaira's responses to society based upon her thoroughly trained intellect as well as how she suffers from her consciousness of her impotent and, therefore, false idea of religion. With Zaira's return to Dublin in pursuit of De Courcy, whom she has unfortunately deified, the principal actors -- Eva and Zaira -- can again be directly contrasted, although they never meet. More important, perhaps, Maturin here provides the details of Zaira's training when

she was the age at which Eva dies. In other words, the narrative action of Women depends for its unity and meaning upon the comparison of Eva's and Zaira's preparation for life during the same time-span in which the foundation for the future is laid.

Zaira's and Eva's education and the examples they had to imitate were based upon antithetical beliefs and practices. On the one hand, Eva was raised in a Christian tradition based, not solely upon the letter of the Bible, but also upon Maturin's concept of Christian charity. When Zaira's mother describes to her the example set by Eva's foster mother, she explains: "Your father gave it [Zaira's daughter] to a woman [Mrs. Wentworth] he knew nothing about, except that she went about <sup>49</sup> helping the poor, and teaching them her own religion..., " and this is precisely how Eva, herself, lives.

Zaira's first fifteen years, on the other hand, had for their example, her father, a man who placed no faith whatever in the spirit of Christianity, as Zaira herself explains: "I had teachers of every language, masters in every art, instructors in every science, and my father illustrating, condemning, and harmonizing every thing into one vast mass of intellectual discipline. I was taught to know every thing but the one <sup>50</sup> thing needful; I was permitted to read every thing but the Bible. " Because of her experiences in France during her search for relief from her sufferings, she now understands her condition as well as the inadequacies of her early training: "In depriving me of heaven, he wished to multiply my ties to earth; and while he took away my birth-right,

aggravated its value by the price he seemed anxious to give it, as if one  
 51  
 world could ever be a balance for the other. " The contrast is finalized.

Eva had learned from Mrs. Wentworth to devote her love and energies toward living in the spirit of the Bible; that is, to living unencumbered by earthly desires and in the hope of eternity. Zaira's "birth-right" of a true spiritual example and discipline was denied her, and she was trained only to burden herself with earthly desires. Because of the nature of her education, Eva triumphs in her death: "That night the dying sufferer, almost sainted, seemed to have a foretaste of the blessedness that awaited her. Her reason wandered, but her heart was awake,  
 52  
 wrapt in a glorious intensity. " Eva has never depended upon her intellect alone, but upon the spirit of religion. She can, therefore, die without regrets about leaving this world. But for Zaira, who was trained to depend solely upon the intellect, the loss of her lover, De Courcy, and her daughter, Eva, deprive her of all her earthly ties, of her only assurances of meaning in life. Both Eva and Zaira die to their respective mortal worlds. However, whereas Zaira's devotion to intellectual accomplishment and her purely social education lead her to pursue a false religion, Eva's love of God and her truly Christian education allow her to pursue a true religion. She alone can die to the world without remorse.

## II

Women became Maturin's most profitable novel to date. As described on page 127 above, a man named Smith paid £80 to cover the printing costs. His publisher



Constable, advanced him £ 130 in July 1817, and suggested a first edition  
 53  
 of two thousand copies. The book's sale was brisk, although no second  
 edition appeared. With the possible exception of Melmoth the Wanderer,  
Women received his most diligent efforts, and his improved circumstances  
 permitted him to devote considerable time to it. Before publication,  
 however, he was anxious about the public's reaction to it.

In the preface to Women, he indicated the direction and method of  
 his efforts, accounting first for the failure of his earlier books:

When I look over those books now, I am not at all surprised at their  
 failure; for, independent of their want of external interest, (the  
 strongest interest that books can have, even in this reading age, )  
 they seem to me to want reality, vraisemblance; the characters,  
 situations, and language, are drawn merely from imagination....  
 In the Tale which I now offer..., perhaps there may be recognised  
 some characters which experience will not disown. Some resem-  
 blance to common life may be traced in them. On this I rest for the  
 most part the interest of the narrative. The paucity of characters  
 and incidents (the absence of all that constitutes the interest of ficti-  
 tious biography in general) excludes the hope of this work posses-  
 sing any other interest. 54

Women's special significance lies in Maturin's attempt to dramatize  
 topics of "external interest" and of "common life" as a means of pre-  
 senting his theological beliefs. Although at first he anticipated that  
 the novel would be published in November 1817, it was not, in fact, pub-  
 lished until April 1818. In the interim, he fretted about its reception.

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It was "wholly unlike any thing I ever attempted before." Realizing  
 that its success would depend mainly upon its plot, he shaped it so that

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"the whole interest depends on the Catastrophe." Yet he feared the

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plot might be too topical: "I fear it will be offensive to some." Two

months earlier, however, he had intended it to offend some: "I think you will be amused by my new novel," he wrote to Scott, "but it will  
58  
set the evangelical world in arms if they read it." He was also concerned about how the general public would respond to the realism he attempted to depict, and herein lay yet another source of anxiety: "I  
59  
was never so anxious about any effort I have made...." Women, then, was a test case for Maturin. He had to prove to himself and his friends that he had promise as a serious novelist, that he could combine controversy and entertainment.

Since Women was neither a typical romance nor an historical novel, many critics mistook the modern flavour of emotional analysis for immorality. The major complaint of the Monthly Review was that the contrast of true and false religion represented in Eva and Zaira, respectively, rendered the latter more socially appealing than the former. This problem was highlighted by the observation that Maturin provided no obvious moral mould in which to cast successful purity. The best example of this tendency lay in the highly sophisticated and intelligent Zaira's unsuccessful debate with Cardonneau. Such a bias, suggested the Monthly critic, gave the reader "the chance of imbibing  
60  
the bane of doubt, without the antidote of conviction." Coupled with this moral laxity on Maturin's part was the intemperance of the "language,  
61  
sentiments, and characters." In spite of his doubts about the book's moral effects, this critic applauded Maturin's humourous depiction of Methodist

pre-occupations. The London Magazine critic, on the other hand, saw Maturin's depiction of the Methodist community not so much as an expression of excellent humour as incipiently immoral satire:

It is difficult to expose, still more so to ridicule, the peculiarities of a sect without in some degree involving the faith upon which all sects are founded; and it is both unfair and perilous to collect together the excrescences of a doctrine, and hold them up to the world as the original substance. Mr Maturin may abjure, may despise the abominations of the 'lady of Babylon' with all the contempt of a genuine monkish adversary; but he has no right to hold up their absurdities as so many specimens of their unmutilated belief-- he has no right to make a rigid family sit for the portraiture of an entire sect, or represent the cruel, hellish, and malignant bigotry of a dark age, and a demoniac system, as the perfect exhibition of a creed with whose genuine principles they are, perhaps, utterly at variance. It is always both unjust and intolerant -- generally dangerous, and in such works, as the present, peculiarly out of place. 62

This critic, aware of Maturin's attempt at realism, thought it a perverse, not to say immoral, caricature of a Methodist clique presented by

63

Maturin as reality. The Quarterly Review critic saw nothing questionable about Women. He felt it was simply worthless: "The great object of the author is to turn his species of writing into ridicule -- to show with how little talent or ingenuity three volumes may be concocted -- to exhibit the monstrous, the impossible absurdities which can be passed off as a plot -- and to expose the raving non-sense which novel

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readers are content to receive as sublimity and pathos." In this critic's opinion, Maturin had aimed neither at topicality nor realism, but had directed all his energies toward parodying the unrealistic nature of contemporary romances and, in attempting this, had surpassed the limits of

his own abilities. The reviewers of the Quarterly, London Magazine, and the Monthly Review questioned Maturin's attempts at realism because they missed -- deliberately in the last case -- the psychological realism attempted in Women. Having collectively attended to a limited, if excusable, concept of 'vraisemblance', they missed the point of the novel.

Nevertheless, several critics perceived the direction, if not the extent, of Maturin's efforts. Writing a "Memoir of the Rev. C. R. Maturin" in 1819, Alaric Watts concluded his brief description of Women by stating that it was "a work unequalled in the list of English novels. We know nothing -- Simile aut secundum." Its uniqueness lay in Maturin's thematic interests which, as Watts saw them, were largely moral. Yet it was not so much the morality expressed which affected Watts so powerfully as the process of revelation:

'Women,' is a work which, with all its dullness, its monotony of suffering, and its horrible anatomy of the moral frame, stands alone among modern writings -- there is nothing like it -- its profound and philosophic melancholy, its terrible researches into the deepest abysses of the human heart and of human feeling -- its daring drawing the veil of the 'holy of holies,' while the hand that draws it trembles at the touch....66

According to Watts, Maturin's realism lay not in his depiction of customs and manners, but in the evolution and growth of states of mind; not in the portrayal of physical action, but in mental and emotional development. This observation was expanded by a critic in the North American Review who noted that Maturin simply could not delineate the commonplace and that he succeeded best when his topics included "outlaws and assassins,

whose minds are congenial to the scenes in which they live. " Maturin's powers excel in depiction of strong and forceful minds:

In such places and with such agents, his invention riots in the abundance of its resources; he is an artist and a master in exhibiting the gigantic features of external forms, the fearful throes and convulsions of nature, and the fiend-like workings of the passions. Nor does he step beyond the visible diurnal sphere on a vain errand; the grandeur and terror of his images, dispose the mind to refer the appalling influences it is contemplating, to invisible and supernatural agents. How different from the trivial ghost-play of ordinary writers are the mysterious destinies of the House of Montorio! Things, in themselves the most strange and unnatural, are made to have a verisimilitude, by a train of images and accompaniments, that compel the mind to assent to their probability. Fate, -- by which we commonly mean only some unknown and inconceivable cause, -- is made to seem an intelligible, omnipotent agency, operating upon us from the dark world with irresistible power, so that men and their doings, appear to be the light and inconsiderable appendages of a mighty system of things with which they are borne along. 67

This power of fate, so convincingly presented in The Fatal Revenge, is duplicated in Women: "the story...abounds in bold description and striking portraitures of character and manners; and these constitute the characteristic excellencies of this species of composition." 68 Maturin combined, therefore, descriptions of commonplace customs and manners with his characteristically powerful depiction of states of mind. Both the critic of the North American Review and Alaric Watts grasped the nature of Maturin's attempt in Women. Later critics, too, were to recognize his intentions.

Two mid-nineteenth-century critics -- J. C. Mangan and Gustave Planche -- complement and expand Watt's perceptions. In a sketch of Maturin in The Irishman in 1849, Mangan stated:

Maturin wrote, besides his tragedies, three works of unsurpassable interest and power -- 'Montorio,' 'The Milesian Chief,' and 'Woman' [sic].... The story of 'Woman,' in which even the 'small numskull' [sic] of Jeffrey' (Maginn) found matter for praise, it best epitomised by its own concluding sentence -- one that at once characterises the author and the hero. When great talent is combined with calamity, their union forms the 'tenth wave' (Byron -- Manfred) of human misery: grief becomes immortal from the inexhaustible fertility of genius; and the serpents that devour us are generated out of our own vitals. 69

Mangan indicated the basis for understanding Women; the tragedy, although spurred by external events, lies in Zaira's capacity to create and to experience her own demise. As opposed to Mangan's interest in the main characters, particularly Zaira, Planche discussed Women's general qualities:

Les Femmes, où se révèle une grâce exquise... est un poème plus réel et plus riche d'observations sociales que les autres ouvrages de Maturin.... A parler le langage de l'enseignement universitaire, il y a plus de sagesse et de sobriété dans les Femmes que dans les autres inventions de Maturin. C'est aussi celui de ses livres qui a obtenu le succès le plus unanime. 70

Planche saw Women as a poetic expression rich in observations of social interaction. These points were important for Women's acceptance and popularity in France and significant because they echo Maturin's own prefatory remarks concerning "external interest".

But the question of Maturin's attempt at creating "external interest" is less important than the way in which he developed his characters. In Women, he had created Eva and Zaira, the two characters who embody the novel's educational and religious themes. They serve as prototypes for the two most fascinating characters of his next novel,

Melmoth the Wanderer. In Women, Eva's strength is described in this way: "With her religion seemed to be an instinct, a part of her pure nature...." <sup>71</sup> Because of this strength, she is invulnerable to the seductive social follies to which all others succumbed. In Melmoth, Eva appears as Immalee; but in this case, Maturin allows her to consummate her love for man by marrying Melmoth. Yet, she too dies before surrendering to the attractions of the world. Like Eva, who loves true Christianity first and De Courcy second, and has no longing for anything mundane, Immalee, who is instinctively a Christian, also loves Melmoth, but cannot compromise her religion for his desires. Immalee becomes an Eva put to the test; and, like Eva, her death is triumphant. Zaira's counterpart in Melmoth is perhaps Melmoth himself. Both Melmoth and Zaira are paragons of knowledge and both are spiritually sterile. As Immalee is an expanded version of Eva, so Melmoth is in a sense an expanded version of Zaira.

Zaira is at first unaware of the enormity of her misdirected energies, but after she has realized the vacuum within her life, she frantically and impotently seeks some way to fill the void:

'I can no longer,' she said, in a deep, hollow, but firm tone, --  
 'I can no longer support this existence -- I cannot make myself religious -- I cannot create the love of God in my soul -- my heart is stone -- my conscience is seared -- the heaven above me is brass, and the earth beneath iron. I am cursed with a curse -- not one being, divine or human, in the illimitable creation, can touch my heart with a sentiment of affection. It is in vain, ... it is in vain -- I have made the experiment with all the powers of my nature -- I have grown to the pavement with my knees -- I have clung to the cross with the arms of my soul -- not a beam of light has fallen on

me -- not a whisper of hope has reached me. I am the unwatered fleece -- I am a fountain sealed -- I am the rock from which not even the arm of the prophet can bring one drop of water. I pray, and my words are all mechanical. I receive no answer even from my own heart. I read the Bible, and when I have done, I shut it as a book whose language has no meaning for me. I exhaust myself on works of charity, but they have no charms for me. I am glad when I have been the means of removing physical pain; but when mental sufferings are spoken of I shudder, from my incapacity, either to sympathise with or console them. I tremble at the blessings of their gratitude; they wish me health and long life -- long life, I cannot support that. Their blessings are curses -- I cannot love God, and man will not love me. What have I to do with life any longer? -- my last resource is near.' 72

Zaira's quest for immortality differs from Melmoth's, but her reasons are similar. Both want to control their earthly destinies without regard for their spiritual destinies, and both suffer the consequences of such a search. To dramatize this concern, in both novels Maturin contrasts this misdirected religious energy with that practised by those he considers true Christians. This theme of religious direction presented in Women is further explored in Melmoth where Maturin creates his greatest characters and where he universalizes his own ever-persistent pre-occupations with mankind's spiritual destiny.



## VI

### MELMOTH THE WANDERER

Maturin's current as well as contemporary fame as a writer rests chiefly upon his gothic achievement in Melmoth the Wanderer (1820). When J. B. Priestley refers to Maturin's "graveyard" novel in his The Prince of Pleasure, he typifies this general view:

Its basic theme rather than any literary merit gave Melmoth the Wanderer its importance (to French and later English literature). Maturin... could deal powerfully with the miseries and horrors, but was lacking in constructive skill. He revived -- and then carried to ridiculous extreme -- the tiresome eighteenth-century device of having a tale within a tale.... 1

Priestley's comments echo those of many Maturin critics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Like those critics, he considers Melmoth as a purely gothic novel, and makes no attempt to see it within the context of Maturin's other works. He has neither read Melmoth attentively nor considered Maturin's own intentions.

In the period 1818-1820, Maturin's main concern was with the true nature of Christianity. He composed both Women and Melmoth while writing sermons for publication. Whereas Women elaborated several of these sermons' themes, Melmoth evolved directly from one, and stands a grand and complex illustration and embodiment of it. He accounts for his inspiration in the preface to Melmoth by quoting a passage from his sermon:

"At this moment is there one of us present, however we may have departed from the Lord, disobeyed his will, and discarded his word -- is there one of us who would, at this moment, accept all that man could bestow, or earth afford, to resign the hope of his salvation? -- No, there is not one -- not such a fool on earth, were the enemy of mankind to traverse it with the offer!"

Maturin then tells us that

This passage suggested the idea of 'Melmoth the Wanderer.' The Reader will find that idea developed in the following pages, with what power or success he is to decide. 2

The original impetus for the writing of Melmoth came from a religious idea. In view of this, therefore, the critic's duty should not be to account for Maturin's wielding of gothic devices independently of his own claims; rather, it should be to examine the pervasive religious themes. From this perspective, Melmoth the Wanderer transcends the gothic and <sup>becomes</sup> a kind of spiritual and social allegory.

In Melmoth the Wanderer, John Melmoth learns the life and fate of a seventeenth-century ancestor (also named John Melmoth) who had sold his soul to the devil in return for supernatural powers, forbidden knowledge, and an extra one hundred and fifty years of life. His sole opportunity to escape the bargain's consequences lies in finding someone who will voluntarily exchange destinies with him. To discover such a person soon becomes his only activity. The Wanderer's descendent, John Melmoth, learns the story from manuscripts written by the Wanderer's victims and through the narration of Monçada, a shipwrecked Spaniard. An orphan and a genuinely poor college student, he depends totally upon the meagre support of his parsimonious uncle.

In the autumn of 1816, John is called from Dublin to Wicklow to the bedside of his dying uncle. Arriving at the "Lodge", he relives his childhood memories of his uncle's miserly and irreligious behaviour. Later, when getting wine for his uncle, John sees the portrait of a middle-aged man whose eyes shed a fearful lustre. On its frame, he reads: "Jno. Melmoth, anno 1646". He senses that the eyes follow him. When he returns, his uncle whispers:

"John, they say I am dying of this and that; and one says it is for want of nourishment, and one says it is for want of medicine, -- but, John, " and his face looked hideously ghastly, "I am dying of a fright. That man, " and he extended his meagre arm toward the closet, as if he was pointing to a living being; "that man, I have good reason to know, is alive still. " 3

John thinks his uncle's behaviour strange, and old Melmoth dies that night, after giving a final example of his avariciousness:

Old Melmoth died in the course of that night, and died as he had lived, in a kind of avaricious delirium....He cursed and blasphemed about three-pence, missing, as he said, some weeks before, in an account of change with his groom, about hay to a starving horse that he kept. Then he grasped John's hand, and asked him to give the sacrament. "If I send to the clergyman, he will charge me something for it, which I cannot pay, -- I cannot. They say I am rich, -- look at this blanket; -- but I would not mind that if I could save my soul." And, raving, he added, "Indeed, Doctor, I am a very poor man. I never troubled a clergyman before, and all I want is, that you will grant me two trifling requests, very little matters in your way, -- save my soul, and (whispering) make interest to get me a parish coffin...." 4

The result of unearthly fear, his uncle's death is shrouded in a mystery intensified by various family legends. John is left sole heir; and, in an addendum to the will, it is suggested that he burn both the old portrait and a manuscript to be found in a desk. Before acting upon this

suggestion, both the housekeeper and Biddy Brannigan, the local wise woman, relate their knowledge of his uncle's motives. The housekeeper describes his miserliness:

"He was a man...of a hard hand, and a hard heart, but he was as jealous of another's right as of his own. He would have starved all the world, but he would not have wronged it for a farthing." 5

She knows little, however, concerning the source of his fear. Biddy Brannigan, on the other hand, knows more of the family's history:

"The first of the Melmoths...who settled in Ireland, was an officer in Cromwell's army, who obtained a grant of...confiscated property....The elder brother of this man was one who had travelled abroad, and resided so long on the Continent, that his family had lost all recollection of him." 6

She mentions also this elder brother's one visit, during which he left his portrait. Shortly thereafter, a stranger visited the Melmoths in search of the elder brother, and left a manuscript. It is this picture and this manuscript which John's uncle had advised be burnt. But Biddy's news is disquieting:

He was still alive, and has been frequently seen in Ireland even to the present century, -- but that he was never known to appear but on the approaching death of one of the family, nor even then, unless when the evil passions or habits of the individual had cast a shade of gloomy and fearful interest over their dying hour. 7

Combining both his uncle's statement that the portrait's subject still lived and his concern for his soul's salvation together with Biddy's knowledge, John determines to read the manuscript left to the Melmoth family by Stanton, one of the Wanderer's first victims.

In 1676, Stanton, an Englishman travelling in Spain, encounters a fellow countryman who excites the superstitious natives to horror.

Stanton himself witnesses the death by lightning of a young couple and the resultant laughter of this stranger. When Stanton finds shelter, his hostess relates to him a story of the deaths of both a young couple as well as an exorcist, for which this stranger was held responsible. When she mentions the name "Melmoth" and the fact that he has been seen in the neighbourhood that very day, Stanton realizes it was Melmoth's laughter he had heard. The manuscript then resumes in London in 1677, where a "fierce passion" for information about the mysterious wanderer is "devouring the soul" of Stanton. He is soon tricked by an avaricious kinsman into a madhouse. Surrounded by inmates who are "mad from politics, religion, ebriety, or some perverted passion", Stanton begins to fear his own sanity and to lose hope of deliverance. At this point, Melmoth appears to him, offers his release upon some secret condition which is refused, and disappears. Stanton is ultimately released, follows Melmoth to Ireland, and deposits his manuscript with Melmoth's family. At this point, Stanton's manuscript disintegrates, and John determines to destroy that portrait of his fearful ancestor. Successful, he attempts to sleep, and dreams of Melmoth the Wanderer. When he awakens, he finds his arm is bruised, and he hears a voice:

"You have burned me, then; but those are flames I can survive. -- I am alive, -- I am beside you." Melmoth started, sprung from his bed, -- it was broad day-light. He looked round, -- there was no human being in the room but himself. He felt a slight pain in the wrist of his right arm. He looked at it, it was black and blue, as from the recent grip of a strong hand. 8

Melmoth the Wanderer has returned to Ireland to haunt the dying hours of John's evil-passioned uncle. At this point, Melmoth's latest victim, Alonzo de Monçada, is shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland near Melmoth's house. Monçada, the sole survivor, is taken to the Lodge; and convalescing, relates to young Melmoth his reasons for pursuing Melmoth the Wanderer even as Stanton had done.

To propitiate his mother's youthful sins, and at the insistence of the family's religious Director, Monçada had been forced to become a monk. After living in a monastery long enough to confirm his hatred of the religious life, he attends a dying monk's bedside. Here, he hears an articulation of his own fears:

"For sixty years I have cursed my existence. I never woke to hope, for I had nothing to do or to expect. I never lay down with consolation, for I had, at the close of every day, only to number so many deliberate mockeries of God, as exercises of devotion. The moment life is put beyond the reach of your will, and placed under the influence of mechanical operations, it becomes, to thinking beings, a torment insupportable." 9

Now understanding the manifest hypocrisy and debilitating nature of monastic life, Monçada rebels. In return, his fellow monks persecute; and, after numerous trials, he attempts to escape with the help of his brother and a monk who turns out to be an agent of the monastery. His brother is killed, and Monçada is imprisoned by the Inquisition as a renegade monk, a fratricide, and a suspected sorcerer. He loses hope and at this point, Melmoth visits him and offers liberation on some undisclosed condition. He is refused. The prison is mysteriously set ablaze. Monçada escapes to Madrid, finds refuge in a Jew's

basement, and sets to copying a manuscript which acquaints him with Melmoth's true nature. In this manuscript, three tales, one within the other, are recounted: the "Tale of the Indians", "The Tale of Guzman's Family", and "The Lovers' Tale". Melmoth himself is pictured in the manuscript as the narrator of the last two tales.

Immalee, the heroine of the "Tale of the Indians", is a solitary and beautiful maiden whom Melmoth discovers on an Indian island. She does not fear him because as a young girl she was shipwrecked on this island, and at seventeen, is innocent of sin or guilt. Her innocence is contagious and inspires some compunction in Melmoth himself. She embodies unfailing tact because her attitudes have been formed by a "logic of the heart and of nature." Melmoth at first tries to pervert her, to make her suffer by describing the religions of civilization. Immalee responds with enthusiasm. He shows her the various religions of the mainland and their ritual cruelties in the hope of inspiring her with a contempt of religion. Incorruptible, she looks hopefully for something else:

She discovered a small obscure building overshadowed by palm-trees, and surmounted by a cross; and struck by the unobtrusive simplicity of its appearance, and the scanty number and peaceable demeanour of the few who were approaching it, she exclaimed, that this must be a new religion, and eagerly demanded its name and rites. 10

Immalee cross-examines Melmoth concerning Christianity; she cannot be deceived. When he had finished, she exclaims: "Christ shall be my

11

God, and I will be a Christian!" Melmoth departs immediately, but he returns frequently to Immalee and her island for respite from his

Cain-like wanderings. When he describes to her civilization at its cruelest in the hope of convincing Immalee to remain uncontaminated on her island, his discourses achieve the opposite to his intentions. Immalee has begun "to love the storm better than the calm", and therefore she loves him and wants to return to civilization with him. But Melmoth loves her too, and determines to abandon her forever.

Three years later, Melmoth and Immalee, now called Isidora, meet in the streets of Madrid. Melmoth has often been arrested by the Inquisition but always mysteriously escaped. Isidora's relatives have brought her from her island to civilization in which her profound religious instincts are daily offended by her mother's narrow and rigid Catholicism. She and Melmoth resume the private talks which are, for both, their only tranquil moments. Soon, however, Immalee urges him to acknowledge himself as a wooer to her parents; after that, she promises to unite her destiny with his. Aghast at her proposal, Melmoth again abandons her. Meanwhile, Isidora's father, the merchant Francisco, returning home with a bridegroom for her, meets a stranger who tells him "The Tale of Guzman's Family". It is the night before Melmoth abandons Isidora.

In Seville, there lived a wealthy merchant, Guzman the rich. His much younger sister, Ines, married a Protestant, a poor German musician named Walberg. Because Ines had converted to her husband's heretical religion, Guzman refused to help them, and they returned to Germany. When Guzman realizes he is dying, he relents on his earlier



decision, and sends for his sister and her family. They are to be his heirs. Before they arrive, however, the local priests try to get his fortune for the Church. Although they fail to secure it, they at least convince him to refrain from direct communication with the heretical family, an arrangement he accepts. When the Walbergs arrive, they are established as gentlefolk and live in unaccustomed luxury, with no thoughts about preparing for the future. Walberg himself becomes self-satisfied and develops the unthinking ways of the idle rich. Guzman dies, the will is contested, and the Church wins, leaving the Walbergs penniless in a hostile environment. The family members undergo dreadful sufferings; their eldest son sells his blood; their daughter tries to prostitute herself, but fails; Walberg's mother dies, and his father goes mad. Walberg himself is rapidly losing his mind. At this point, he begins a series of nightly encounters with a stranger who, at each meeting, tempts him in some way. Finally, the nature of these temptations is articulated, and Walberg relates them to his wife:

He has offered, and proved to me, that it is in his power to bestow all that human cupidity could thirst for, on the condition -- I cannot utter! It is one so full of horror and impiety, that, even to listen to it, is scarce less a crime than to comply with it! 12

Having told his wife this story, Walberg temporarily loses his reason. He tries to kill his children but is interrupted by word that the court's decision has been reversed. Shortly thereafter, the family's health is restored and they return to Germany with the prospect of future comfort and happiness. His story completed, the stranger retires, leaving

Francisco alone with his thoughts. Melmoth himself then enters Francisco's room, intimates both the story's significance and the immediacy of the Melmothian threat, and shows him the corpse of the story-teller. He is further told they will meet the following night.

They meet accordingly and Melmoth relates a narrative which he intends "may operate as a warning the most awful, salutary, and efficacious to yourself." <sup>13</sup> It is "The Lovers' Tale", in which Melmoth traces the fortunes of Sir Roger Mortimer's grandchildren: Elinor, Margaret, and John. Shortly after the Restoration, Sir Roger dies. He wills most of his property to Margaret on the condition that she marry John Sandel, and almost nothing to Elinor if she marry John. Sandel's mother makes John break his betrothal with Elinor by informing him that his own father had sired Elinor too. Events conspire so that John eventually marries Margaret, and that Elinor lives in seclusion. At childbirth, Margaret asks Elinor's attendance. She assents, but both Margaret and her twins die. Almost immediately, Sandel's mother confesses her lie concerning Elinor's parentage as well as her motives, and John goes mad. Elinor then directs all her love and energies toward him. During their evening walks, they meet several times a stranger who finally makes a sinister proposal to Elinor. Horrified, she runs to a neighbourhood clergyman who recognizes Melmoth. Melmoth instantly departs, and this clergyman explains to Elinor how and why Melmoth operates. When Melmoth himself has finished his tale, he realizes that Don Francisco understands nothing.

He resolves to tell him another, more pointed, tale:

"I have heard," said the stranger, "that the family has returned to Spain, -- that the beautiful inhabitant of the foreign isle is become the idol of your cavaliers.... But listen to me, -- there is an eye fixed on her, and its fascination is more deadly than that fabled of the snake! -- There is an arm extended to seize her, in whose grasp humanity withers! -- That arm even now relaxes for a moment, -- its fibres thrill with pity and horror, -- it releases the victim for a moment, -- it even beckons her father to her aid! -- Don Francisco, do you understand me now? Has this tale interest or application for you?"

He paused, but Aliaga, chilled with horror, was unable to answer him but by a feeble exclamation. "If it has," resumed the stranger, "lose not a moment to save your daughter!" 14

In order to attend to various matters of business, however, Don Francisco abandons Immalee to her fate. Melmoth returns to her and through the use of his supernatural powers, they are married by a dead hermit. The tale at this point returns to Monçada's account of the manuscript that he copied for the old Jew.

Returning after her midnight nuptials to her parents' home, Immalee continues to entertain Melmoth at night. She now urges him to declare their marriage to her parents. Two factors make this declaration imperative: first, Immalee realizes she is pregnant; and second, she is to be formally betrothed to a man selected by her father at a reception that night. Melmoth's character has changed from misanthropy to gloomy pensiveness but he promises to attend the party and to take her away at midnight. As they leave, Immalee's brother tries to stop them. Melmoth kills him, reluctantly but inevitably, and Immalee collapses on her brother's corpse. Melmoth soundly admonishes the company and departs, alone. Immalee, arrested by the Inquisition,

gives birth in her dungeon. The child dies mysteriously before it is to be given to a monastery, and Immalee herself is near death from a broken heart. Melmoth appears once more to offer her an escape but on the usual conditions. She refuses, gets absolution, and dies. At this point, Monçada concludes the "Tale of the Indians" by remarking that Immalee was a victim of Melmoth's passion but also of his destiny. Both young Melmoth and Monçada are exhausted by the tale and resolve to meet the following day in order that Monçada may conclude the recitation of his adventures.

With the story back in the Ireland of 1816, Melmoth the Wanderer appears and completes the tale, terrifying both his descendant, John Melmoth, and his intended victim, Monçada. He intimates that some dreadful event, which transcends the capacity of mere mortals to endure, is about to happen. He then retires. During the night, young John and Monçada hear frightful shrieks from the Wanderer's room. In the morning, they follow tracks to the "wide, waste, engulfing ocean". Melmoth the Wanderer has fulfilled his fate, and John and Monçada have learned their lesson about avarice and about tampering with forbidden knowledge.

That Maturin chose Ireland as Melmoth's basic setting is consistent with his view that it was Europe's social, political, and spiritual backwater. All his previous novels discussed to varying extents Ireland and Irish destiny. Even The Fatal Revenge, his first

and only gothic novel -- with a setting in 16th century Italy -- contains allusions to the deplorable state of culture in post-Union Ireland. At that time, he felt that more explicit Irish topicality would be dangerous. Inspired by Lady Morgan's nationalistic Wild Irish Girl, he exploited Ireland's potential for romance in his Wild Irish Boy and Milesian Chief. For one thing, Ireland provided the inimical and isolated setting romances required. Another reason for using it was that the Irish character -- either native or Anglo-Irish -- courted isolation. In these novels, his main characters eventually congregate and dramatize social and political evils accentuated rather than assuaged by the Union because it is only in the isolation of Ireland that his heroes and heroines confront the true meaning of life. In The Wild Irish Boy, for example, Ormsby's mother-in-law, Lady Montrevor, and her husband retire to their Irish property, after his political fall in London, where she begins to seek social involvement instead of political influence. In The Milesian, too, the heroine follows her father into exile in Connaught where she becomes embroiled in the natives' fatal rush for independence, and where she learns the impossibility of political peace. In both these novels, Maturin used a political framework in which to examine Ireland's social chaos.

In both Women and Melmoth, Maturin shifted from a political to a social framework in which to examine spiritual laxity. In Women, he traces the fortunes of a native Irish woman, Zaira, who returns to

Ireland to recover her child. Because of her Continental education as well as her pre-occupations with high society, she succeeds in destroying not only her child, but also their mutual lover as well. She is then doomed to live miserably in a spiritual vacuum because she is incapable of responding to the spirit of Christianity. A similar theme is central to Melmoth; but here, Maturin also makes his most profound and least understood statement concerning the state of Irish spiritual and social health.

Although both Idman and Jeffares praise Maturin's mastery in depicting the squalid life of the Irish lower classes in the first and last chapters of Melmoth, they fail to ascribe thematic significance to it. In this failure, they are representative of most other critics.<sup>16</sup>

They are correct in asserting its "intensely suggestive 'atmosphere' and minute truthfulness to nature",<sup>17</sup> but go only so far as to account for Maturin's distaste for the lower Irish social orders. But the social significance of using this Irish setting is unmistakable.

Melmoth the Wanderer, young John Melmoth, and his uncle share more than common ancestry. They represent and are the Protestant rulers and spiritual guides of a superstitious native population. The older John Melmoth (later to become the Wanderer), the oldest brother of a Protestant settler after Cromwell's Irish conquest, is seen traveling the Continent rather than devoting his energies to Ireland's future. In this, his pursuits are archetypically selfish; as such, the difference between his attitudes and those of John's uncle is one of degree, not kind. The Wanderer is as irrevocably bound to his destiny as, it appears,

is the younger John's uncle. John himself, however, is of the post-Union generation and therefore can amend his ancestors' mistakes. With typical irony, Maturin has him learn his lesson not from the University, but from Melmoth the Wanderer himself, the Anglo-Irish  
18  
guilty conscience incarnate.

Maturin's treatment of the natives is neither complimentary nor vicious. They are crafty and steal from John's uncle's larder, but their stealing results from compulsion rather than inclination. John's uncle -- their social and spiritual superior -- hoards resources for himself, and leaves the natives to shift for themselves.

The fact that the natives are crafty and dishonest, and that they are Catholics, makes Maturin's criticism of the Anglo-Irish's religious behaviour more devastating because these same natives have more spiritual insight than John's uncle. His housekeeper and her cronies, for example, are genuinely concerned for his soul:

the housekeeper, though a Catholic, asked if his honour would not have a clergyman to give him the rights, (rites) of his church. The eyes of the dying man sparkled with vexation at the proposal. 'What for, -- just to have him expect a scarf and hat-band at the funeral. Read the prayers yourself, you old \_\_\_\_\_; that will save something. 19

Uneducated, however, she cannot read. But one of her cronies can and ~~does~~:

she never had been at school, and had never before seen or opened a Protestant prayer book in her life; nevertheless, on she went, and with more emphasis than good discretion, read nearly through the service for the 'churching of women;' which in our prayer-books following that of the burial of the dead, she perhaps imagined was someway connected with the state of the invalid. 20

The ritual is corrected when young John enters and takes over the service. Maturin's comments, again replete with irony, are directed, not against the Catholics, but against Anglo-Irish hard-heartedness:

hearing the inappropriate words uttered by the ignorant woman, taking quietly as he knelt beside her the prayer-book from her hands, and reading in a suppressed voice part of that solemn service which, by the forms of the Church of England, is intended\* [sic] for the consolation of the departing. 21

Although the service is intended to comfort the dying, no one in this case believes John's uncle can be consoled for the loss of his possessions. Here again, the native shrewdness is evident, this time in the sybil's diagnosis of John's uncle's illness:

The oracular movements of a Pythoness on her tripod never excited more awe, or impressed for the moment a deeper silence. "It's not here," and she extended her hand to the foreheads of those who were near her, who all bowed as if they were receiving a benediction, but had immediate recourse to the spirits afterwards, as if to ensure its effects. -- "It's all here -- it's all about the heart." 22

Although described in pagan terms, although repulsive in manners, and although exploiting her fellow-natives' propensity to superstition, yet in her diagnosis, she is corroborated by John's uncle himself. Her shrewdness combined with the Irish native's craftiness and superstition, rather than being corrected or alleviated by the socially and spiritually superior Anglo-Irish, are characteristics intensified by their illness of the heart -- by their own material pre-occupations. Idman's statement that the "old Sybil...is a decidedly unsympathetic figure, a humbug and an imposture of the first order..." is simply inadequate in view of

23

Maturin's concerns. It is not only social but spiritual abuse in Ireland which attracted Maturin's attention, not only in Melmoth, but



in all his novels from The Fatal Revenge to The Albigenses.

In addition to the Irish setting, one feature these novels share is the presence of a Church of England clergyman who provides the spiritual criterion for proper Christian living. Brief but crucial, his appearance provides the ideal moral and spiritual background against which other characters act. In The Wild Irish Boy, for example, the curate Corbett embodies the spiritual values toward which the ideal Anglo-Irish gentleman aspires, in this case, Ormsby. Corbett alone is the only tranquil and purposeful character. In The Milesian, Rose St. Austin and her father, a Church of England Minister, alone survive the violent passions which engulf the other characters, heroines and heroes alike. Their purposes and goals alone transcend immediate political and national concerns. The spiritual norm in Women is less clear because there are two exponents of proper spiritual direction: Eva, and her instinctive religion directed by her Bible away from the petty rivalries of this world; and De Courcy's guardian, Asgill, a Church of England clergyman whose solid advice De Courcy consistently ignores. All except Eva and Asgill live tormented and vacuous lives; the result therefore approximates that of The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian. In Melmoth likewise two characters embody the strength and purpose of true Christianity: Immalee, through all her trials; and, the Church of England minister of "The Lovers' Tale". In this novel, the former is central to the theme, the latter central to the

structure of the plot.

Immalee serves distinct purposes in each half of the "Tale of the Indians". First, as Eva had been, she is instinctive religion incarnate; and as such, provides the definition for proper religious direction. Second, when brought to civilization, she accentuates Melmoth's impotence in controlling his chosen destiny.

Melmoth discovers her on an island paradise close to a mainland corrupted by numerous false religions from which she remains inviolate. Her seemingly incongruent response -- "God made me" -- to his salutation astounds Melmoth: "It was the first of his intended victims he had ever beheld with compunction." <sup>24</sup> She marvels at Melmoth's powers of speech and thought, and believes that because of this power, all "'must love each other'" in his world. When he describes famine, disease and, above all, "the fire of forbidden passion", she suggests that even in such a world, joy is still possible: "'perhaps what thinks may live...after the form has faded, and that is a thought of joy.'" <sup>25</sup> In spite of the considerable powers which the reader has witnessed him wield on Stanton and Monçada, Melmoth could not immediately pervert Immalee's "logic of the heart and of nature" because of "her instinctive and unfailing tact in matters of right and wrong...." <sup>26</sup> He determines his course: "She must learn to suffer, to qualify her to become my pupil, he thought." <sup>27</sup> Immalee, a willing student because she wishes to be a part of his world, is shown the

mainland by means of a telescope.

Up to this point, Immalee has lived by responding to nature; in so doing, she has sensed religious impulses which she could not articulate. On the one hand, her instructor intends to discourage her religious cravings by showing her the numerous anti-natural religions pursued by mainlanders; on the other, she seeks only a form through which to direct her impulses. To achieve his end, Melmoth surveys various religious practices. To accomplish hers, she asks him to describe "religion":

"It [religion] is the consciousness of a Being superior to all worlds and their inhabitants, because he is the Maker of all, and will be their judge -- of a Being whom we cannot see, but in whose power and presence we must believe, though invisible -- of one who is every where unseen; always acting, though never in motion; hearing all things, but never heard." 28

Immalee has sensed what he describes, and explains her recollection:

"I have had thoughts within me like that voice. I have thought I loved the things around me too much, and that I should love things beyond me.... I could have sprung, like a bird into the air, after such a thought -- but there was no one to shew me that path upward." 29

When she discovers the Christian chapel, Melmoth is unwillingly "constrained by a higher power" to explain this "new religion..., its name and rites." He acquiesces with peculiarly anti-Catholic allusions:

"The religion... requires them to honour their parents, and to cherish their children.... their religion enjoins them to be mild, benevolent, and tolerant; and neither to reject or disdain those who have not attained its purer light.... they know that God cannot be acceptably worshipped but by pure hearts and crimeless hands; and though their religion gives every hope to the penitent guilty, it flatters none with false promises of external devotion supplying the homage of their heart ; or artificial and picturesque religion standing

in the place of that single devotion to God, before whose throne, though the proudest temples erected to his honour crumble into dust, the heart burns on the altar still, an inextinguishable and acceptable victim." 30

Melmoth's description of true Christianity contrasts sharply with that practised by John's uncle, by the native Irish, by Monçada and his parents, and by the Church of Rome with its exclusiveness, bigotry, and idolatry and, of course, by Melmoth himself. But his description strikes a sympathetic chord in Immalee; to her, it is the form she has sought. At this point, she is incarnate Christianity; as such, she is Melmoth's most difficult and most inevitable victim. Yet Melmoth loves her and what she represents. He therefore tries to avert her death by abandoning her. Melmoth, however, does not control his chosen destiny, and in spite of his intentions, they meet three years later in Madrid.

In Madrid, they are irresistibly drawn to each other, but Melmoth again tries to abandon her. Because he now realizes that his destiny is not a matter of free-will, he enlists Immalee's father's aid by telling him first "The Lovers' Tale", which he fails to understand, and then an explicit account of Immalee's desperate situation. Aliaga responds to a business letter rather than to Melmoth's plea. Melmoth has to fulfill, therefore, another step in Immalee's victimization and marries her. Though Melmoth strives determinedly against his fate, Immalee's father, brother, and mother all compel him to follow through with his damnation because they are all in some way selfish. Immalee

is ultimately imprisoned by the Inquisition, where she gives birth to Melmoth's child. Once again, Melmoth's destiny mocks his efforts, and his island-lessons in misery come to fruition. On the island, he had described all too well European civilization's only redeeming feature: " 'There are some kind parents...who murder their children at the hour of their birth...and, in so doing, they give the only credible evidence of parental affection.' " <sup>32</sup> This is precisely what Immalee does while she awaits sentencing in her dungeon. When officials arrive to take her son from her to be dedicated to a convent as Monçada had been, they find its corpse with a strange black mark around its throat. All Melmoth's moves, in spite of his intentions, contribute to his damnation.

Both on the island and in civilization, Melmoth had loved and pitied Immalee, and had tried to exclude her from his list of victims. In spite of his intentions, he is powerless to alter his destiny. But his is not the only guilt. His efforts remained ineffectual because those who might have obstructed his actions were likewise guilty of "the fire of forbidden passions". Immalee's father, in spite of Melmoth's personally delivered warning, pursued a lucrative business deal, while his wife tried to dedicate her daughter to a convent. Melmoth's other victims, too, had pursued Melmoth and therefore had pursued what Melmoth represented: Stanton, the narrator of "Guzman's Tale", Monçada himself in "The Spaniard's Tale", and, of course, both John and his uncle. All,

save Immalee herself, cherished some "forbidden passion" which separated them from God and upon which Melmoth could exert his powers. Only one person, besides Melmoth, knew his secret and could cope with that knowledge with impunity: the Church of England minister of "The Lovers' Tale".

Melmoth himself relates "The Lovers' Tale" to Immalee's father. When the insane hero and his doting lover meet a stranger, she calls a neighbourhood Anglican clergyman who recognizes the stranger. It is Melmoth:

They immediately recognised each other. An expression that was never before beheld there -- an expression of fear -- wandered over the features of the stranger! He paused for a moment, and then departed without uttering a word -- .... 33

This minister had known Melmoth before the latter had "given [himself] up to diabolical delusions -- to the power of the enemy." He had witnessed Melmoth's death to God's universe, although Melmoth would not explain why he wanted him to be present. Further, he had heard numerous ghastly tales about Melmoth's subsequent activities on the Continent which Elinor asks him to relate. He replies: "'Seek no farther...you know already more than should ever have reached the human ear, or entered into the conception of the human mind.' "

This minister then reviews Melmoth's reasons for wandering. . By means of this summary, Melmoth himself warns Aliaga, Immalee's father, about his next victim: "he has been already repelled amid the horrors of the dungeon and of the scaffold, the screams of Bedlam and

the flames of the Inquisition --". His next resource is through " 'the withered energies of a broken heart.' " It is Melmoth himself warning Aliaga that Immalee, in spite of her purity, is corporeally doomed. By implication, however, it is more than that. The teller of the tale of Melmoth's conversion is the only person who knows Melmoth's complete story, and is the only survivor with that knowledge. He knows its danger as he explained to Elinor; yet, because he is a minister of the Church of England, his training, his faith, and his perfect Christian system protect him from the otherwise dire consequences. Immalee dies, not because she lacks true Christian virtue and direction but because she is a victim of a cruel, Catholic system. The Church of England minister lives because he too is a true Christian. As in the case of Corbett in The Wild Irish Boy, St. Austin of The Milesian, and Asgill of Women, it is only the Church of England minister of Melmoth who can live with the prospect of tranquil futurity, and who provides the spiritual criterion for proper Christian living.

Melmoth stands as Maturin's most critically maligned novel. Contemporary critics, with few exceptions, have deplored his attempts to revitalize the immoral gothic genre. Modern critics, with the exception of Idman, have likewise examined Melmoth in terms of the gothic genre. But it is not simply Maturin's treatment of his theme which antagonizes critics. By extracting the theme from its structural framework, most critics have likewise misunderstood his structural

intentions as well. The Edinburgh Review, for example, suggested that Maturin had "contrived to render his production almost as objectionable in the manner as, it is in the matter. The construction...is singularly clumsy and inartificial...." The reviewer for the Quarterly was equally inimical:

We shall not waste our time in endeavouring to unravel the tissue of stories which occupy these four volumes: they are contained one within another like a nest of Chinese boxes; but instead of being the effect of nice workmanship, Mr. Maturin's tales are involved and entangled in a clumsy confusion which disgraces the artist, and puzzles the observer. 36

Both reviewers drop the topic after this brief reference to it. Twentieth-century critics are likewise negative. Although Maturin's "Chinese box" technique is perhaps initially perplexing, it is thematically important in that the central "boxes" contain the Christian core of the novel and, further, that this innermost core is enveloped overall in a specific Irish setting. Maturin used this technique deliberately and for two reasons; first, to demonstrate his own aesthetic abilities; and second, to embody his own Irish and spiritual preoccupations. The second goal, he accomplished; the first, fell short of his intentions because of his inability to cooperate with his publishers.

In April 1818, Maturin sensed that his writing career had gained in momentum. Women had just been published, and he had contracted with his publisher, Constable, to publish Melmoth during the fall of that year. According to Maturin, the trying circumstances surrounding the writing of Women had been alleviated, and he hoped to compose Melmoth "con amore". Ambition soon shattered hope,



however, and the period between the publication of Women (1818) and Melmoth (1820) proved tumultuous and overwhelmingly disappointing.

The tumult of this two year period stemmed directly from Maturin's writing ambitions. Summarizing the year following the publication of Women, he wrote Constable: "This has been a most disastrous  
39 year for me --". Two dramas, upon which he had set financial and literary hopes, had failed: Fredolfo, in the theatre and at the book-  
40 sellers; Osmyn the Renegade, mislaid in manuscript by Kean. He had further tried to interest Constable in a poem, the plan of which he sent in July 1819. But Constable wanted to see the work, or a portion  
41 thereof. The poem was The Universe, published by Colburn in 1820. Maturin's ambition was not to be thwarted, in spite of good advice. In pursuing his own ends, he completely alienated the hitherto sympathetic Constable.

Shortly before accepting the Melmoth commitment, Constable agreed to publish Maturin's Sermons, advanced him £ 100, and projected publication for the fall of 1818, because Maturin intimated ~~that~~ publication depended solely on his collecting existing sermons. However, as the deadline passed, Constable realized that Maturin was in fact writing them. Further, some manuscripts were lost in the mails. After much misunderstanding and frustration to both parties, the Sermons appeared in June 1819. The original agreement for delivery of the Sermons had expanded from five to fourteen months. Constable's frustrations are summed up in a response to Maturin's request to postpone

work on the Tales -- the working title of Melmoth -- while he completed two plays:

On the subject of your bringing forward your Tragedy at Drury lane immediately after that which I understand is so soon to appear at Covent Garden -- since you ask my opinion I will frankly give it -- I must at once say that one Dramatic piece in a season is enough for any mans fame -- Success in Play writing I should pronounce the greatest lottery in Literary Composition -- and in reckoning on the consequences of being successful -- it is wise to consider what effect the reverse might have on the reception by the public on other Works the fate of which we ought perhaps to regard as not less important --

After this opinion which I candidly give you I need not add that I should very greatly prefer your proceeding to complete your Tales -- to allowing them to stand over -- they may not do much for your dramatic fame -- but I have no idea that their appearance this season could in any respect injure it -- Besides the Tales is one of the most important works I shall have to bring forward during the early part of next season -- & I confess I should not like to be disappointed of the work-- unless my agreeing to delay was certain of producing very beneficial effects to you, which after every consideration I cannot in any degree satisfy myself would be the case --.... The season for publication is for the present so nearly over that I am very anxious to see the volume of Sermons completed without any further delay -- 42

Constable's anxiety is based upon the fact that both the Sermons and Melmoth had been contracted in April 1818 to be published in the fall of 1818. The Sermons finally did appear in June 1819, but it was  
43  
July 23, 1819 before Constable received the first part of Melmoth.

Melmoth the Wanderer was finally published in October 1820.

Maturin had evidently misled Constable by hinting in a letter dated 6 September 1818 that "a large part of the [Melmoth] MS... [is]  
44  
ready...." Constable received the first parts of the manuscript in July 1819 by threatening Maturin at the beginning of July that one of his clerks would pick up any manuscript ready within three weeks. Although it began to arrive shortly thereafter, Constable had to urge repeatedly

that Maturin direct his efforts exclusively to Melmoth.

By January 1820, Maturin contemplated a continuation of Melmoth. Constable's response was predictable: "till the completion of the work now in progress we would rather defer making any proposal  
46  
for a continuation of the Tales --". In April, Maturin twice attempted to interest Constable in a continuation, and was twice acquainted with the importance of timing:

if [Melmoth is] not ready in the course of next month, the present season will be lost which it is all our interests to avoid if possible. The volume of Sermons was greatly injured indeed ruined by delay, and I entreat of you to use every exertion to prevent Melmoth experiencing a similar fate. It would be quite impossible to publish with any chance of success after the first or second week of July and that cannot be unless we receive the whole M. S. within three weeks from this day .... 47

Predictably, the July deadline came and went, and Maturin continued composing. Again, Constable reminded him of publishing considerations:

we cannot print any more of the M. S. of vol 4th after the last proof we had from you till we receive the completion of the M. S. the reason is this, you have so greatly exceeded the usual limits of a volume that we will have to print the last sheets on a smaller type --....we cannot move till we] get the finish of the M. S. 48

As his writing momentum augmented, Maturin conceptualized Melmoth in an unsellable five volumes. Acting upon this impulse, he left the central tale -- "The Lovers' Tale" until page 355 of the 453 page fourth volume. In other words, instead of having five hundred pages to draw the thematic threads together and to balance out the "Chinese box" structure, Constable's injunction left him only one hundred. The hasty conclusion compacted the latter portions of the novel; and further, pre-

cluded revision of those now lengthy earlier tales. This resulted in a structural imbalance which not only rendered Maturin's narrative technique reprehensible to most critics, but obscured its relationship to the theme.

Maturin had planned an elaborately balanced novel in which to develop his views of contemporary Ireland's moribund economic and cultural status in terms of its spiritual degeneracy. To this end, he enveloped his theme in a contemporary Irish setting which he described with appalling realism. His theme gradually emerged and crystallized through Monçada's monologue, and the Jew's manuscript of the "Tale of the Indians"; this in turn led to the two central tales, in which Melmoth is the central actor. In his unsuccessful and final efforts to sway Aliaga's mercantile pre-occupations to the care of his daughter, Melmoth's own sense of destiny is made manifest to him. This realization is then expanded through the final half of the earlier tales in reversed order. It concludes ultimately and inevitably with Melmoth the Wanderer himself in contemporary Ireland, for here Maturin implies that the demented pursuits of the Anglo-Irish squires have not altered in one hundred and fifty years.

Melmoth the Wanderer is the climax of Maturin's literary career. Most critics have acknowledged its superior quality as a gothic novel. Several have remarked or noted its Irish content. But viewed in the light of his earlier novels, Melmoth stands as Maturin's most profound statement of mankind's spiritual bankruptcy. H. P. Lovecraft

observed that Melmoth evolved from Maturin's "miscellaneous writings":

Out of an ample body of miscellaneous writing which includes one confused Radcliffian imitation called The Fatal Revenge; or the Family of Montorio (1807), Maturin at length evolved the vivid horror-masterpiece of Melmoth, the Wanderer (1820), in which the Gothic tale climbed to altitudes of sheer spiritual fright which it had never known before.... Fear is taken out of the realm of the conventional and exalted into a hideous cloud over mankind's very destiny. 49

Lovecraft is correct in stating that Melmoth is concerned with mankind's destiny as he is in relating it to fear. But Maturin's point is that man need not fear the dreadful sense of destiny embodied in the life of Melmoth the Wanderer unless he deliberately chooses to live in that fearful and Godless universe, the universe which both John and his uncle appear to be on the verge of choosing.

VII  
THE LAST YEARS

I

Melmoth the Wanderer, "that bizarre and episodic medley  
of thriller and sermon,"<sup>1</sup> gained Maturin widespread notoriety as a  
novelist, but it also alienated him from publishers and critics in  
England, and from Catholic nationalistic forces in Ireland. In Eng-  
land, publishers refused further intercourse because of his insensiti-  
vity to their business routines, and critics firmly condemned  
Melmoth's -- and by extension, Maturin's -- "thriller" immorality.  
In Ireland, the Catholics were rapidly organizing themselves into a  
formidable pressure group, and they viewed Melmoth's "sermon"  
qualities as definitely inimical to their interests. These influences  
converged immediately upon publication of Melmoth, and created for  
Maturin four years of intense anxiety, frustration, and penury. The  
Albigenses (1824), a product of this period, reflects his conscious  
efforts to placate publishers and critics, and to tread lightly upon Irish  
Catholic sensibilities.

As a result of his own obduracy as well as his isolation,  
Maturin alienated three publishers between 1817 and 1821: these were  
Murray, Constable, and Colburn. Some friction arose from legitimate  
sources, particularly from Ireland's dependence upon English publishing

houses and from an unreliable postal service. Maturin himself, however, antagonized publishers by his disregard for deadlines. Murray gave up after the failure of Manuel (1817). Through Scott's efforts, Constable agreed in July 1817 to publish Women in early November. Although not published until mid-April 1818 -- that is, five months after the deadline -- Maturin offered<sup>2</sup> him his Sermons a week before Women's late publication. Although a year after Murray had declined further business with him, Maturin indicated first, that Murray had offered £100; and second, that he preferred Constable's patronage. They were eventually published in June 1819, nine months after the agreed deadline. The week before the Sermons agreement, Constable had contracted to publish Melmoth at the same November 1818 date of the Sermons. It was published in October 1820, two years late. Before Melmoth was finally published, Maturin convinced Colburn to publish his poem, The Universe, as well as the sequel to Melmoth. In fact, Maturin offered both the sequel and the poem to Constable as well as to Colburn. Various misunderstandings led both to refuse publication of that sequel or any other works.

From the fall of 1818 to the fall of 1820 -- that is, from the projected to the actual publication date of Melmoth -- Maturin strove diligently for literary recognition in poetry and drama as well as fiction. He could not co-ordinate his efforts, however, and succeeded only in antagonizing his publishing friends. In spite of Constable's urgings to

the contrary, for example, Maturin attempted two dramas whilst composing Melmoth, one of which he tried to sell to Constable on April 22, 1819:

--my play will be out in about ten days from the date of this, and I have received offers from two Booksellers of eminence for the Copy-rights -- I need not say how happy it would make me to have my play published by a gentleman to whose liberal, able dealings I am proud to owe my eternal obligations.... 3

Constable, however, had yet to receive a single manuscript page of Melmoth and, although Maturin's Sermons bluff had succeeded, at this point Constable's chief interests rested on Melmoth's completion:

On the subject of their value as literary property I am quite at a loss what to say -- ...I regret therefore that I cannot make you any offer for the Copy right -- ...in the meantime I must not feel disappointed if they should go into other hands.... 4

Unknown to Constable, his London agents, Hurst Robinson & Company,  
5  
undertook to publish it. Undeterred and still not having sent any Melmoth manuscript, Maturin offered Constable some poetry in a  
6  
letter dated July 9, 1819, which likewise was gracefully refused.

Constable refused the poetry -- presumably The Universe -- because he felt Maturin should have been exerting himself to complete Melmoth. As a result of Maturin's tardy remittances, Constable no longer trusted Maturin's ability to fulfill obligations. In August, a month after Maturin's first offer of the poem, Constable did offer to consider the completed poem but further indicated that the plan by  
7  
itself was insufficient. Constable heard no more about the project until Colburn had published it, at which point in March 1820 he wrote:



we cannot but express our deep regret that while the Tale has been proceeding you have been printing a poem with another Bookseller -- this must have occasioned delay with the Tale, which by the lateness of the season for Publication will suffer very considerably. 8

This surreptitious publication determined Constable to refuse further business with Maturin after Melmoth's completion.

The Universe debacle contributed materially to Maturin's literary problems for the next four years. Before its publication, Constable had indicated possible interest in a sequel to -- but only after the completion of -- Melmoth. Maturin, however, wanted a more immediate agreement, to no avail. In April 1820 -- that is, after Constable had registered his disapproval of The Universe transaction, and before the completion of Melmoth -- Maturin again tried to interest him in the sequel. Constable's stance on this topic had eloquently hardened:

I am extensively engaged in the works of the Author of Waverley for whom during the last six months I have published two works -- & am engaged to bring out two others during the present year these added to my other undertakings -- I find quite enough for me at present.

I feel much obliged by the confidence with which you treat me & for the friendly preference which you are disposed to give me -- on the other hand feeling like dispositions towards you -- I would now take the liberty of recommending you accept Mr. Colburn's offer for the next four volumes of Tales without awaiting the result of further correspondence on the subject with my house--.... 9

The bluff failed again. At this stage, Melmoth was eighteen months overdue, and Constable preferred prompter dealings than those he had experienced with Maturin. The turning point in Constable's attitude seems to be Maturin's publishing and, presumably, working on The Universe in spite of the delay which that course could have caused in the

Melmoth project. As a result of that poem, therefore, Maturin lost the interest of his second publisher. The poem also cost him a third publisher, the same Colburn who had offered to publish Melmoth's sequel and by whom Maturin had tried to retain Constable as publisher.

In spite of Constable's understandable suspicions that The Universe endeavours diverted energy rightfully belonging to Melmoth, Maturin in fact had devoted little time to it because someone else wrote<sup>10</sup> it for him. Upon publication, he had agreed to tell Colburn its background. Maturin reneged. Learning of his duplicity, Colburn refused any further business, including the partially completed sequel to Melmoth. Maturin soon realized his status with Colburn, although<sup>11</sup> Colburn never wrote to him. Thereafter, Maturin again tried to excite Constable's competitive nature as a last resort. Constable responded with chilling irony:

Melmoth has just been completed at Press....

The reasons which induced us (or rather I should say obliged us) to decline entering into any new engagement with you still continue to operate -- it will require some months before the success of Melmoth is ascertained & besides the times & state of trade are such as to compel me to decline for the present any new literary undertaking -- but the state of things will not I hope be any material interruption to the progress of your literary engagements seeing that Mr. Colbourn of London who must be differently circumstanced in regard to the number of his speculations is so ready to meet your views -- and as I took the liberty to remark on a former occasion so kindly disposed towards you -- 12

Maturin's bluff failed and, because he had spent most of his Melmoth money, his situation degenerated rapidly. From October 1820 until late June 1822, he could not find another publisher. During this period,

his desperate circumstances augmented, as he indicated to Scott in October 1821:

My circumstances are these -- I am to receive £ 500 for my next romance which will be published in spring, but in the interval I and my family are -- almost starving --

I believe the annals of medicity [sic] record no greater instance of actual wretchedness --

I am distrained for taxes, under ejectment for rent, and have no more than eleven pounds on earth for my subsistence till my book comes out -- 13

Whatever response Scott gave, Maturin applied to Hurst & Robinson with some encouragement on June 25, 1822 (see pp. 205 ff. below), some eight months after his application to Scott. It is possible the work alluded to in his letter to Scott was the Melmoth sequel. His agreement with Hurst & Robinson, however, was for The Albigenses. It would appear that local pressures -- in addition to Colburn's indifference -- discouraged his continuing the provocatively anti-Catholic material of his Irish efforts. This final romance is Maturin's response to these pressures.

Because of his disappointments with Colburn and Constable, and because of the vague Irish Catholic threats, Maturin altered his determination to publish a sequel to his much misunderstood Melmoth. As early as 1821 -- before Hurst & Robinson accepted The Albigenses, and during his search for a publisher for the projected sequel -- Maturin wrote to Lady Morgan's husband:

'You terrify me by saying there is a prejudice against me amongst the Catholics; what have I done? I have never been a partizan -- my voice was never heard at a meeting -- I am not a public man in the least -- what can I have done?' 14

But Maturin sensed that the tone of the anti-monastic sentiments dramatized in Melmoth might be resented; and, in The Albigenses, he replaced it with an amusing and temperate depiction of the Abbey of Normoutier. In the latter, monks behave very much like other people -- neither worse nor better -- and they are contrasted to aspects of Protestant fanaticism.

During the early 1820's, Catholic emancipation efforts through both political influence and terrorism in Ireland intensified considerably. The terrorism assumed the Whiteboy tactics of intimidation in agrarian communities described in Chapter III above.

New agrarian disturbances (of 'Ribbonmen') in the south at the beginning of the 1820s, the new administration of Lord Wellesley, who was reputed (an ill-deserved reputation) to favour Catholics, and then O'Connell agitation for emancipation, all gave renewed vigour to Orangeism throughout the country. 15

The relative lull of five years (1815-1820) gave way to renewed antagonisms.

In his History of Ireland, Curtis outlines the situation as follows:

Resolutions in favour of Emancipation passed the House of Commons (in 1821), but...the House of Lords rejected the Bill....Later in the year a royal visit of George IV to Ireland was the first sight of a king that Ireland had had since the Boyne [1690]. It aroused great enthusiasm, but unhappily neither George nor his successors...had a genuine, as distinguished from an official, solicitude for Ireland. In the general neglect of Ireland there was nothing for it but agitation in the country itself to stir the official government to action.

The Catholic-Association was suppressed in 1812...and a mild 'Catholic Board' took its place....In 1823, however, a real forward body appeared in the "Catholic Association of Ireland", led by O'Connell and Sheil....Pledged to obtain emancipation by legal and constitutional measures, and confining itself to petitions and correspondence, the Association had members paying a modest annual subscription and a body of supporters throughout Ireland, where collectors in every parish collected what was called the "Catholic Rent" of poor supporters at a penny per month. The movement spread like heather alight, and with the funds thus raised the Catholic cause

could be advanced in the newspapers in both countries, popular opinion formed, and the unjust proceedings of landlords and Orangemen contested in the courts. 16

The British government continued to ignore Catholic demands for political emancipation, thereby implicitly condoning the actions of the Orange societies in their crude bid to retain Anglo-Irish ascendancy. This attitude, however, produced results antithetical to the British government's intentions. Not only did Catholic society rally behind O'Connell, but the Catholic Church too became a powerful force in the Emancipation efforts, although it had remained relatively and officially uninvolved during the eighteenth and first two decades of the nineteenth centuries.

This general agitation, directed and articulated by the Catholic Association, compelled Maturin to reconsider his projected sequel to what was considered the virulently anti-Catholic Melmoth the Wanderer; and his last novel reflects Maturin's sensitivity to the changing face of the Irish problems. MacDonagh outlines the highlights of this change:

Militant, doctrinaire nationalism declined immediately after the Act of Union. Robert Emmet's Dublin Rebellion of 1803 was a sordid fiasco, even if it subsequently added to the rhetoric and hagiography of the Republicans. The critical happenings of the first half of the nineteenth century belong to another sphere. The failure to grant Catholic Emancipation, and the attempt (1812-1813) of the British government to intervene in the elections of the Irish Catholic bishops, led the Church into participation in parliamentary politics. This had momentous consequences. It also destroyed the governmental strategy of taming the Catholic masses through influencing the priests, the only extensive literate Catholic group and in many ways the natural and inevitable leaders of their congregations. The Church had unmatched resources of organization and management in Ireland; once these were thrown into battle, it emerged, not only victorious on the issue which had aroused it to action, but also politically conscious and effective. The Church-in-politics was one of the main determinants of nineteenth-century Irish history.... 17

The Church had far better resources as the leader of native Ireland than many institutions, including the British government and the Orangemen, realized. These two parties, for example, attacked the native Irish in various ways, thus precipitating Ribbonmen and Whiteboy retaliation. But they attacked only the symptoms and left the causes unattended. Maturin, on the other hand, remained aloof from all parties and wrote against the Roman Catholic Church as an institution. However, because he feared Catholic retaliation, and because his earlier novels, particularly Melmoth, had been misunderstood, he deliberately wrote The Albigenses as it appeared. In it, he included some obnoxious Protestants, subdued his emphasis upon superstitious and irresponsible Catholics, and emphasized action rather than a declamatory theme. In writing it, too, he separated Catholicism as a political force from the main body of the Catholic participants.

The Albigenses concludes with the marriages of the heroes to the heroines -- Sir Paladour to Lady Isabelle, and Sir Amirald to Genevieve -- all of whom live together in the prospect of harmony. The heroes are the sons of Count Raymond of Toulouse, the occasional protector and martial leader of the Albigenses; Isabelle is a relative and dependent of the Lord of Courtenaye, a superstitious supporter of the crusades against the Albigenses; and Genevieve is the daughter of the Albigensian spiritual leader, Pierre. These four characters encounter each other at the first battle outside Courtenaye Castle, and

marry after the second and final battle at Tarascon. As the tale opens, however, all are unknown to each other and are but pawns in the Albigensian efforts to preclude annihilation by the crusaders.

The story opens in France in 1216 with the Albigensian forces threatening Courtenaye Castle. A cowardly cripple, the Lord of Courtenaye, has summoned the crusaders to defend him. • They are arriving, led by two powerful and rival leaders. One is the blunt, ruthless, and influential champion of the church, Simon de Montfort; the other is a self-confessed sceptic, ambitious of the power of the Church could provide him, the Bishop of Toulouse. Included in their ranks are Sir Paladour and Sir Amirald. Upon their arrival, Sir Paladour becomes entranced by Lady Isabelle, and his love is returned.

In their first attack against the Albigenses, the crusaders miscalculate their power and are routed, leaving Sir Paladour, Sir Amirald, and de Montfort among the wounded. The Bishop now assumes full command. Meanwhile, Lady Isabelle flees her vantage point, is intercepted by a strange knight, and is taken to the island fortress of an outlaw. Sir Paladour recovers sufficiently to pursue her, and he too is taken prisoner. Sir Amirald, more gravely wounded, is discovered, hidden, and nursed by Genevieve. The first battle concludes, then, with a chance victory for the Albigenses and with the union of the lovers.

Although precariously united, the future lovers are also

separated from their respective camps. Sir Paladour and Lady Isabelle eventually escape from the outlaws' captivity and return to Castle Courtenaye where they are to marry. Fate intervenes in the person of Marie de Mortemar, who burns the lord of the castle and his attendants. She then reminds Paladour of a youthful vow to destroy the last surviving member of her enemy's family. When he realizes that this survivor is his own beloved Isabelle, he attempts to thwart fate by stabbing himself. Isabelle, however, interferes and is stabbed. Mad with despair, Paladour wanders off to join the Albigenses and to die fighting. Isabelle recovers, is disguised as a page by the relenting Mortemar, and attends Paladour. They travel to Tarascon where the Albigenses and the crusaders are to encounter in the novel's climactic and final battle.

Meanwhile, Genevieve's merciful tending to an enemy is discovered and she is banished to Toulouse. Although captured by the Bishop who wants her for a mistress, she escapes and re-encounters Amirald, who now avows his love for her. They ultimately arrive at Tarascon and join the Albigenses. After the final battle and the defeat of the crusaders, the heroes marry the heroines, in spite of class differences, and live in the prospect of uniform harmony.

With The Albigenses, Maturin in some measure avoided offending the critics, his publisher, and the Irish Catholics. Contemporary critics consistently claimed it Maturin's best work, although for a variety of reasons. The sympathetic reviewer for Scots Magazine, for



example, conveys an interest in Maturin himself:

This is really a very good Romance; -- not exactly so original as we might have expected from Mr Maturin, but all the more reasonable, perhaps, on that account; possessing much eloquence, some pathos, great bustle and variety of incident, a few absurdities, and not a few specimens of exaggeration and bad taste. There is an obvious improvement, however, in this last particular, since the publication of *Melmoth*, which we can attribute only to the author's having abandoned the Devil and all his works.... 18

It is Maturin's restraint which attracts this reviewer, although he notes ~~that~~ this restraint is still limited. The Westminster Review praised its historically accurate depiction of manners and customs:

But we can confidently state, to the readers of works of this nature, that, with all its faults, they will find the *Albigenses* well worth a perusal. They will meet, in the first place, with a very vivid general picture of the manners, habits, and tones of feeling, of a most singular and interesting, if not a most enviable state of society -- a picture, they may rest assured, very little if at all exaggerated, either in its individual features or its general effect. 19

Finding comfort in its historical viability, this reviewer, contrary to the previous example, finds little exaggeration. The final example comes from the London Monthly Review, in which the reviewer extolls the novel's morality:

It undoubtedly...discovers riper and more enlarged powers than any single one among his former productions; it displays wider views, more information, reflection, and research; and it is directed to higher and more important objects, viz. the inculcation of religious toleration, humanity, and peace, than we find in many of our modern historical romances. 20

These reviewers all commend aspects which, in his other novels, had been condemned.

One reason for its critical acclaim lies in the novel's recognizable format: the historical romance. In a letter in which he tries

to interest his new publisher, Hurst Robinson & Company, Maturin sells the romance in this way:

it is an historical romance founded on an interesting and hitherto untouched-on portion of the History of Europe in the feudal ages and has been flattered by some literary men towhom [sic] I have read it, with a strong resemblance to "Ivanhoe" which I admit was my model, -- I have studiously avoided the faults so justly charged on Melmoth, and tried to form myself on the style of my friend Sir Walter Scott. 21

As Idman suggests, "That most contemporary critics...hailed The Albigenses as Maturin's best work only proves their partiality for the style in which it was written...." 22 In place of the originality required for the expression of his religious interests of the previous novels, Maturin had made peace with the reading public and, by extension, the critics by utilizing the accepted form. Further, the fact that The Albigenses had been published at all -- let alone with the promise of two sequels as his preface indicated -- suggests that his relations with a publisher had been satisfactorily re-established. 23 But it is the comments of the reviewer for the London Monthly Review which account for Maturin's placating the Irish Catholic. In writing about "religious toleration, humanity, and peace" -- however superficially -- in The Albigenses, Maturin ostensibly sought peace with the Irish Catholics, too. To this end, he relocated the battlefields; and, although the conflict remains the same, it is this time overshadowed by the narrative action.

The success of The Albigenses lay in Maturin's ability to abstract the essence of the religious conflict that he had described in the

Irish settings in his earlier novels; that is, whereas the Catholic and Protestant conflict had earlier been set in contemporary Ireland, in this novel they confront each other in thirteenth-century France. He has, in effect, combined the chief enemies to social harmony from both Women and Melmoth, and has further relegated them to a secondary role in The Albigenses with the Bishop representing one party, and Mephibosheth the other. Furthermore, in this novel the characters are mere pawns at the mercy of the more powerful though minor characters. The combination covered his theological tracks.

In all his earlier novels, Maturin had presented the conflict in terms of the fortunes of the heroes and heroines; that is, the conflict and the main characters were one. In both The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian, he had characterized the native Irish as an irresponsible and occasionally violent group. From this viewpoint, their moribund Gaelic culture and their hopes for future Ireland as a nation depended solely upon a new Anglo-Irish squirearchy. In the former, he described the weaknesses of both the native Irish and the old Anglo-Irish squirearchy as well as the necessary course of the new in terms of the hero's adventures. In the latter, the Gaelic nation's best hopes are embodied in the doomed hero's efforts. In both cases, Ireland's current dilemma is portrayed in terms of the hero and his actions. During this early stage in Maturin's writing career (1807-1812), too, Ireland's Union with England remained tenuous. In Women, the hero becomes involved with fanatical Catholics, agnostics, and fanatical Protestants, the last being alarmingly similar to the fanatical

Catholics. The hero's only course is to die with Eva, the single true Christian among the dramatis personae. In the other novel of this period, Melmoth, the focal figure and heroine, Melmoth and Immalee, interact with Catholic and Protestant alike. Melmoth is damned, and the Catholic establishment is incapable of punishing Immalee as she dies breathing the uncorrupted spirit of Christianity. Overall, mankind's avarice and penchant for evil is cloaked in the mantle of religion -- Catholicism and Protestantism. In both novels, the hero and heroine are involved directly in the religious dispute. At this stage of Maturin's writing career (1817-1820), Gaelic extremism was not a chief concern because Ireland had committed all its resources to the English cause at Waterloo; that is, the threat of more French invasions in support of Gaelic and Catholic nationalism had been destroyed. With the re-assertion of Catholic claims embodied in the formation of the Catholic Association, however, and with his personal fear of persecution, Maturin directed the action of his final novel away from contemporary Ireland; and further, the heroines and colourless heroes, at the beginning of the tale, are ostracized from the political conflict -- that is, the war between Crusader and Albigensian, between Catholic and Protestant. Nonetheless, Maturin directed The Albigenses, as he had all his other novels, to the Irish question.

In examining the consistency of Maturin's vision of Ireland's destiny, it is instructive to consider the consistency of character-motifs.

Idman claims that Maturin's characters are the weakest element of the novel and that they are drawn from types established by Scott. He states, for example, that Ivanhoe's Rebecca "obviously served as a model to Genevieve...";<sup>25</sup> that "Sir Ezzelin de Verac would scarcely have been born but for the existence of Sir Piercie Shafton in The Monastery...";<sup>26</sup> that "The picture drawn of the life and manners of the Albigenses is, in some essentials, inspired by the descriptions of the Covenanters in Old Morality...";<sup>27</sup> and finally, that Marie de Mortemar is "A personage [who]...through the influence of Scott, [had] occupied Maturin's imagination, the old Irishwoman in Women...."<sup>28</sup>

It was, he suggests, a composite of Meg Merrilies [Guy Mannering, 1815], Magdalena Greame [The Abbot, 1820], Norna [The Pirate, 1822], and Ulrica [Ivanhoe, 1820]. But it is equally plausible to assert that Maturin's characters, essentially, are original, that they are either direct transpositions or composites of characters from his own novels. This supposition gains significance in view of the fact that he maintains the same basic conflict of Catholic versus Protestant in which both remain the spiritually blind parties described in all his previous novels.

It is as easy to find prototypes of Marie de Mortemar, Genevieve, de Verac, and the Albigensian camp, in Maturin's pre-Waverley novels as well as his later novels as it is from Scott's novels. Thus, for example, de Verac and de Simonville represent effeminate characterizations of The Wild Irish Boy's Anglo-Irish dandies, Roschamps and

Orberry. More significant, perhaps, is the character of Marie de Mortemar. Although similar to Meg Merrilies and the others Idman mentions, her role duplicates that of Schemoli of The Fatal Revenge in addition to elements of Melmoth's Biddy Brannigan and Women's demented and fanatical Catholic woman, Zaira's mother. Like Schemoli, she aligns herself with her enemy, the Lord of Courtenaye, to wreak an exquisite revenge; like Biddy, she is portrayed as a local wisewoman who preys upon her victim's superstitions as, in fact, Schemoli had done; and, like Zaira's mother, her madness is the result of former maltreatment. In a similar way, the whole extreme side of the Albigensian camp shadows the Wentworth household, but in thirteenth-century France, not nineteenth-century Dublin. In particular, the Albigensian deacon, Mephibosheth, dramatizes the zealous, irrational, and inflated sense of religious self-importance embodied in Macowen of Women. Genevieve, too, shares characteristics and qualities with Eva of Women and Immalee of Melmoth, particularly in her instinctively Christian behaviour in the face of religious perversion and dogma. Not only do these and other characters have prototypes in earlier novels, but further, those are novels in which Protestants oppose Catholics against the unobtrusive background of a common sense religious toleration.

Yet not all characters in The Albigenses have their prototypes in Maturin's canon; this is a significant factor in understanding his

intentions. The Bishop of Toulouse, as Idman suggests, is the best-drawn character of the novel. As a career churchman who uses his ecclesiastical trust for personal aggrandisement, he is original to Maturin's cast; and more important, he is a product of Maturin's new sensitivity to Catholic opinion. The Bishop is essential to Maturin's efforts to subdue his penchant for painting Catholicism and Catholics in unadmirable terms. He is used, in fact, to separate Catholicism from Catholics.

Although in Melmoth Maturin had depicted several admirable Catholic clergymen as well as several obnoxious Anglicans and other Protestants including Melmoth himself, the Irish Catholics responded only to the depictions of despicable Catholics. In The Albigenses, he could no longer only imply that it was the Roman Catholic Establishment and not the individual Catholic which evoked his condemnation. To this end, the Bishop of Toulouse **not** only embodies the worst abuses of spiritual trust; rather, he describes his own motives as being those of the Church Establishment. When he tries to persuade Genevieve to become his mistress, for example, he describes the Catholic Church's unlimited power and soul-destroying influence:

The vast system of which I am no feeble or inert engine, hastens to the summation of its workings -- the conquest of the world. That old and mighty Rome, of whom pedants prate, subdued but the meaner part of man -- his body; but our Rome enslaves the mind -- that mind, which, once enslaved, leaves nothing for opposition or for defeat. Look round thee -- a peevish dotard in the seven-throned palace tramples with his palsied foot on the necks of the crowned kings of earth, from the shores of the Orcades to

the cliffs of Calpe. He stamps with it, and their blood, their treasures, and their vassals are poured on Asia, making the eastern world tremble to its centre: for ours is the power that not only binds the spirit but makes it clasp its chain; ours are the powers of the world to come; all that is potent in life, all that is mysterious in futurity, the fears, the hopes, the hearts of mankind, all are ours; and shall we not wield the weapon their credulity has put into our hands for our own behoof? -- All knowledge is ours -- to the laity the book is closed -- the key is lost -- every avenue to science, every loophole through which light might wander, is barred up or sternly sentinelled; the tomes of ancient wisdom are buried in monkish libraries, unfolded, save by daring hands like mine. Under the old tyrants of the earth the decree of a senate might desolate a province, and the frolic of an emperor consume a city; but when did it chain up the arm of man, or wither his soul within him, like a papal interdict, at whose reported sound the bridegroom drops the hand of the betrothed, the mourner quits the unburied corpse, and the priest flies from the altar? I tell thee, maiden, the eagles of Ancient Rome would be blasted if they dared to grasp the thunder that is now wielded by the hand of every busy legate. 30

In this novel, individual Catholics are harmless because they are but pawns in Rome's quest for a new empire; and it is this new empire -- its power and willingness to enslave mankind's mind to serve its own political and economic interests -- against which Maturin directed his fears as an Irish novelist.

In addition to the setting, and to the character and role of the Bishop, another feature intended to assuage Irish Catholic opinion is the absence of a middle path between the warring Protestant and Catholic factions. From The Wild Irish Boy to Melmoth, Maturin had consistently included the presence of a Church of England clergyman who served as a peaceful foil against distraught factions, and who, at some time during the narrative, attempted to influence the behaviour of the



hero. In The Albigenses, however, there is no mediator to influence the heroes' actions because they themselves are independent of the action. They alone emerge from the final conflagration with the prospect of future harmony. The two heroes, sons of the Catholic Raymond of Toulouse, are numbered among the Crusaders at the beginning of the novel. They and their heroines are at various times victims of both parties. By the end, they have joined the Albigenses, and the question raised is not the possible conflict of their differing religious backgrounds, but whether or not those of high -- Paladour, Amirald, and Isabelle -- and low -- Genevieve -- birth can live harmoniously. That is, stripped of the mantle of romance, the problem of harmony devolves from the politico-religious plane of the earlier novels to a social one.

Transcending the romance, the fundamental conflict described in The Albigenses remains consistent with that expressed in various guises in his earlier novels -- the exploitation of others by means and under the protection of a faulty religious system. And yet, his romance resolution -- high and low classes as well as individual Catholics and Albigensians reconciling their differences -- bespeaks an optimistic resolution to Ireland's cultural, religious, and social problems which Maturin did not share. He had, in fact, voiced similar optimism only once before. In The Wild Irish Boy, Ormsby is re-integrated into his household and into enlightened Anglo-Irish squirearchy after numerous political and social trials; but this novel had been written under very different circumstances. As it stands, The Albigenses' resolution

itself represents a major and uncharacteristic concession to the reading public in general, and to the Irish Catholic reading public in particular. This novel is not, however, Maturin's final statement on the state of Ireland's future.

## II

With the characteristic though tragic fate shared by most of his heroes, Maturin failed to achieve fame until several months before his death; and further, this fame rested not on his fictional attempts but upon his final publication -- Five Sermons on the Errours of the Roman Catholic Church (May, 1824). Because he had lived in an Ireland where religious and social issues intertwined inextricably, he had directed his fiction toward illustrating the basis of this conflict. Within six months of his death, he explicitly outlined thoughts which had hitherto been only implicit in his fiction. The result was that his local fame rested upon these explicit comments, while his novels were consigned to the past.

Maturin's status at the time of his death is as nebulous as his fictional efforts. His most careful biographer, Niilo Idman, clarifies the apocryphal notion that Maturin precipitated his own death through some mistake about medicine, but he likewise misrepresents local reaction to the fact of death:

The death was briefly announced by the local papers; in The Morning Star of Nov. 3 there was this brief necrology:

'In him the poor have lost a kind friend; our religion a firm supporter; and literature one of its brightest ornaments.' 31

Maturin's death, on the contrary, was broadcast extensively, suggesting that at least his local fame was widespread, and that the loss was considered grave. The question remains, however, upon what did his local fame rest?

Although obituaries of even important local figures received five or six lines, the obituary from which Idman apparently extracted his necrology ran approximately two hundred and fifty words. Because of its unusual thoroughness, it is here quoted in full from The Dublin

Correspondent:

On Saturday evening, after a protracted illness, the Rev. C. R. Maturin, M.A., Curate of St. Peter's. In him the poor have lost a kind friend; our religion a firm supporter; and literature one of its brightest ornaments. As a preacher, Mr. Maturin was highly esteemed; his sermons were masterly compositions; his reasoning incontrovertible; and his language the most calculated to subdue the heart, and to demand attention. His six Controversial Sermons, preached during last Lent, have been lately printed, and are now before the public. They show the author to be a profound scholar and an acute reasoner; never, since Dean Kirwan's time, were such crowds attracted to the Parish Church, as during the delivery of these sermons; neither rain or storm could subdue the anxiety of all classes and all persuasions to hear them; and did he leave no other monument whereon to rest his fame, these sermons alone would be sufficient. But Mr. Maturin's genius was as expanded as his learning was deep and various; his Novels and plays, if they cannot be ranked amongst the higher productions of this kind, evince wonderful power of imagination, while the beauty of his language stands unrivalled; indeed, we have seen it observed by some of the Reviewers, that there was no writer of the present day who had a greater range of thought, or greater command of language than this Rev. Gentleman. 32

Excusing his literary limitations, the obituist eulogizes Maturin's final

publication, The Five Sermons, a title paraphrased into "Six Controversial Sermons". A second, and longer, obituary appeared the following morning in The Morning Register. In it, Maturin's religious endeavours provide the sole topic:

It is with great regret that we announce the decease of this gentleman, which took place on Saturday evening, at Harold's-cross.

When, on a recent occasion, we were called upon to animadvert upon Mr. Maturin's sermons, and on the circumstances that accompanied their publication, we were very far from anticipating his so speedy removal from the scene of earthly contentions. Had we entertained, at the time, (which we did not) any personal displeasure at his theological diatribes, the awful event which had occurred, would at once disarm our resentment -- "we war not with the dead." Indeed, it is but justice to state our conviction, that pecuniary difficulties, which reflect but small credit on the establishment on which Mr. M. was dependent, had more to do in hurrying him into his crusade against the Catholics, than any animosity he nourished, either as a man or a clergyman, against that body. In the wretched state of degradation, intellectual, no less than political, to which the Union has reduced this city, we can ill afford to part with any portion of its resident talent; and we feel, that in this gentleman's death, Dublin has sustained a loss, it is not soon likely to retrieve. The temptations of a better market, and a more extensive circle of admirers, withdraw from our ill-fated land, all who are not detained by strong feelings of patriotism, as soon as a consciousness of merit opens those brighter prospects, which await genius in all its departments, in the great capital of the empire. "Star after star decays;" and in a few years, Ireland will be as bankrupt in wit as it is in fortunes. We have much pain in adding, that unless the dignitaries of the establishment step forward to the assistance of Mr. Maturin's rising family, their situation may be most destitute and deplorable, and we shall wait with some anxiety to learn what portion of those endowments, originally destined to the purposes of charity and hospitality, will find its way from the wealthy and mitred depositaries of the church's emoluments, and stray into the service of the poor curate's helpless progeny.

The immediate cause of Mr. Maturin's death was, we understand, his having taken a lotion, containing a large quantity of laudanum, in mistake for medicine intended for the stomach. 33

The indignation and bitterness not against Maturin but against "the wretched state of degradation...to which the Union has reduced this

city... " had provided both the environment in and the subject matter about which Maturin wrote. The Morning Register's suggestion, however, that "pecuniary difficulties had more to do in hurrying him into his crusade against the Catholics, than any animosity he nourished, either as a man or a clergyman, against that body" is more an account of the Church of England's values than an explanation of Maturin's motives.

Maturin wrote The Albigenses while Catholic emancipation in Ireland organized, and published it as the Catholic Association's efforts gained momentum. In writing it, he strove to avoid the pervasive misunderstanding which had greeted his former productions:

I put forward my present work with diffidence. No one can think more moderately of his powers than I do mine; but I must demand of my reader's consideration, that the opinions and errors of my imaginary characters shall not be transferred to my own. In what singularly severe the injurious spirit this has been hitherto done, I need not say. 34

By dissociating himself from the "opinion and errors" of his earlier fictional characters, particularly Melmoth, Maturin sought to obviate the usual critical accusations of immorality which greeted his productions (see p. 9 above). In the case of The Albigenses, he gave little opportunity for the critic to err in the usual manner, if its favourable critical reception be used as a gauge. One reason lies in the fact that in this novel, he assigned to neither hero any specific social, political, or religious platform which could have been transferred either favourably or otherwise to himself. In acknowledging receipt of a complimentary copy, Scott himself intimated how the usual criticism had been avoided:

Your very interestin[g] volumes arrived safe and gave me high pleasure in the perusal -- there is in the Albigenses, as in all you write, the strongest traces of the vis poetica, enough to make

the stock in trade of a dozen modern rhymers. The reader may also, if he pleases, acquire much knowledge while enjoying much pleasure. The characters are drawn with great force & spirit -- a little exaggerated perhaps -- but not more so than is pardonable when we look back upon ancient days and form our calculations of morality upon the heroic scale. 35

Through his euphemism, Scott notes that the characters are depicted --as were moral issues themselves-- in terms of a black and white morality. By implication, Scott's observation suggests that those moral nuances within previous focal characters which had been ascribed to Maturin's own moral ambiguity no longer existed. Although his major characters do not offer Maturin's usual criticism of Catholicism, a minor character, the Bishop of Toulouse, embodies and articulates many traits of the Catholic establishment which Maturin hated and feared. This exception, however, is in no way ambiguous. The general dearth of anti-Catholic material, however, is more than compensated for in his final publication, The Five Sermons, which appeared three months after The Albigenes. In effect, these sermons embody the theme rightfully belonging to -- but divorced from the action of -- The Albigenes.

Whatever Maturin's motives for printing the Five Sermons, its publication initially pleased him, although it also gained him the enmity of the Irish Catholics. It was printed at his parish's expense, a factor indicative of the stir the Catholic Association had caused. It was also a best-seller locally, as he explained to Scott:

--during last Lent, I preached five sermons on the 'Corruptions

of the Church of Rome, ' which drew congregations of 3000 persons every evening. They have since been published at the expence of the parish, and their success in Dublin has been unexampled --

Possibly your good people of Edinburgh would have no objection to see the scarlet robes of the old lady get a good dusting. . . . 36

Unknown to Maturin, its brisk sale led to a second edition in 1826.

It was further to return him to the midst of the controversy he had sought to avoid with The Albigenses but which he had fought by means of his fiction throughout his life.

Three months after the publication of the Five Sermons in October 1824, Lady Morgan's husband, one of Maturin's doctors, summarized his social as well as medical expectations:

Poor Maturin is ill, severely ill; we (the Drs.) have sent him into the country, I fear, to die. Not contented with drawing the 'saints' down upon him, he has attacked the 'papishes' and is now in the condition somewhat of a nut between the two blades of a nutcracker. If the poor fellow should live, and the two parties abuse him into a good living, there might be some good for it, for he has a family of fine children. I fear, however, there is little chance of either. 37

The " 'saints' " of course are the Methodists he had satirized in Women.

The " 'papishes' " or Irish Catholics had been irritated by the general tone of Melmoth; and, although avoided in The Albigenses, had again been stirred to active resentment by the Five Sermons. Describing the insidious nature of the Catholic institution in the first sermon, for example, he echoes the Bishop's speech in The Albigenses:

...this system of opposition to the word of God was framed for no spiritual purpose...but solely for the purpose of acquiring earthly domination, wealth and aggrandizement -- and that such powers were attained and exercised, even to the deposition of kings, the overthrow of governments, the dissolution of the allegiance of

subjects, and the subversion and distraction of all order, social, civil, and moral -- till mankind, indignant, grappled with the intolerable yoke, and burst forth into the vindication of their civil and religious liberty... more than half Europe, and, oh! that I could add unhappy Ireland, has rejected its impositions, and defied its power -- even now, 'cabined, cribbed, confined' as she is, the spirit of that church is as despotic, interfering, exclusive, and sanguinary as ever ... time has not taught her conviction, nor misfortune humility.... 38

In general terms, Maturin saw Ireland's hopes for peace retarded by the continued influence and power of the Catholic church. One reason why he was so frightened was because of the increasing political influence being wrought by the Catholic Association. With any Catholic emancipation, Ireland must regress socially to a plight even worse than contemporary conditions:

It is not from this country that we are to take our estimate of the Roman Catholick Church -- here, under the eye of a more enlightened community, her laity are reserved and circumspect, and her priests cannot, as in other countries -- play such fantastic tricks before high heaven, as might make angels weep. Look to where she has established her headquarters -- look to Spain -- to Portugal -- to Italy -- what a picture do they present? A Clergy without learning -- a nobility without education -- a commonality without occupation -- a population without subsistence -- a mass of mendicants without number -- and a country without a national character, save that of indolence, beggary, sensuality, and superstition -- a country that unites the widest extremes of mental and moral degradation, and combines all refinements of vice, with the simplicity of the profoundest ignorance -- where the libertine rushes reeking from the brothel to the confessional, and the shrine gives alternate shelter to the penitent and the assassin -- a country, where the native, the born vassal of the deadliest of despots -- priestly power -- dare not even call his soul his own -- where he lives without one generous purpose -- one lofty thought, one glorious aspiration after mental distinction or moral utility -- nay, even one improvement in science, or one effort of imagination; for the latter would consign his book to the Index Expurgatorius; and the former, his person to the prison of the Inquisition -- in a word, where those who slumber on the surface of the ground, scarce differ from those who slumber below it, and the tenant of the soil is like the tenant of the grave. Such is



the picture of Italy, the head quarters of the Roman Catholic religion -- such are the effects of that religion, where it is permitted to reign unbounded and uncontrouled. 39

Maturin's explicit description of what he considered the inevitable product of "priestly power" must be -- apparent in varying degrees in all his novels -- angered the "'papishes' ". By 1824, the Catholics in Ireland were, in fact, seeking political power. It was Maturin's contention, however, that they should seek spiritual, not political, emancipation.

Even in this collection of sermons purportedly directed toward exposing and correcting the spiritual misdirection of Irish Catholic endeavours, Maturin also directs his criticism to Protestant religious abuses, as he had done in most of his fiction, including The Albigenes and Melmoth. He mentions "Popery" and "unitarianism" in the same breath; he criticizes Calvinists, Methodists, and other sectarians for confounding the Church of England rites with those of the Catholics; he criticizes the upper classes who do not recognize "truth", and the lower classes of Protestants for mixing and imbibing religious direction from the Catholics; and he criticizes most "Protestants" for worshipping not by faith but by habit. In essence, Maturin's vision was consistent from his first novel through to his last; and further, his main theme expressed in these novels also finds expression in his sermons.

These Five Sermons were well-received. Even the periodicals found reason for praise because not only were they good in themselves, and not only did their appearance lend articulated support to English anti-Emancipation propaganda, but they marked Maturin's final return from his immoral novel-writing to his proper station as a divine. The Gentleman's Magazine reviewer, for example, comments upon the previous inconsistency of Maturin's romancing and sermonizing:

But we hope the impudence is gone, and that in future we shall see the evident high powers of Mr. Maturin employed as they are in the work before us. 40

This reviewer then praises Maturin's efforts unabashedly:

Though heavy writers may mean well, they will never be read, and of course do little good. But such brilliancy, such energy, such originality; in the whole such splendour of eloquence and genius, as these sermons show, will not fail to command perusal; and the wise and the good will know that the intention is also excellent, namely, the check of folly and mischief in exposure of the baneful results of Popery. If, as is undeniable, men have a civil right to be silly; yet such silliness may become a public evil; and the palliation or encouragement of Popery be as absurd as to recommend us to retain the habits of children when we have become adults. 41

But Maturin had not finished his debate with the Catholics upon publication of The Five Sermons, as the posthumous appearance of his sole Irish folktale intimates.

42

When Maturin died, the New Monthly Magazine recorded that he had begun to compose a history of his own family. His son's letter to Scott also mentions this partially written family romance as among his papers. 43 Earlier, in April 1818, Constable had asked him to contribute to his "Monthly Magazine... Any short article on the state or Manners of

Ireland...." Maturin's single short story, "Leixlip Castle", appeared in The Literary Souvenir published by Hurst Robinson & Company, in 1825, and is possibly part of all three projects. It is equally likely that it was to have been part of the Melmoth sequel. Maturin's own introductory note provides some clue:

The incidents of the following tale are not merely founded on fact, they are facts themselves, which occurred at no very distant period in my own family. The marriage of the parties, their sudden and mysterious separation, and their total alienation from each other until the last period of their mortal existence, are all facts. 45

The tale, according to Maturin, is genuine Irish folklore, and is connected in some mysterious manner to his own family. But more significant, the tale affords him yet another platform for criticizing Catholicism. In the first paragraph, he describes the tale's setting, the detail of which is incidental to the plot:

The tranquillity of the Catholics of Ireland during the disturbed periods of 1715 to 1745, was most commendable, and somewhat extraordinary; to enter into an analysis of their probable motives, is not at all the object of the writer of this tale, as it is pleasanter to state the fact of their honour, than at this distance of time to assign dubious and unsatisfactory reasons for it. Many of them, however, showed a kind of secret disgust at the existing state of affairs, by quitting their family residences, and wandering about like persons who were uncertain of their homes, or possibly expecting better from some near and fortunate contingency. 46

In describing the uncharacteristic lull in Catholic agitation, Maturin implies that chaos and civil disorder are the Irish Catholics' desired social norm. This view, in fact, had been a stance consistently maintained throughout his career as both clergyman and novelist. From The Fatal Revenge through to The Albigenses, Maturin combined his

understanding of both Christianity and the social situation in Ireland to express his belief that Ireland's turmoil resulted from the misdirected spiritual energy of several parties. Whether he dramatized the blind adherence of the native Catholics to their defunct Gaelic culture in The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief, the sly and superstitious behaviour of the native peasant in Melmoth, the socially disruptive theological pursuits of the Dublin Evangelical Methodists in Women, or the worship by the English and the Anglo-Irish upper-classes of social or political ritual described in The Wild Irish Boy and Women, Maturin based his descriptions upon his belief that these various forms of worship represented false religions and alienated its adherents from any workable society. To emphasize his point, Maturin often introduced characters whose behaviour is quintessentially Christian. In The Wild Irish Boy and The Milesian Chief, for example, Maturin made his criteria obvious by making Corbett and St. Austin, ministers of the Church of England, the sole examples of the complete Christian personality. In later novels, Anglican ministers no longer represented the only adherents of the Christian way; and, in Women and Melmoth, we also find heroines -- Eva and Immalee -- who are Christians in spite of their church associations. But their purpose remains the same: to provide the criteria against which the behaviour of the other characters must be judged. By relating these conflicts, either directly or indirectly, to Irish society, Maturin illustrated both the reasons for Ireland's turmoil as well as an approach to a solution.

Maturin composed his romances for an English, rather than  
 an Irish, audience because there was little market for fiction in Ireland,  
 and because he wanted to correct what he considered mistaken English  
 conceptions about Ireland. To court an audience, therefore, he used  
 typical conventions; to serve his educational goals, he set his novels  
 in Ireland because he felt that, politically, economically, and culturally,  
 Ireland was the anomaly of modern Europe, and was therefore a suitable  
 setting for romances. To draw attention to the various conflicting  
 forces at work in Irish society, and yet to write recognizable romances,  
 Maturin introduced his topic through the usual romance conventions.  
 As he developed the narrative, however, he abandoned the romance  
 and made the reader consider a particular Irish problem. This com-  
 bination of romance and realism resulted in novels which, while using  
 typical romance features, examined a wide variety of Irish social  
 problems.

Maturin's expressed concern for Ireland was obtrusive in only  
 his first romance, The Fatal Revenge. He composed this novel in the  
 gothic genre because he thought it was popular in England, and also  
 because it was a convenient vehicle by which to examine the anti-social  
 influences of Catholicism. Anti-monastic sentiments were characteristic  
 of the gothic novel, but Maturin transferred his anti-Catholicism from  
 the sixteenth-century Italian setting of the novel to the nineteenth-century  
 Irish setting of his own life. He achieved this by including a "modern"

poem about Ireland, and a statement about his own hope for a valid Irish political identity. The reader was thereby diverted from the gothic romance, and compelled to consider, albeit briefly, Ireland's political problems and, perhaps, to associate them with the Catholic characters of the novel.

In all his other romances, Maturin attempted to educate his reader in the realities of Ireland by beginning his novels in recognizable genres and then developing the action to describe his particular vision. To attract the reader to The Wild Irish Boy, for example, he imitated the title of Lady Morgan's popular novel, The Wild Irish Girl, constructed it around a series of letters, and copied some of his descriptions from newspapers. Furthermore, in a manner similar to other contemporary romances, Maturin introduced an idealistic character into a foreign country -- Ireland -- to fulfill his dreams. Like the heroine of The Milesian Chief, this character possesses many qualities but cannot cope with what he encounters in Ireland because it is so foreign to his expectations. The hero is forced thereby to analyze his romantic preconceptions, and to discard them in the face of a grim political reality. In The Wild Irish Boy, this reality is Britain's unwillingness to solve Ireland's leadership problem; and in The Milesian Chief, it is the natives' fatal determination to live in terms of their long-departed romantic Ireland, a determination which the English heroine at first condones. In The Wild Irish Boy, Maturin fulfilled the readers'

expectations by re-integrating his hero into an Irish society purged of its retarding forces. In The Milesian Chief, Maturin left the readers' expectations unfulfilled in order to underline his view that the romantic view of Ireland was tragic.

Maturin used a similar technique in Women and Melmoth. He began Women, for example, with obvious and humorous satire of both the Evangelical Methodist community and the Anglo-Irish upper-classes in Dublin. As the action developed, however, Maturin confronts the reader with a realistic analysis of the sufferings which accrue from worshipping a false religion. He set most of the action in Dublin because, considering the condition of Irish society, these forces were particularly disruptive. This technique was again used in Melmoth, in which Maturin set the first section in contemporary Ireland and described the tenant-landlord relationship with appalling realism; but he then drew the reader into yet another analysis of false religion, particularly as it influenced the Anglo-Irish landowner.

Maturin's final novel, The Albigenses, epitomized his determination to cater to public taste while making the reader confront reasons for Ireland's woes. This novel begins and concludes according to the conventions of the historical romance, but because he sets the conflict during the Albigensian crusades, he forces the reader to examine some of his ideas about the techniques by which the Church of Rome serves its own, not spiritual, interests.

In view of Maturin's varied efforts to attract readers and to disseminate his understanding of Ireland's problems, those critics who assert that his interests were primarily with gothic terror oversimplify both Maturin's motives for writing and the novels themselves. The gothic devices of monasteries and nefarious monks who preyed upon the Catholics' induced credulity provided a minor dramatic tool which was used in only two of his six novels. In the other four, Maturin described the social and political ramifications of Catholicism as it existed specifically in Ireland. His main interest was Ireland in which the Catholics had agitated for centuries, and in which various Protestants -- English and Anglo-Irish landowners and, later, the Evangelical Methodists -- had provoked the Catholics' active resentment. Maturin's interests were not gothic, nor was he concerned about the justice of the native Catholics' rebellion against an unbearable British colonial policy. Rather, his interests until his death focussed upon regenerating the degraded status quo of the Anglo-Irish -- whom he felt to be the proper leaders of Ireland -- by stressing that any solution to Ireland's problems must be based uncompromisingly upon the true principles of Christianity. In doing so, Maturin was less a gothic novelist than an Anglo-Irishman attempting to define the present, rather than justify the past. He assumed the stance of not of a



novelist interested in producing gothic thrillers, but of a clergyman justifying by controversy his own religious beliefs through the medium of fiction.

## APPENDIX I

In the following letter to Sir Walter Scott, William Basil Maturin listed the literary remains of his father, Charles Robert Maturin. The letter is quoted in full:

Nov<sup>r</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> [1824]

Sir

By My Mothers desire I take the liberty of annexing a list of my late Fathers unpublished Fragments --  
Unfinished preface to a Religious work, written at the age of Twenty at the request of the late Bishop of Meath and never published --  
Essay written some years before, entitled "the Evil effects ascribed to Christianity constitute no valid objection to its divine origin or beneficial tendency" --  
Fragment of a Comic Irish tale entitled "Bills & Protests, " running to, I should think, nearly a volume & a half --  
A few scenes from two unfinished tragedies --  
Fragment of a sketch of the "Maturin Family" -- written shortly before his Death --  
3 perfect sermons, and one unfinished, commenced by my Father almost on his death-Bed.  
Fragments of Poetry, containing unfinished lines on the Death of the Princess Charlotte.  
Unpublished Preface to "Woman" [sic] --  
With regard to the "letters" you have the kindness to mention, we should be de[lighted] to publish, but know not in what [di]rection to apply for them --  
The only copyrights unsold are, those of "Woman" [sic], the Anti-popish sermons, & "Fredolfo" or "Manuel" --

Believe me to be Sir,  
With the sincerest gratitude,  
Your ob<sup>t</sup> humble Serv<sup>t</sup>  
Wm M[aturin]

## APPENDIX II

- 1780: Born September 25 in Dublin.
- 1795: Entered Trinity College, Dublin.
- 1800: Graduated B. A.
- 1803: October 7: "License was granted...to solemnize marriage  
between the Rev<sup>d</sup> Charles Robert Maturin of Camden Street...  
& Henrietta Kingsbury...."  
: Ordained and appointed to curacy of Loughrea, Galway.  
: Robert Emmet's Rebellion.
- 1804: Engineered relocation to curacy at St. Peter's, Dublin.
- 1806: Thrashers' Rebellion in Connaught; Morgan's The Wild Irish Girl.
- 1807: The Fatal Revenge published at own expense.
- 1808: The Wild Irish Boy published at own expense.
- 1809: November: His father dismissed, and Maturin was forced to become self-supporting. Took boarders and pupils to prepare for Trinity College, Dublin.
- 1810: Stood security for someone who defaulted. This added to his financial difficulties.  
: Scott's compassionate review of The Fatal Revenge.
- 1812: Sold copyright for The Milesian Chief, his first profit from writing.  
: December 12: began correspondence with Scott. Sought review writing, unsuccessfully.
- 1813: Wanted to publish sermons; composing an unidentified "poetical Romance" with extreme gothic trappings.
- 1814: Second edition of The Wild Irish Boy appeared of which Maturin was unaware.  
: September: Sent Bertram MS. to Scott.  
: December: Scott forwarded it to Kemble who, at this time was uninterested.

- 1815: June 15: Scott sent Bertram to Byron (associated with Drury Lane).  
 : December 22: Byron accepted Bertram.
- 1816: "Lines on the Battle of Waterloo" sold.  
 : May: Bertram copyright sold to Murray for £ 350; 7 editions in its first year.  
 : Bertram produced and successful. Total profit approximately £ 1000.  
 : Visited London for a disappointing week.  
 : Scott thought Maturin's novels might be reprinted.  
 : July: Morning Chronicle indicated Maturin's probable dismissal because of Bertram.  
 : August: Dismissal threats cease.  
 : Had started to write Manuel.  
 : December: At Scott's request, began to contribute lyrics to Alexander Campbell's Albyn's Anthology.
- 1817: March 8: Manuel produced and failed: Murray printed 3 editions that year but declined further business with him.  
 April: Scott encouraged him to write periodicals.  
 May: Had started to write De Courcy (the working title of Women) to be published by Constable; an unknown admirer named Smith, paid printing costs.  
 : July: Coleridge's destructive but perceptive critique of Bertram appeared in Biographia Literaria.  
 : August: Had started to write another drama, possibly Osmyn.  
 : October: Reviewed Shiel's Apostate in Quarterly, and was also writing a review of Edgeworth's Ormond and Harrington.
- 1818: Women translated into French as Eva, ou amour et religion.  
 : Spring: Women published; copyright not sold.  
 : April: Sermons offered to Constable for £ 100 and accepted.  
 : Melmoth the Wanderer and Osmyn being written.  
 : May : Constable offered uncompleted but "projected... Poem... something like Lalla Rookh...."  
 : August: Lamb persuaded him to submit Fredolfo to Covent Gardens.
- 1819: Sermons published.  
 : Osmyn submitted to Kean and was mislaid.  
 : May: Fredolfo acted; it failed.
- 1820: Received £ 500 for Melmoth from Constable who henceforward refused to publish any more of Maturin's work.

- 1821: Had begun to write The Albigenes which he anticipated would be completed in 1822.
- : Second edition of Sermons appeared.
  - : Melmoth translated into French.
  - : The Universe: A Poem published in his name, although it was composed by James Wills.
- 1823: Melmoth dramatized as Melmoth the Wanderer: A Melo-Dramatic Romance, in Three Acts, by B. West, the text of which was published.
- 1824: The Albigenes was published by Hurst.
- : Second edition of The Fatal Revenge appeared.
  - : February: Thought of visiting Scott.
  - : May: Five Sermons on the Errours of the Roman Catholic Church was published at the desire and expense of his parish.
  - : October 30: Died.
- 1825: "Leixlip Castle: An Irish Family Legend" was published by Hurst, Robinson, & Co., in The Literary Souvenir; or Cabinet of Poetry and Romance.
- : Bertram; or, the Castle of St. Aldobrand... A Romance; based upon Maturin's tragedy.
- 1826: Second edition of Five Sermons appeared.
- : "The Sybil's Prophecy: A Dramatic Fragment" was published by Hurst, Robinson, & Co., in The Literary Souvenir.
- 1828: The Milesian Chief translated into French as Connal, ou les Milésiens.
- 1830: Osmyn the Renegade; or, the Siege of Salarno produced in Dublin, a benefit performance for Maturin's survivors. Ran t hree nights. A copy was sent to Scott.

## FOOTNOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> Oliver MacDonagh, Ireland, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> English writers had characterized the Irish as either violent barbarians or as stage buffoons who, in either case, lacked respectable religion, education, and manners. Implicitly, from a British perspective, they had no values, no dignity, and no manners. For a fuller treatment, see Richard L. and Maria Edgeworth, Essay on Irish Bulls (1802).

<sup>4</sup> See also O'Halloran, Introduction to the Study of the History and Antiquities of Ireland (1772), History of Ireland (1778); Gordon, History of Ireland (1806); Croker, Sketch of Ireland (1808); Hoare, Journal of a Tour of Ireland (1807); Ledwich, Antiquities of Ireland (1790); Plowden, History of Ireland from its union with Great Britain (1811).

<sup>5</sup> The Gaelic Society and the Dublin Library are two of the many organizations. See Maxwell, Dublin Under the Georges, p. 217; Hardiman, Irish Minstrelsy, I, viii. For examples of individual efforts, see Brooke, Reliques of Irish Poetry (1789); Bunting, General Collection of Ancient Irish Music (1796); Morgan, Twelve Original Hibernian Melodies (1805).

<sup>6</sup> The Edgeworths' Essay on Irish Bulls (1802) is an objective evaluation of both Irish and English idiosyncrasies. Instead of presenting only positive and picturesque qualities of the native Irish -- as in Morgan, Patriotic Sketches (1807) -- they present an anecdotal and sardonic reproof of both English as well as Irish behavioural inconsistencies in order to demonstrate that the English as well as the Irish have flaws, but are nonetheless admirable people.

<sup>7</sup> O'Brien, The economic history of Ireland, pp. 368-369; and Maxwell, Dublin Under the Georges, p. 217.

<sup>8</sup>Idman, The Life and Works of Charles Robert Maturin, p. 13; Ratchford and McCarthy, eds., The Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Robert Maturin, pp. 19-20. Details relating to Maturin's varying income are discussed in Chapter III.

<sup>9</sup>This criticism pursued him to his death. See Gentleman's Magazine, XLIV, 348.

<sup>10</sup>See Chapter VII, p. 215, where Maturin's obituary in The Morning Register (November 3, 1824) summarizes his difficulties in terms of Ireland's difficulties.

<sup>11</sup>Idman, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>London Magazine, III, 515.

<sup>13</sup>The Milesian Chief, I, iv-v.

<sup>14</sup>Suphan, "Anzeige des trauerspiels 'Bertram' nebst proben einer uebersetzung", Goethe-jahrbuch, XII, 12.

<sup>15</sup>Baker, The Novel of Sentiment and the Gothic Romance, in The History of the English Novel, V, 219-225.

<sup>16</sup>Railo, The Haunted Castle, p. 359, note 176.

<sup>17</sup>Piper and Jeffares, "Maturin the Innovator", Huntington Library Quarterly, XXI, 270, state that a second edition of The Wild Irish Boy appeared in 1814. In spite of this, only Melmoth and The Fatal Revenge (1807, 1824) were consistently popular. In France, The Fatal Revenge, Women, and Melmoth were translated during his life, and The Milesian Chief, The Wild Irish Boy, and The Albigenses were all translated before 1830.

<sup>18</sup>Idman, pp. 8-9.

<sup>19</sup>Cleeve, Dictionary of Irish Writers, I, 89.

<sup>20</sup>Buchan, "Maturin's Birth-Date", Notes and Queries, (July 8, 1950), p. 302.

<sup>21</sup>Flanagan, The Irish Novelists: 1800-1850, pp. 46-47.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>23</sup>In spite of their frequent references to Idman and Scholten, for example, Piper and Jeffares give Maturin's birth-year as 1782 (p. 261), and give Connal O'Morven's name as Connal O'Riordan (p. 275).

<sup>24</sup>De Blácam, A First Book of Irish Literature, pp. 178-179.

<sup>25</sup>Law, Anglo-Irish Literature, p. 189; Thomas MacDonah, Literature in Ireland, p. 62; O'Connor, The Backward Look. In this final book, O'Connor ignores both Morgan and Maturin, although he does discuss Edgeworth's satirical strain in Castle Rackrent.

<sup>26</sup>Craig, Dublin 1660-1860, pp. 310-311; S. T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross, Chapter XXIII

<sup>27</sup>Summers, A Gothic Bibliography, pp. 102-103.

<sup>28</sup>Scholten, Charles Robert Maturin, Terror Novelist, p. 54.

<sup>29</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. viii.

<sup>30</sup>For the text of this letter, see Appendix I.

<sup>31</sup>See Appendix II.

<sup>32</sup>Fitzpatrick, The Friends, Foes, and Adventures of Lady Morgan; and Dixon, Lady Morgan's Memoirs, II.

<sup>33</sup>Lockhart, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, 7 vols.; O'Donoghue, Sir Walter Scott's Tour of Ireland; Moore, The Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron.

<sup>34</sup>Watts, Alaric Watts; Smiles, Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray, I; Pollock, William Charles Macready.

# I

## THE FATAL REVENGE

<sup>1</sup>Idman, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 9.



<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted from Idman, p. 10, note 6.

<sup>6</sup>See Scholten, p. 17; Baker, V, 220.

<sup>7</sup>Idman, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Baker V, 192-193.

<sup>10</sup>Quoted from Idman, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup>The Fatal Revenge, 4th edition, published in The Romancist and Novelist's Library, I, 118.

<sup>12</sup>Idman, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup>Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 35-43.

<sup>14</sup>See Idman, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup>Godwin himself might have recognized in Maturin's fiction kinship with his own efforts. In The Irishman, March 24, 1849, p. 187, Mangan records the following: "If there be any writer of the present day, 'said the author of 'Caleb Williams,' 'to whose burial-place I should wish to make a pilgrimage, that writer is Maturin.'"

<sup>16</sup>De Paor, Divided Ulster, p. 41.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 39ff.

<sup>18</sup>Idman, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup>Stevenson, The Wild Irish Girl, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup>Lewis, On Local Disturbances in Ireland, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup>Quoted from de Paor, p. 42.

<sup>22</sup>Quoted from Stevenson, pp. 69-70.

<sup>23</sup>Crowe, "The Carders", Today in Ireland, pp. 24-25.

<sup>24</sup>Idman, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup>See Hoare, Journal of a Tour in Ireland (1807); A Classical Tour through Italy and Sicily (1813); Morgan, Italy (1821); The Life and Times of Salvatore Rosa (1823).

<sup>26</sup>Stockdale, History of the Inquisition. In this book, the bibliography offers a selection of the popular anti-Catholic sentiments of the time in England. This publication and bibliography further imply that anti-Catholicism supported a popular non-fiction -- in addition to gothic -- market.

<sup>27</sup>The Fatal Revenge, pp. 142ff.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>32</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 14: "tales of superstition were always my favorites, I have in fact always been more conversant with the visions of another world, than the realities of this...!"

## II

### THE WILD IRISH BOY

<sup>1</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Scott, Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, p. 378.

<sup>3</sup>The Wild Irish Boy, I, x.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>De Paor, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Lewis, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup>Krans, Irish Life in Irish Fiction, pp. 28-29.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>9</sup>The Wild Irish Boy, I, iv.

<sup>10</sup>Parson Adams' eponymous ancestor appears to be Fielding's parson in Joseph Andrews.

<sup>11</sup>The Wild Irish Boy, I, 101.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 102-103.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., III, 134.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., I, 208-209.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., II, p. 249.

<sup>20</sup>Oliver MacDonagh, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup>See the episode in which they play a practical joke on a cart-load of Irish peasant women, II, 210-211.

<sup>22</sup>This "code of honour" is sketched in Barrington, Personal Sketches, I.

<sup>23</sup>The Wild Irish Boy, III, 134.

<sup>24</sup>Idman, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 56. For Idman's commentary on this novel, see pp. 56ff.

<sup>26</sup>The Wild Irish Boy, I, 111-113.

### III

#### THE MILESIAN CHIEF

<sup>1</sup>Idman, p. 13, concerning the genial nature of tutoring to Maturin. For Maturin's own view of tutoring, see Ratchford and McCarthy, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 673, fol. 35-36, Maturin to Constable, dated May 11, 1819. In this letter, Maturin mentions that this person was his brother. There are conflicting reports about any surviving brothers of Maturin, and these are recorded by Idman, p. 312, note 8.

<sup>4</sup>The Milesian Chief, I, iv-v.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. v.

<sup>6</sup>Idman, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>10</sup>Lewis, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>12</sup>Stephen Gwynn, Irish Books and Irish People, p. 377.

<sup>13</sup>Lewis, p. 306.

<sup>14</sup>Gwynn, p. 390.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 391.

<sup>16</sup>Maxwell, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>19</sup>Hurst, Maria Edgeworth, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup>Morgan, Patriotic Sketches of Ireland. This book, for example, is a general attempt to dissolve English bigotry and prejudice against the misused and misunderstood Irish native. She discusses the native love for learning and reverence for knowledge, even in wild Connaught. Her depiction of the native Irish is polemical,

a case for the nobility of the native Irish in isolation from and independent of the English. It is, however, a one-sided view by which she implies that for any flaws the native Irish may possess, the English are responsible.

<sup>21</sup>Flanagan, p. 125.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>24</sup>Idman, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup>The Milesian Chief, I, 73-84.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., II, 142-143.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 135-136.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-142.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., IV, 47-48.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., I, 132.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., II, 99-100.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 100-101.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., III, 89.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., IV, 52.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., III, 52.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., II, 40-41.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., III, 48.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., I, 195.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., III, 130.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., IV, 75.

<sup>44</sup>Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, XX, 151. This type of criticism is repeated in The Irishman, (March 24, 1849), p. 187, and in The Irish Quarterly Review, (1852-1853), p. 148.

<sup>45</sup>Melmoth the Wanderer, (1892), p. xxxiv.

#### IV

1812-1818

<sup>1</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, pp. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 9, 16, 19-20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>O'Donoghue, Sir Walter Scott's Tour of Ireland, pp. 17-18.

<sup>10</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 15, 20.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-26.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 37-38.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>24</sup>For a first-hand account, see Ratchford and McCarthy, Letters XX-XXV, pp. 38-49.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>26</sup>British Museum, MS 40256, fol. 29.

<sup>27</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 61.

<sup>28</sup>See, for example, Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross, pp. 180-207; Eclectic Review, XXIV, 379; London Monthly Review, LXXX, 180; British Review, VIII, 70-71; Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, XX, 375.

<sup>29</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 64

<sup>30</sup>Fitzpatrick, The Friends, Foes, and Adventures of Lady Morgan, p. 108.

<sup>31</sup>The Wild Irish Boy, I, vii.

<sup>32</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 60.

<sup>33</sup>Smiles, Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray, p. 294.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>35</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 57.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 73, describe Maturin's efforts as follows: "Acting upon Scott's suggestion, Maturin deluged Murray with material for the Quarterly, of which only his review of Sheil's Apostate could be used, and that only after it had been rewritten 'A more potatoe-headed arrangement, or rather dearrangement', said Gifford, 'I have never seen. I have endeavoured to bring some order out of the chaos. There is a sort of wild eloquence in it that makes it worth preserving.' "

<sup>40</sup>Ibid. pp. 15, 94.

<sup>41</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS.673, fol. 7-8; MS 790, fol. 472-473.

<sup>42</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS 673, fol. 7-8.

<sup>43</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 94.

<sup>44</sup>See pp. 188 ff. below.

## V

### WOMEN, OR POUR ET CONTRE

<sup>1</sup>De Paor, pp. 41-42

<sup>2</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 673, fol. 19.

<sup>4</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p.80. See also National Library of Scotland, MS.673, fol. 15, in which Maturin states that the amount, in fact, was £80. De Courcy was the working title of Women which Maturin changed on Constable's advice.

<sup>5</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 673, fol. 35-36

<sup>6</sup>See pp. 123-124, and p.234, footnote 39 above.

<sup>7</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS.673, fol. 8-9.



<sup>8</sup>MacDowell, Popular Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland 1801-1846, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Curtis, A History of Ireland, p. 358.

<sup>11</sup>Idman, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>13</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup>Idman, p. 145; Scholten, p. 56.

<sup>15</sup>Sermons, p. 160.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-192.

<sup>19</sup>Women, I, 120.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., II, 15.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., I, 112.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 133-134.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 135-136.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., III, 62.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., I, 58-59.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 59-60.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-62.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., III, 137-139.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., I, 151.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 152-153.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 153-154.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., III, 3.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-141.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-217.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 386.

<sup>53</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS.789, fol. 823-824.

<sup>54</sup>Women, I, iv-v.

- <sup>55</sup> Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 77.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 79.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 86.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 82.
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 86.
- <sup>60</sup> Monthly Review, LXXXVI, 408.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 404.
- <sup>62</sup> London Magazine, III, 517.
- <sup>63</sup> A similar criticism appeared in Scots Magazine, VIII, 21.
- <sup>64</sup> Quarterly Review, XIX, 322.
- <sup>65</sup> Idman explains this critic's motives, pp. 174-175.
- <sup>66</sup> Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, II, 167.
- <sup>67</sup> North American Review, VIII, 134.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 131.
- <sup>69</sup> The Irishman, March 24, 1849, p. 187.
- <sup>70</sup> Planche, Portraits littéraires, I, 48-49.
- <sup>71</sup> Women, II, 15.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., III, 239-240.

## VI

MELMOTH THE WANDERER

- <sup>1</sup> Priestley, The Prince of Pleasure, p. 227.
- <sup>2</sup> Charles Robert Maturin: Melmoth the Wanderer, edited by Douglas Grant, p. 5. This sermon passage occurs in Sermons, 1819,

pp. 35-36, entitled, "Preached on the Sunday after the Death of the Princess Charlotte."

<sup>3</sup>Melmoth, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 427.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 443.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 503.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 542.

<sup>16</sup>J. McGarry includes this first chapter, which he entitles "The Dead", in Irish Tales of Terror because it depicts a peculiarly Irish response to death.

<sup>17</sup>Idman, p. 202.

<sup>18</sup>This theme of cruel and selfish landlordism is common in Maria Edgeworth's work. Castle Rackrent is the most obvious example, but it is found also in Ormond and Harrington, two novels which Maturin reviewed in 1818. Edgeworth's treatment of this theme differs from that of Maturin: hers is socially directed; his, spiritually.

<sup>19</sup>Melmoth, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>23</sup>Idman, p. 205.

<sup>24</sup>Melmoth, p. 285.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 296-297.

<sup>31</sup>Idman, p. 261, states that this is not surprising because the tale has nothing to do with the situation.

<sup>32</sup>Melmoth, p. 304.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 498.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 500.

<sup>35</sup>Edinburgh Review, XXXV, 353-354.

<sup>36</sup>Quarterly Review, XXIV, 304.

<sup>37</sup>Saintsbury discusses structure at length in his introduction to Tales of Mystery, pp. xxiv-xxv, as does Ashton in "Maturin and Diderot", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, XV, 124.

<sup>38</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 673, fol. 9.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., fol. 40.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 509-510, 558, 589. See also Alaric Watts, Alaric Watts, I, 69ff. Osmyn the Renegade was finally performed for three nights in Dublin in 1830.

<sup>41</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 790, fol. 564-565, 588-590. This episode in Maturin's career raises questions about his ethical code. See Idman, pp. 273ff concerning The Universe and authorship.

<sup>42</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 790, fol. 473-474.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 581.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 464-465.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 559.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., MS. 791, fol. 6.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., MS. 791, fol. 95.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., MS. 791, fol. 102.

<sup>49</sup>Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror in Literature, pp. 31-32.

## VII

### THE LAST YEARS

<sup>1</sup>Levin, The Gates of Horn, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 673, fol. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., MS. 673, fol. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 472.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 509-510; 588-590.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., MS. 790, fol. 564-565.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., MS. 791, fol. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., MS. 791, fol. 39-40.

<sup>10</sup>Idman, pp. 270ff.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 274-275.

<sup>12</sup>National Library of Scotland, MS. 791, fol. 176.

<sup>13</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 99.

- <sup>14</sup>Quoted from Idman, p. 278.
- <sup>15</sup>De Paor, p. 42.
- <sup>16</sup>Curtis, pp. 358-359.
- <sup>17</sup>Oliver MacDonagh, p. 43.
- <sup>18</sup>Scots Magazine, XIV(ns), 209.
- <sup>19</sup>Westminster Review, I, 553.
- <sup>20</sup>London Monthly Review, CVI, 173-174.
- <sup>21</sup>British Museum, MS. 41996, fol. 27-28.
- <sup>22</sup>Idman, p. 284.
- <sup>23</sup>British Museum, MS. 41996, fol. 27-44. These include several letters covering the period 1822-1824.
- <sup>24</sup>Idman, p. 295; Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 101.
- <sup>25</sup>Idman, p. 302.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 303.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 306.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 303.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 297.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 297-298.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 308.
- <sup>32</sup>The Dublin Correspondent, Tuesday, November 2, 1824.
- <sup>33</sup>The Morning Register, Wednesday, November 3, 1824.
- <sup>34</sup>The Albigeneses, I, iv.
- <sup>35</sup>Ratchford and McCarthy, p. 101.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>37</sup> Redding, Yesterday and To-Day, III, 53; quoted from Idman,  
p. 308.

<sup>38</sup> Five Sermons, pp. 24-25.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 154-155.

<sup>40</sup> Gentleman's Magazine, XCIV, 348.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Colburn's New Monthly Magazine, XIX, 402.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>44</sup> National Library of Scotland, MS 790, fol. 78.

<sup>45</sup> "Leixlip Castle", Gothic Tales of Terror, ed. Peter Haining,  
p. 237.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> National Library of Scotland, MS 673, fol. 12: "I am so little known or noticed in this Country, that I know nothing of the Sale [of Women], but I cannot help thinking it singular that not one Bookseller in Dublin has placarded the Book, a form observed with the commonest of Novels, and I fear the omission of which is not likely to operate favorably on the Sale --".



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