

The Casework Relationship: Le Fanu, Stoker and the Rhetorical Contexts of Irish Gothic

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The process of identifying—or, perhaps, of fabricating—an organic relationship between two authors is, inevitably, a problematic one. Any critic or biographer who tries to do this runs the risk of making arbitrary conjunctions from the complex ebb and flow of separate lives, or of adding emphasis to force some congruence which, perhaps, might be inconceivable to the authors under study. Yet this has been very much a persistent tradition in literary criticism, and its tendency to read fiction as a sort of coded cultural biography—and multiple fictions by several authors as a type of communal heritage—is surely as defensible a practice as it is a problematic one. Such relationships punctuate the conceptualities of genre, subdividing broad productive areas such as the Gothic into national and regional genres, creating communities from out of a diaspora of writers scattered through time as much as they are across geographical space. The functions of genre, which are as political as they are aesthetic, are naturally supported by the divisions vested in the related concept of literary canon. This demarcation, which excludes some authors from a tradition in the process of including others, no

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doubt problematises the related concept of genre. An author may write consciously out of genre, but canonical status is surely something bestowed by others in retrospect. And an author's accession to canon, of course, may well depend upon how a subsequent critical or cultural establishment considers that individual's work to fulfil or enhance those later criteria by which a genre may be retrospectively defined.

Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie quite rightly open their 2014 essay collection, *Irish Gothics*, with a revisiting of the disputed history of that tradition—or canon—which we conventionally term *the* Irish Gothic. As they argue, any attempt to produce a singular and unified definition of Irish Gothic has historically been thwarted, either by confusion regarding appropriate terminology or else on account of the competitive and exclusive nature of rival definitions of the national genre. A large part of the ongoing controversy has traditionally centred upon what Morin and Gillespie term the “peculiarly Protestant” nature of the triadic nineteenth century canon formed by Maturin, Le Fanu and Stoker.¹ The parallel, though distinctive, interpretations put forward in the mid-1990s by Terry Eagleton in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* and Roy Foster in *Paddy and Mr Punch* are representative of the controversy, whilst they still signal the problematic nature of generalising or reductive terms such as Protestant, Ascendancy and, most of all, Anglo-Irish.²

The latter label, as Paul Murray notes in his 2004 biography of Stoker, is as problematic as it is convenient for the scholar of Irish writing. The hyphen of cultural hybridity here glosses a tense space of conjunction, and separates two identities which alternately exclude and imbricate their disparate components. But if the approximations which necessarily occur when an author is labelled through perceived cultural origin or professed identity ought to be treated with caution so, likewise, should any terminology that glibly associates nation with genre be regarded with a degree of wariness.

In a sense, Irish Gothic is as hybrid and thus as difficult a term as Anglo-Irish, and for many of the same reasons. There may be no hyphen, but the two components of that generic marker exist in a type of reciprocal exclusion occasionally breached in the interests of literary criticism. To be Irish, after all, is to be associated with a geographical location as much as a cultural one; to be Irish is not to be English—or indeed any other nationality, other than one qualified with an emphatic hyphen. The presence of such terms as Anglo-Irish or Irish-American, in

other words, serves to reference the singularity of the term “Irish” as a signifier of discrete and valid identity. The tension arises because Gothic is *not* a discretely Irish mode of writing, even though it can be said to have been successfully appropriated, profoundly modified and frequently popularised by authors whose origins are to be found in Ireland. Gothic, in the sense that Irish writers in the nineteenth century understood it, was implicitly an *English* form of writing, notwithstanding its palpable connection to German *Sturm und Drang* and other Continental influences. The deterministic power of the genre’s English connection is vested in far more than Horace Walpole’s origination of many of the conventions of the tradition, or Ann Radcliffe’s English adaptation of Edmund Burke’s Irish aesthetic philosophy. England, whose private circulating libraries formed the main market for published fiction for much of the nineteenth century, influenced not merely *how* Irish writers wrote but also *what* they were permitted to write about. William McCormack’s revelation that Le Fanu was dissuaded from writing Irish historical fiction by his London publisher, Richard Bentley, who preferred “an English subject, and in modern times” is but one example of how Irish Gothic can be only incrementally Irish in its content.³

Hence, Maturin published his *Fatal Revenge* (1807) with a London publisher, while his more famous *Melmoth the Wanderer* was jointly issued in Edinburgh and London. Le Fanu wrote for Bentley, but published also in Dickens’s London periodicals as well as in the Dublin journals he, himself, owned and edited. Stoker, likewise, sought and achieved publication in English monthlies before his first Irish publication in *The Shamrock* in 1875.⁴ Gothic, for nineteenth century writers in the English language, was a genre bound up with primarily English markets, the literate populations of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the British colonies and even the United States being arguably something of a secondary consideration. The genre is shaped by economics as much as by aesthetics. The financial considerations of both publishers and authors must therefore silently challenge any contention by later critics that Irish Gothic, whether produced in Ireland or by exiles abroad, proclaims some sort of independence from English cultural determinism. Irish Gothic is a more complicated phenomenon than it might first appear.

Such a contention does not, however, preclude a discrete and distinctive identity for Irish Gothic. There is a rhetorical heritage that perceptibly unites Maturin, Le Fanu and Stoker and renders their works distinctive and consistent in terms that are not necessarily reminiscent

of a conventional cultural nationalism. It is impossible to avoid the fact that the critical establishment has invested the nineteenth century canon of Irish Gothic in the hands of a small number of male, educated and Protestant writers—Regina M. Roche (1763–1845) is the rare (and now notably neglected) female exception that perversely proves the rule. It should be remembered that, for much of that century, these canonical writers had no coherent or unifying political belief or cultural revival upon which to premise their works as being discretely Irish. They were bound up in a publishing system that favoured the English milieu. Their education recalled an English collegiate model. They moved within the hierarchies of professional bodies which paralleled similar organisations across the Irish Sea. Yet if these conditions might seem, at first sight, to suggest that such writers could produce nothing other than an inflected shadow of some other country's literature, the concentrated nature of the canon of Irish Gothic, its very specificity of gender, religion and education, provides the defining conditions that surely elevate this national realisation of the genre into a coherent structural and linguistic distinction.

In *Paddy and Mr Punch* (1995), Roy Foster traces a “line of Irish Protestant supernatural fiction” which “leads from Maturin and Le Fanu to Bram Stoker and Elizabeth Bowen and Yeats”. These Gothic writers are “marginalized Irish Protestants,” frequently exiles in England, but “stemming from families with strong clerical and professional colorations”.⁵ It is this “professional” colouring which might arguably be said to be the distinctive feature of Irish Gothic in the nineteenth century—a consistency that sets it apart, quite possibly, from the more disparate nature of authorial backgrounds found elsewhere in Britain. The relative smallness of the Irish Gothic canon, and the occupational as well as cultural congruence of its writers, might suggest that the rhetorical style of these writers owes something also to the professional training identified by Foster. All are, without doubt, writers heavily implicated in professional as well as literary communication. Maturin, of course, was a cleric and a writer of sermons, a rhetorician in the service of the Protestant Gospel. Le Fanu's father was likewise a clergyman, though the writer and newspaper editor was called to the Irish Bar in the 1830s, and thus exchanged the company of Trinity's Classical rhetoricians for associates who were, in McCormack's words, “principally legal men”.⁶ Stoker, like Le Fanu, was drawn to Trinity's debating culture, and though his progress through the University of Dublin

appears to have been less intellectually systematic, he embraced the law first by way of the Irish civil service and latterly by being called to the *English* Bar—at which he was never to practise.

Another professional context, shared by Le Fanu and Stoker, is medicine. The elder author was a notorious hypochondriac who, it was alleged, suffered mentally as a consequence of entrusting his wife to the treatment administered by homeopathic physicians.⁷ Stoker was frequently to be found in the company of medical men: two of his brothers, William and George, were surgeons active in medical publication, and the author also shared Dublin accommodation with the physician and playwright John Todhunter. Le Fanu and Stoker, incidentally, were acquainted also with William Wilde, the father of Oscar and a celebrated Dublin oculist. The professional—and professionally rhetorical—world shared by authors educated and still domiciled in or near Dublin was, it appears, quite a small one.

The productive culture shared by all of the canonical authors of nineteenth century Irish Gothic fiction is thus premised upon far more than religion and a perceived separation from the Celtic or Roman Catholic identities of Ireland. It is very specifically one influenced by the structures of professional life beyond both home and college. Professional training, as it were, shapes not merely the everyday speech of practitioners and their associates, but specifically influences their fictions—not merely at a linguistic level, but at an organisational one also. Irish Gothic, as we understand it through the limited canon of its major nineteenth century authors, is arguably not merely the most religiously conscious of all of the national Gothics, but the most influenced by the disciplines of medicine and of law.

It is this linguistic and organisational influence that most tangibly links the work of Bram Stoker and that of J. S. Le Fanu. Sadly, there is no evidence to substantiate any physical meeting—or even communication—between the two. In no way, either, could one suggest, as Richard Dalby does, that Stoker was somehow actively championed by the author of *Uncle Silas*.⁸ Their writings, though, do share a number of common features which can be associated with the professional languages of Irish Gothic. Both nominally lawyers by profession, Le Fanu and Stoker are discernibly influenced by the rhetorical processes of proof associated with that profession—and with the similar systems by which medical evidence may be presented to a lay as well as clinical reader.

Historically, critics have drawn thematic parallels between Le Fanu's "Mr Justice Harbottle" (1872) and Stoker's "The Judge's House" (1891).⁹ Likewise, they have perceived a thematic link between "Carmilla" (1871–1872) and *Dracula* (1897), and seen in Dr Martin Hesselius, ostensibly the linking personality of Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) a precursor of Abraham Van Helsing and his successors, the psychic doctors of Algernon Blackwood, William Hope Hodgson and Dion Fortune.¹⁰ It is likely that Stoker would have had access to Le Fanu's novels and to the short fiction he published in the *Dublin University Magazine* and *The Warder* as well as in London periodicals—though it is only the author's readings of the radical poetry of Walt Whitman that merits explicit acknowledgment in his scarce autobiographical fragments.¹¹ Again, we have no firm evidence of a connection with Le Fanu.

But there *is* a credible structural connection which may be said to shape both Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* and Stoker's *Dracula*, this being a rhetorical style or discourse in which both works participate. In a sense, the short stories of *In a Glass Darkly* and the fragmented accounts which make up *Dracula* are a product of the manner in which evidence is presented both in law and in medical investigation. The two fictions are in effect structured like case studies. They advance evidence by way of testimony, observation and experiment—this latter a form of human vivisection, given that its experimental subjects are, for Le Fanu, a psychologically disturbed clergyman and, for Stoker, a confined lunatic. Though it may be argued that these two mainstay texts of the generic Irish Gothic share this common structure, it will be evident, however, that their implications diverge widely. Le Fanu's bleak vision of an inevitable psychological breakdown is more cynical and worldly than Stoker's neat containment of the vampire's unprecedented threat. The earlier work points out the limitations of the presiding professional; the later celebrates the power of collective, educated effort.

The question, of course, necessarily arises as to why both authors deployed such a specific form of rhetoric. The answer may arguably found in a short and often overlooked statement placed immediately before the opening of Stoker's novel. The statement reads as follows:

How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made clear in the reading of them. All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of latter-day belief may

stand forth as simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past events wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them.¹²

There is a resemblance here to another alleged source for *Dracula*, Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859–1860), a narrative “told by more than one pen, as the story of an offence against the laws is told in court by more than one witness”.¹³ *Dracula*, though, is not wholly a crime novel (though crimes against religion and humanity are depicted), for part of its detective process is associated with the investigation of unprecedented disease—namely the wasting of the body that follows vampirism and the abnormal mental states associated with the vampire's presence. The case work structure, which is both evidential and analytical, is therefore ideally suited to the presentation of mysterious and unprecedented symptoms which, for much of the novel, are a source of speculation, and which urgently need to be contained within the knowledge structures of conventional medicine. The casework paradigm thus functions as a type of authority gesture, as a supposedly authoritative register of language through which the supernatural may be presented to a modern world obsessed with, and structured through, secular explanations and scientific rigour. Ostensibly, such structural conventions *should* reassure us that science and modernity *can* absorb the unprecedented, contain the unknown, and express that which is apparently impossible under current thought. For Stoker, they do, albeit with a necessary adjustment of the parameters of reality. For Le Fanu, the outcome is far less convincing.

In “Green Tea”, Le Fanu is somewhat more emphatic regarding his deployment of a fictional editor for the medical narrative that follows.¹⁴ The “Prologue” to “Green Tea” is subtitled “Martin Hesselius, the German Physician” though it soon becomes apparent that its author is in fact the clinician's unnamed literary executor, a dilettante doctor without a practice of his own.¹⁵ There is much in this opening gesture to imply that what follows has been presented and arranged by a purblind sycophant. The editor is indeed fulsome in his praise:

In Dr Martin Hesselius I found my master. His knowledge was immense, his grasp of a case was an intuition. He was the very man to inspire a young enthusiast, like me, with awe and delight. My admiration has stood

the test of time and survived the separation of death. I am sure it was well founded.¹⁶

Purportedly, the five narratives which follow (each of which has its own preface, making some reference to Hesselius's research or published writings) are extracts from the master's "immense collection of papers", arranged here into a sort of representative case-book.¹⁷ They are implicitly advanced, as it were, as cumulative truth, as evidence of Hesselius's omniscient grasp of both diagnosis and cure. The editor's supposed motivation, though, masks a more subversive functionality within the extent of *In a Glass Darkly*, and one which is made evident through the tacit processes of selection and organisation. The editor's admiration is insincere, his version of truth specious.

Gothic fictions have traditionally deployed the document as a device through which a semblance of authenticity might be applied to grotesque or unlikely scenarios. Walpole prefaced *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) with a claim that the novel was a translation of an ancient manuscript discovered in an obscure library in the north of England. Radcliffe framed *The Italian* (1797) with the supposed reading of a student's translated account of events some years earlier. James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) is, likewise, constructed as an authenticated testimony enclosed within editorial matter. Yet such reassurances may be somewhat misleading. The document advanced by Hesselius's narrator in the form of "Green Tea" has been selected somewhat arbitrarily from the German physician's oeuvre, as the editor makes clear:

Here and there a case strikes me as of a kind to amuse or horrify a lay reader with an interest quite different from the peculiar one which it may possess for an expert. With slight modifications, chiefly of language, and of course a change of names I copy the following. The narrator is Dr Martin Hesselius.¹⁸

The narrative is thus derivative, a copy and not a verbatim reproduction of Hesselius's original. As the editor makes clear, the narrative "is related in a series of letters", even though the conventions of letter-writing are nowhere visible in "Green Tea" until Hesselius's appended "Conclusion", subtitled "A Word for Those Who Suffer".¹⁹ These letters "were written, some in English, some in French but the greater

part in German” to a Dutch recipient, their linguistic inconsistencies being apparently elided by the work of one who is “a faithful” but “by no means a graceful translator”.²⁰ The editor’s closing reassurance that “although here and there, I omit some passages, and shorten others and disguise names, I have interpolated nothing” is thus something of a hollow one.²¹ Where, for Stoker’s readers, “all needless matters have been eliminated” by the editor in order to produce an account which contains only relevant matter, Le Fanu’s fictional literary executor may justifiably be suspected of eliding far more from the original document.

Effectively, it is this editorial figure rather than Hesselius who is in control of the narrative, and the exercise of this control may be seen to perceptibly undermine the work’s purported mission of celebrating the diagnostic and analytical genius of the supposedly magisterial physician. It should be noted here that the selection is arbitrary, and cannot be said to reflect favourably in any way upon the deceased savant. Hesselius is present in only one of the five narratives that make up *In a Glass Darkly*: his role in the others is simply one of prefacing or, rather, of being mentioned in passing in a preface very obviously written by the fictional editor. Thus, the German physician is referenced only in his absence and though his supposed medical publications—texts, of course, which have no real existence beyond *In a Glass Darkly*, and which cannot be scrutinised in order to ascertain their relevance or credibility.

Again, “Green Tea” itself is a narrative hardly calculated to reassure the reader of Hesselius’s curative abilities. Its ostensible selection as a representative case must therefore be regarded with suspicion, for its implications appear calculated to cast doubt upon the German physician’s ability. There is no doubt, at all, that Hesselius rapidly identifies the mental trauma of the Reverend Mr Jennings, the English clergyman whose mental symptoms punctuate “Green Tea”. Indeed, the relations between the physician and the cleric, which develop over several meetings, seem most cordial up to the point at which the doctor visits him during a notably extreme seizure. At this point, Hesselius pacifies the doctor not merely with assurances of his curative ability but also with an affirmation that he is actively seeking a cure for the cleric’s hallucinations.

Though Jennings believes that his hallucination, a particularly distracting and occasionally blasphemous spectral monkey, represents some sort of supernatural visitation or divine disfavour, Hesselius informs him that “he must regard his illness strictly as one dependent

upon physical, though *subtle* physical, causes”.²² This assurance specifically removes the apparition from the field of the theologian or the metaphysician and locates it firmly with that of the physician: Hesselius has already intimated that the ability to see the monkey is a consequence of Jennings having drunk too frequently of the green tea of the title.²³ Through such a diagnosis conventional medicine, and the physiological pharmacopeia of the nineteenth century, effectively claim control over a psychological disorder.

It is the imperative of the doctor to exercise this control efficiently as well as accurately, though the sole narrative selected by the editor as representative of Hesselius’s practise sees the latter depart from the patient’s company in a manner which exposes both his own intellectual selfishness and his thoughtless irresponsibility. Hesselius recalls:

He seemed comforted. One promise I exacted, which was that should the monkey at any time return, I should be sent for immediately; and, repeating my assurance that I would give neither time nor thought to any other subject until I had thoroughly investigated his case, and that tomorrow he should hear the result, I took my leave.²⁴

Having taken his leave, the doctor then notes privately:

My own arrangements I made with a view to being quite secure from interruption.

I merely called at my lodgings, and with a travelling-desk and carpet-bag, set off in a hackney carriage for an inn about two miles out of town. And there I resolved, without the possibility of intrusion or distraction, to devote some hours of the night, in my comfortable sitting room, to Mr Jennings’ case, and so much of the morning as it might require.²⁵

Hesselius is certainly free from interruption—so much so that Jennings’ final, written, call for help does not reach him, the physician learning of his patient’s suicide on his return to London the following afternoon. The physician, clearly, has not anticipated the extent of the disorder, nor prepared himself in readiness for its conclusion. To compound the whole issue—and, indeed, to emphasise the nature of his own medical malpractice, Hesselius then claims—in the Conclusion, which is extracted from a letter to his Dutch correspondent—that “I had not even commenced to treat Mr Jennings’ case” and that his patient’s

suicide was a consequence not of the physician's absence but of "hereditary suicidal mania".²⁶

The physician's incompetence is exposed all too completely here. The conventional casework structure, with its rhetorical tissue of observation, diagnosis, prognosis and conclusion tabulates not a record of successful treatment but indicts Hesselius via a catalogue of mistakes and malpractice. Those fictional integers of the Gothic, which might prototypically provide reassurance of the testimony they prefix and embody, here serve to demonstrate the unreliable nature of narration, and the partiality exercised by both editor and edited. Though *In a Glass Darkly* may be read with ease as nothing more than a collection of ghost stories, it may be argued that its function is in part to expose to scrutiny the shallow value of consoling words and professional reassurances.

The opposite might be said of *Dracula*. Though the case structure in Stoker's novel is underplayed when compared to that in "Green Tea" and its associated narratives, its primary function appears to be one of celebrating the collective power of professionals. In the place of Le Fanu's solitary physician, who works alone and retreats even from observing his patient when wishing to formulate a curative hypothesis, Stoker advances an *aristos* of educated men. Much has been made in criticism of the novel's attention to the craft of the solicitor, though less has been said regarding how the legal profession maps over the professional territory of the physician. Indeed, it is possible to argue that there is no truly authoritative legal voice in the novel. Harker is a solicitor by articles rather than through having read for his qualification at a university or college of law. He is, as he admits at the start of the novel, "a solicitor's clerk" only recently exalted by examination to the rank of "a full-blown solicitor!"²⁷ He is competent, but certainly not prestigious—and his legal training is deployed far less frequently in the novel than the practical medicine of Seward and his mentor, Van Helsing.

These two latter figures, though, do successfully combine the professions of medicine and law, uniting as it were rhetoric and proof with practical, physical intervention. Van Helsing is presented primarily as a medical specialist in *Dracula*, though he displays a convenient legal qualification when it is necessary for him to take possession of Lucy Westenra's private papers—something which he might not have done so easily had he been merely a doctor.²⁸ Seward is explicitly a medico-jurist, a physician qualified to speak within the court system and, as the keeper

of a private asylum, a professional who would on almost every day deal with the interface of law and medicine in the administration of clinical incarceration. These two central figures are more than doctors, therefore, and it is tempting to see in them something of an autobiographical familial fantasy, with Seward and Van Helsing the seamless embodiment of the two professions that encompassed Stoker's life.

The fantasy here is one of success and, moreover, one that celebrates a quite different mentorial relationship between Seward and Van Helsing than that which pertains between Hesselius and his literary executor. Seward, who the reader encounters initially, is well versed in medical casework and in the associated empirical practices of observation, diagnosis and prognosis. As Van Helsing says, his "case-book was ever more full than the rest".²⁹ This much is confirmed by Seward's meticulous observation of Renfield, a patient whom he observes at close quarters, even during times of distracting crisis.³⁰ If Seward's motives for observing Renfield are suspect—he is trying to distract himself after his marriage proposal has been rebuffed—then his attention to detail is thoroughly professional even down to recording the patient's age, sanguine temperament, physical capability and *idée fixe*.³¹ Seward's excessiveness comes in his persistence in returning the lunatic to his obsession rather than directing his attention towards a "sane" alternative. As he notes,

I questioned him more fully than I had ever done, with a view to making myself master of the facts of his hallucination. In my manner of doing it there was, I now see, something of cruelty. I seemed to wish to keep him to the point of his madness – a thing I avoid with the patients as I would the mouth of hell.³²

Seward is clearly acting in an unethical manner. He is conducting an experiment upon a private patient without formal consent and, by his own admission, in a way that could be psychologically damaging. As he feeds Renfield's obsession, providing sugar, promising him a cat, the patient's condition must surely accelerate. This is a type of human vivisection, where the progress of the patient's disorder is facilitated under controlled conditions—but it needs to be remembered that it is undertaken in an establishment well provided with qualified medical attendants, and in such a manner that the subject could come to no *bodily* harm—other than through the unforeseeable intervention of an

outside force such as the Count, an occult intruder whose ability to enter locked rooms challenges the precepts of material science. The ethical criteria which pertain to the age of Burdon-Sanderson and Ferrier, the experimental surgeons whom Seward seeks to emulate, are not those of today: both were active vivisectionists.³³ Seward may, perhaps, be judged more harshly by a later culture that condemns animal experimentation. The vivisectionist looks at what he might learn, and the pain to which one subject may be exposed for the sake of the lasting relief of many is justification enough for him.³⁴

It is Van Helsing, though, who encourages Seward to be less dogmatic in his reasoning. Scripted as being ignorant, for a time at least, of the experiments conducted upon Renfield, the Dutch physician invites Seward to extend his reasoning by analogy rather than simple observation: he queries of him how he can “accept the hypnotism but reject the thought-reading” and finally demands of him “Do you know all the mystery of life and death?”³⁵

Of course, Seward doesn’t—and neither does Van Helsing. The point is that the latter is prepared to treat the recent decline of Lucy with an open mind, to envision it as a case that sets, rather than merely affirms, precedents, and to apply the lessons it provides not merely to later victims, such as Mina Harker, but also to the pathological source of the disease itself—the Count. With the nature of the infection intimated through the wastage of Lucy’s body and its source confirmed by way of the observational evidence of Jonathan Harker, the progress of *Dracula* follows the course of that type of medical casework which, to paraphrase Le Fanu’s anonymous editor, presents symptoms in terms accessible to the layman before proceeding “to the work of analysis, diagnosis and illustration”.³⁶

In this respect the two works have nominally similar functions. The difference is that, in *Dracula*, those patients who are known victims of the vampire and thus in imminent danger are never deliberately left alone to fall victim to their disorder. It is those whose contamination is not properly known—Lucy, at the earliest stage of her decline, Renfield following the Count’s entry and Mina on the night her associates enter the Count’s dwelling—who suffer for a time without protection. Once the nature of the disorder is known in a manner analogous to Hesselius’s knowledge of Jennings’ hallucination, the patient is not merely observed but protected and offered prophylactic support. Hence, Lucy is first garlanded in garlic and subsequently contained in her tomb by the Host;

Mina has an armed guard outside her door and the Host is applied to her flesh.³⁷ Like the Count himself, they have to learn, and to learn they must organise—and rhetoricise—the data they collect.

The gathering, presentation and dissemination of data are, of course, the essence of that process we understand as rhetoric. Rhetoric, it might be added, is the linguistic, persuasive and communicative process which links the professions of the lawyer, the physician and the sermoniser with the craft of the creative writer. Certainly, Stoker and Le Fanu were writers who could anticipate their audiences, and work within the implicit conventions of the genres in which their fictions have historically been situated. They were likewise, however, professional men of meticulous habits, and this aspect of their non-literary lives has left a distinctive trace across the breadth of their writings. In the case of these two specific works, *In a Glass Darkly* and *Dracula*, the case-work relationship is one which invites the reader variously to question or to trust the authenticating editorial voice of the narrative or the ostensibly authoritative evidence presented as a case study. The motivations of the respective authors remain unknown, though it is tempting to see in Stoker's work a celebration of medical rhetoric, in Le Fanu's a resentful dismissal.

There is more at stake here, though. The pointed rhetorical posturing of works such as these invite the reader to raise serious questions regarding the status of Gothic itself, and the specific definition of Irish Gothic. For the first, it should be apparent that any blanket dismissal of Gothic as either ephemeral or crude in style is untenable. The nature of these two works, and indeed of other writings as diverse as Maturin's *Melmoth*, Hogg's *Confessions* or Stevenson's pointedly titled *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), confirms that the genre has long been informed by the structured and tempered language of a professional world. The implications for Irish Gothic are more serious, though. Rather than set out a premise that Irish Gothic may be so defined not merely by the origins of its authors, but through an assumed, occluded encoding of Irish issues, one might look instead to the narrative consistency of canonical works in the tradition. The stylised deployment of rhetoric as opposed to the reproduction of mere fictional convention points towards the presence of an exceptionally educated and thoroughly professional authorship. The religious context of Irish Gothic, and its relationship to the other national Gothics, cannot and should not be discarded. The gendered problematic of the nineteenth century Irish

Gothic canon, likewise, must be understood for what it has to say about modern criticism as well as nineteenth century authorship. But Irish Gothic, though, needs to be considered most of all for its consistency of professional sophistication, its adoption of technical languages and persuasive structures. Beyond these two most obvious of case-studies, many further texts undoubtedly lie.

NOTES

1. Christina Morin and Niall Gillespie, "Introduction: Delimiting the Irish Gothic", in *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes and Traditions, 1760–1890* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), 2. Wilde, with his single novel and comparatively few short supernatural fictions, sits at the periphery of this tradition.
2. Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* (London: Verso, 1995); Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch* (London: Penguin, 1995).
3. W. J. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu*, Third Edition (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1997), 141.
4. Stoker published his first short story, "The Crystal Cup", in *London Society* in September 1872. There is evidence from the author's correspondence that he unsuccessfully sought to publish another story, the now-lost "Jack Hammon's Vote", with *The Cornhill Magazine*, *Temple Bar* and *Macmillan's Magazine* in London, and with *Blackwood's* in Edinburgh. See National Library of Scotland: MS4325.f.240.
5. Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch* (London: Penguin, 1995), 220.
6. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu*, 54.
7. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu*, 129–30.
8. See Richard Dalby, "Introduction" to Bram Stoker, *The Primrose Path* (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 1999), 7.
9. "Mr Justice Harbottle" appeared as "The Haunted House in Westminster" in the London periodical *Belgravia*, in January 1872. It is, though, a revision of "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street", *Dublin University Magazine*, December 1853.
10. See, for example, Peter Denman, "Le Fanu and Stoker: A Probable Connection", *Éire-Ireland*, 9 (1974), 152–8; Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula: A True History of Dracula and Vampire Legends* (London: Book Club Associates, 1979), 172–3; Robert Tracy, "Introduction" to J. S. Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), vii–xxviii at xxi–xxii; Julia Briggs, *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story* (London: Faber, 1977), 60–4.

11. Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: William Heinemann, 1906), 2 vols, Vol. 1, 93–4.
12. Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. A. N. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), xviii.
13. Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, ed. John Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5; Mark M. Hennelly, “Twice-Told Tales of Two Counts: *The Woman in White* and *Dracula*”, *The Wilkie Collins Society Journal*, 2 (1982), 15–31.
14. “Green Tea” was first published with its preface in Dickens’s *All the Year Round* between October and November 1869.
15. J. S. Le Fanu, “Green Tea” in *In a Glass Darkly*, ed. Robert Tracy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.
16. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 5.
17. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 5.
18. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 6.
19. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 38–40.
20. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 6.
21. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 6.
22. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 33, original italics.
23. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 32, cf. 34, 39.
24. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 33.
25. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 34.
26. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 38, 39–40.
27. Stoker, *Dracula*, 15.
28. Stoker, *Dracula*, 163.
29. Stoker, *Dracula*, 119.
30. Stoker, *Dracula*, 243.
31. Stoker, *Dracula*, 61.
32. Stoker, *Dracula*, 60.
33. Stoker, *Dracula*, 71.
34. Stoker, *Dracula*, 71.
35. Stoker, *Dracula*, 191, 192.
36. Le Fanu, “Green Tea”, 5, 6.
37. Stoker, *Dracula*, 296.

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