

**Narrating the Nation: Britain in Gothic Literature, 1760-1820**

**By:**

Catherine E. Gadsby-Mace

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Abstract

This thesis explores the work of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British authors who set their Gothic literature in Britain between 1760 and 1820. It argues that many of these novels have previously been marginalised or excluded from studies of the genre because they do not conform to the recognised Gothic trope of displacing anxieties onto foreign Catholic settings. Rather, they represent Britain as a fertile terrain for Gothic events. In doing so, they interrogate its history, national identity, and politics, as well as directly engaging with the domestic and international crises of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries. They display a keen awareness not only of the historical development of the nation, but with its refashioning during this period in response to the 1707 Act of Union, the Seven Years’ War, the loss of the American colonies, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars: all of which challenged and complicated national identity.

By analysing the work of Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, William Henry Ireland, T. I. Horsley Curties and Walter Scott, this thesis demonstrates their shared preoccupation with the myth-making process of national history and collective identity formation, and with interrogating systems of power and leadership. ‘Gothic’ developed as a historico-political term regarding the origins of British national identity, and as such the Gothic genre developed symbiotically alongside the Historical Romance and the national tale. Tracing the genesis of Gothic fiction back past Horace Walpole’s 1764, *The Castle of Otranto*, to Thomas Leland’s 1762 novel, *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury: An Historical Romance*, allows a new set of novels to be foregrounded in the genre. By refocusing critical attention on these texts, this project aims to extend the limits of this heterogeneous genre to include Gothic tales set in Britain. It also demonstrates the dialogue and dispute between Gothic texts as authors of disparate socio-political backgrounds engaged with one another through their fiction; borrowing, challenging, and redeploying generic tropes to support their political discourses.

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Introduction

Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observations of what is passing around you.

* Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817)[[1]](#footnote-1)

The central plot of Jane Austen’s famous satire of the Gothic, *Northanger Abbey*, turns upon the laughable implausibility of Gothic events occurring in present-day England. Henry Tilney’s rebuke of the young heroine, Catherine Morland, is not aimed at her voracious consumption of Gothic fiction in general, but at her imaginative attempts to project the plots onto the situations unfolding around her. With a head full of Gothic drama, she interprets the world through the recurrent tropes of the genre: labyrinthine castles, tyrannous patriarchs, murdered wives, absent mothers, and discovered manuscripts revealing terrible family secrets. Upon discovering her conjectures, Tilney admonishes her to, ‘Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians’.[[2]](#footnote-2) It is unimaginable to Tilney that Gothic events such as those described in the pages of Mrs Radcliffe’s works could ever transpire in his own country. Taking his censure on board, Catherine later assures herself that:

Charming as were all Mrs Radcliffe’s works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the Midland counties of England, was to be looked for […] Catherine dared not doubt beyond her own country, and even of that, if hard pressed, would have yielded the northern and western extremities. But in the central part of England there was surely some security for the existence of a wife not beloved, in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age. Murder was not tolerated, servants were not slaves, and neither poison nor sleeping potions to be procured, like rhubarb, from every druggist.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Her recourse here is to the ‘laws of the land’ and the ‘manners of the age’ which will provide protection for England’s vulnerable members, including women and servants. She comforts herself that security is provided by the country’s civilised systems, in the same way that Tilney lists education, laws, social and literary intercourse, roads, newspapers and the ‘neighbourhood of voluntary spies’, as a defence against Gothic atrocities.[[4]](#footnote-4)

These speeches, while framed as patriotic rhetoric, hint at a subtle criticism of British domestic policy during the late Eighteenth Century.[[5]](#footnote-5) *Northanger Abbey* was published posthumously in 1818 but written in 1798-99, at the end of French Revolution. The 1790s had been a fraught time for national politics, with the government introducing reactionary policies in a paranoid attempt to suppress Jacobinism and prevent, as Walter Scott put it, ‘invasion from abroad and insurrection at home’.[[6]](#footnote-6) The sedition and treason trials of 1793 and 1794, the ’Gagging Acts’ of 1795, the successive suspensions of *habeas corpus* after 1794 and the outlawing of the London Corresponding Society, the United Englishmen and United Britons in 1799, the spate of treason trials associated with the Irish revolt in 1798, the Seditious Meetings Act, the Combination Acts in 1799, the naval system of ‘impressment’, and the newly introduced Quota System, were all introduced within a decade.[[7]](#footnote-7) Against this contextual backdrop, Tilney’s reference to the ‘neighbourhood of voluntary spies’ begins to sound more like a warning against an increasingly authoritarian regime which threatens individual freedoms. England, then, was not so far removed from the Gothic horrors of tyranny, imprisonment, slavery and execution as either Tilney or Catherine originally profess.

Gothic fiction has always thrived on the contemporary anxieties of the public, and during the late Eighteenth Century there was much discussion of the genre’s links to the Revolution and it impact on the reading public. Thomas Mathias made the association explicit in his satirical poem *The Pursuits of Literature* (1798), which condemned Matthew Lewis’s Gothic novel *The Monk* (1796) and where he claimed that ‘LITERATURE […] IS THE GREAT ENGINE by which ALL CIVILIZED STATES must ultimately be supported or over-thrown’.[[8]](#footnote-8) He went on to say that he feared the ‘Gallic frenzy’ which was overtaking English literature and inspiring ‘our peasantry [to] read the *Rights of Man* on mountains’, and ‘our *unsexed* female writers [to] instruct, or confuse, us and themselves in the labyrinth of politics’.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Such melodramatic attacks on the Gothic genre inspired a series of satirical responses in the form of open letters that appeared in the periodical press. ‘The Terrorist System of Novel Writing’ printed in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1797, once again makes the link between the events in France and Gothic fiction clear: ‘But, alas! So prone are we to imitation, that we have exactly and faithfully copied the SYSTEM OF TERROR, if not in our streets, and in our fields, at least in our circulating libraries, and in our closets’.[[10]](#footnote-10) The article explicitly references the French Revolution and charges Maximilien de Robespierre and his reign of terror with the horrible ‘revolution’ in English fiction. While seemingly light-hearted and parodic, however, the article’s allusions to *habeas corpus*, the equivocal reference to the violence that we have imitated ‘if not in our streets’, and the sign-off by ‘A Jacobin Novelist’ suggest that the Gothic tropes could be equally reminiscent of recent events in Britain. Like Austen, the author clearly harboured doubts as to how unrealistic Mrs Radcliffe’s portrayals of ‘human nature’ were, how improbable Gothic events were, and how unlikely they were to occur specifically in Britain.

This opinion was clearly prevalent in late eighteenth-century minds as the period saw the publication of a large number of Gothic novels set around Great Britain. Despite the popularly-held view that Gothic Romances take place abroad, depicting Catholic tyranny in continental settings, a surprisingly large number took place much closer to home. Whether with the intention of highlighting corruption in Britain and its need for political and social reform, or with the desire to promote a loyalist discourse full of national heroes, usurping foreign enemies and a proud architectural heritage, domestically-set Gothic novels proliferated. The heterogeneous nature of the Gothic ensured that it could be utilised by authors for a wide variety of ideological purposes and that it symbiotically developed alongside two other popular genres; the Historical novel and the national tale. These Gothic novels are united in their preoccupation with national identity, cultural history and narratives of liberty. In the politically-fraught period at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, they seek to evaluate the historico-political issues surrounding individual freedom, the value of monarchy, the nature of leadership, the role of ideology in politics, and the balance of power within nations. These issues carried particular currency in the Eighteenth Century, both with regards to international politics – the American and French Revolutions, and the Napoleonic Wars – but also domestically after the 1707 Act of Union, which redefined national identity in the newly-united Kingdom.

Scotland and England had been growing closer together since the Scottish Reformation in the Sixteenth Century. They had been ruled by the same Stuart dynasty since 1603, they shared the same King James Bible and – at least along the border – they shared a language. Despite this, the 1707 Act of Union which created the nation of Great Britain by joining Scotland to England and Wales, caused significant social disruption. For the Scots it meant the loss of their ancient independence and national identity as a sovereign state; for the English it also signalled a somewhat unwelcome change as ‘English’ and ‘England’ gave way to ‘British’ and ‘Great Britain’ in official and everyday vocabulary.[[11]](#footnote-11) While it brought about political union then, the Act broke apart established national identity. Particularly in Scotland, it made a coherent national identity impossible as political allegiances divided people. Some families viewed Scotland as part of the Union, others took up the Jacobite cause, many remained undecided. These divisions did not only occur between regions, towns or families, but also within families where political differences could form irreconcilable feuds.[[12]](#footnote-12) As Britain struggled to establish a shared national identity, it faced further crises abroad - the Seven Years’ War, the loss of the American colonies, the French Revolution and the consequent influx of refugees, the Napoleonic Wars – all of which challenged and complicated this identity.

Domestic politics were also tumultuous throughout the Eighteenth Century with two Jacobite rebellions against George I in 1715 and George II in 1745, a series of Prime Ministers who largely controlled British domestic policy in place of the monarchy, and George III’s recurrent, and eventually permanent, mental illness. Again, this political fragmentation had ramifications for Scotland in particular, which was both the stronghold of Jacobinism and far removed from parliamentary control – or interest - in London. These turbulent times provoked anxieties surrounding the loss of national identity, the insecurity of political and monarchical rule, and the increasing alienation of the people from this newly-formed ‘Britain’. Consequently, the British Isles became fertile terrain for exploitation by and representation in Gothic fiction.

While eighteenth-century Gothic authors addressed the national crises in different ways, a series of key tropes recur as they each engage with topical political issues. Tracing the series of conflicts at home and abroad, depictions of Britain are often troubled by insurrection or hostilities; homes and heritages are usurped; ruins are haunted by unsettled spirits; borders are liminal locations of contested authority and ambiguous safety. In similar fashion, Catherine Morland feels it necessary to qualify her claim that the central part of England is secure from Gothic drama, by admitting that ‘if hard pressed, [she] would have yielded the northern and western extremities’ to such horrors.[[13]](#footnote-13) Even if central England is benign, then, the regions which border Scotland and Wales carry the threat of Gothic barbarity. These domestically-set Gothic novels often feature ‘uncanny’ landscapes, where the hero knows himself to be at home in England or Scotland but finds the nation changed, unfamiliar and unknowable.[[14]](#footnote-14) Narratives of returning heroes are increasingly popular: soldiers from the Crusades or Europe or America who return to find their native soil plagued by unjust leaders, civil strife and political corruption, and who discover themselves usurped, forgotten or unknown. The struggle to discover or reclaim their lost identity leads them to wander across these inhospitable landscapes in search of people, locations or discovered relics which will validate them. Consequently, ruins, tombs, graves and monuments - remnants of a past age emerging from the national landscape - and the material culture of found manuscripts, inscriptions, relics and artefacts prove particularly valuable to the narratives. They provide a route back to a national and personal history via exhumation and interpretation which can rediscover the hero’s lost heritage and reinstate the status quo. Ancient architecture becomes a metaphor for the state as authors follow William Blackstone, Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft’s lead in using the restoration or ruin of buildings to reference loyalist or reformist principles.[[15]](#footnote-15) These preoccupations bring the authors in this thesis into dialogue with one another, despite their varied social backgrounds, political opinions, genders and influences.

Studies of the Gothic usually begin by stating the difficulty of defining the parameters of the genre and the scope of texts that fit within it. Jerrold Hogle in his ‘Introduction’ to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002), states that ‘One difficulty in [explaining the reason for the persistence of the Gothic] is how pliable and malleable this type of fiction-making has proven to be, stemming as it does from an uneasy conflation of genres, styles, and conflicting cultural concerns from its outset’.[[16]](#footnote-16)Similarly, David Punter begins his ‘Introduction’ to *A New Companion to the Gothic* (2012) by acknowledging that ‘the notion of what constitutes Gothic writing is a contested site’ and that ‘it is obviously possible to view this uncertainty about the field of Gothic writing as, if not exactly a virtue, at least a significant resistance to canonization’.[[17]](#footnote-17) The Gothic novel is by no means a coherent entity and has been used by writers to serve their own disparate social, political and ideological ends since its inception. This has created a distinctly heterogeneous genre that Robert Miles describes as ‘a discursive site crossing the genres’, and Michael Gamer characterises as ‘a shifting aesthetic’, and Angela Wright views as ‘a nebulous protean entity that both sustains and is sustained by other literary discourses’.[[18]](#footnote-18) These depictions of the Gothic demonstrate its range and mutability; something which is essential to a thorough study of the genre. Many critics have noted, as Maggie Kilgour does, that, ‘The gothic displaced anxieties at home onto places geographically and temporally remote’.[[19]](#footnote-19) While this technique was prevalent, especially after the success of Ann Radcliffe’s novels, by acknowledging it as staple trope studies have often overlooked the large number of novels which apply the Gothic aesthetic to domestic, British settings and engage with national politics.

While the Historical novel and the national tale have been widely researched, the Gothic has not hitherto been studied in any depth in relation to these genres. The work of individual authors has been appraised in relation to the Gothic and the Historical novel – particularly pioneers like Sophia Lee and Walter Scott - but no extensive study has been done which examines both male and female authors who used the Gothic genre to reappraise the subjects of national identity, liberty and patriotism in decades when these terms came under severe pressure. Acknowledging the Gothic genre’s roots in the Historical Romance and the national tale, its engagement with broader historico-political discourses and its investment in an imagined national past, forces us to reassess the position of supposedly atypical novels which do not displace anxieties abroad but focus them on the increasingly unfamiliar and ‘uncanny’ domestic space. By giving attention to this range of novels, with their diverse ideological purposes but shared preoccupation with national history, identity and heritage, we expand our interpretation of Gothic literature instead of narrowing and limiting the genre’s reach.

The term ‘Gothic’ has always been associated with national identity and politics. Originating with the tribe, the Visigoths, who invaded the Roman Empire in the Fifth Century AD, the word gothic was predominantly associated with barbarism and anarchy. Contrasted to the refinement of the Romans and their classical learning, the Gothic age was seen as one of superstition and ignorance.[[20]](#footnote-20) During times of political precariousness, however, the monarchy often invoked an idealised past through the affectation of medievalist pomp, pageantry and culture to stabilise their claim to a legendary national heritage. Following the turbulent Tudor reign, through Henry VIII and his six wives, and the bloody and destructive Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts were flamboyantly medievalist. Equally, as tensions built between Charles I and Parliament, antiquarians and political theorists evoked the Gothic in their debates on the origin of English government. In the context of political crisis, they appealed to the Gothic for historical evidence to curb the increasingly absolutist policies of the King. These claims for a ‘Gothic’ form of English government informed political discussion throughout the Eighteenth Century, including the 1707 Act of Union which rewrote national identity in Great Britain. Thus, the Gothic has always had a heterogeneous application in the narratives of classicists, reformists, loyalists, Whigs and Tories alike.[[21]](#footnote-21)

The adaptability of Gothic as a concept is evident from its use throughout the major political crises of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries – the mid-seventeenth-century Civil War, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the 1707 Act of Union, the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. In these early conflicts, ‘Gothic’ was a term used by Parliament to defend against the absolutism of the monarchy. Through politically motivated antiquarian research, it developed a narrative which historically justified it as a national institution: the Saxon ‘witenagemot’ – an archetypal English parliament – ensured that the spirit of liberty was handed down from the freedom-loving Goths to the democratic political representation of the English government. By the time the Stuarts had been deposed, parliamentary rhetoric of Gothic liberty was firmly associated with the Whigs. Robert Molesworth, in the ‘Preface’ to his translation of François Hotman’s *Franco-Gallia* (1711) observed that: ‘My Notion of a *Whig*… is, That he is one who is exactly for keeping up to the Strictness of the true old *Gothick Constitution*, under the *Three Estates*  of *King* (or *Queen*) *Lords* and *Commons*’.[[22]](#footnote-22) In the Eighteenth Century, parliamentary rhetoric helped to make sense of the new country of Great Britain, following the 1707 Act of Union, by providing a historical context for current events. It boasted that Scotland and England shared an ancient Gothic ancestry and that, as *A Perswasive to the Union Now on Foot* (1706) proclaimed; ‘it is no wonder, that after they were severed they should be so desirous now to unite’.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The Gothic rhetoric became very important to the formation of a new national identity in the wake of the 1707 Act of Union. Antiquarians became fascinated with exploring, exhuming and interpreting the material evidence of native Gothicism that was scattered across the countryside. Ruined abbeys and monasteries, castles, tombs, graves, and anything bearing an inscription, became important sites in the discovery of the nation’s ancient past, and in the myth-making process of forging a new identity. Horace Walpole, long heralded as the founder of the Gothic literary genre, provided a useful metaphor for this process in the form of his own Gothic monument, Strawberry Hill. It was his ambition to build a Gothic castle but, as Nick Groom argues:

Strawberry [as Walpole called it] was not based on the restoration or extension of an earlier mediaeval building, neither was it located on some historically hallowed site: it was simply a project to Gothicize a cottage in Twickenham… It was sufficient unto itself: a spectacle, a generalized performance of the English past.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Similarly, eighteenth-century antiquarians were participating in and promoting the ‘performance of the English past’. There was a drive to demonstrate the shared national heritage of Scotland and England, to forge a new national identity defined by the inherited Gothic love of liberty and disdain of tyranny. Particularly in the wake of the loss of the American colonies, and throughout the horrors of the French Revolution, and during the Napoleonic Wars, this mythic rhetoric of the shared British identity would be usefully defined against the foreign ‘other’ in favour of a United Kingdom.

This political rhetoric goes some way to explain the prevalence of continental, Catholic settings in Gothic fiction during the 1790s. As Linda Colley argues in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, the key to sustaining the national myth of unity in Britain was to continually define themselves against their European enemies: ‘Poor or not, large numbers of Protestant Britons believed… that they were richer in every sense than other peoples, particularly Catholic peoples, and particularly the French’.[[25]](#footnote-25) The Gothic texts discussed in this thesis, however, draw from the earlier literary tradition of the first Gothic novels. Before Gothic fiction developed its associations with foreign settings, Catholic superstition, and terror, it was more closely aligned with medieval chivalry and mythic romance.

Thomas Warton’s *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spencer* (1754) discussed Gothic fiction at length in relation to the medieval period. He defended it against its detractors by stating that it should be appreciated as a product of another time and as an important influence on later British authors. This defence was necessary, as Gothic Romances were frequently used as a foil for the burgeoning genre: the realist novel. Novelists such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding emphatically distinguished their fiction from the outdated Romance style. ‘The novel’, E. J. Clery explains, ‘marked itself off as a new, more credible and progressive genre of fiction for an enlightened age by denigrating the old, the romance’.[[26]](#footnote-26) Warton also suggested that the Gothic’s supernatural elements should be interpreted as subtle allegories of social realities, an idea that was taken up by Richard Hurd in his own piece of literary history, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762).

Hurd showed a particular interest in feudal society and manners, and expanded on Warton’s claim that Gothic fiction was a valid form of early literature. To lend the genre legitimacy, he recorded some of the ‘circumstances of agreement between the *heroic* and *gothic* manners’ including their allegorical use of supernatural monsters.[[27]](#footnote-27) ‘These Giants’, Hurd explained, ‘were oppressive feudal Lords, and every Lord was to be met with, like the Giant, in his strong hold, or castle’.[[28]](#footnote-28) This Gothic imagery ‘shadowed out’ the realities of the feudal hierarchy in a way that Hurd compared to the enchanted tales of Edmund Spencer and John Milton.[[29]](#footnote-29) ‘The great geniuses of our own and foreign countries,’ he claimed, ‘were seduced by the barbarities of their forefathers; were even charmed by the Gothic Romances’.[[30]](#footnote-30) The link he forges between the medieval Gothic tales and British genius paved the way for Walpole to claim in his second ‘Preface’ that he could ‘shelter [his] own daring under the cannon of the brightest genius this country, at least, has produced’: William Shakespeare.[[31]](#footnote-31)

The association between the Gothic and Britain’s national heritage has been discussed by James Watt in his book, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (1999). As Watt explains, the interest of eighteenth-century scholars like Warton and Hurd in national and cultural origins led to the Gothic being appropriated by those with a loyalist agenda to promote Britain’s proud heritage and ancient traditions.[[32]](#footnote-32) As ‘Britain’ was a new appellation for the nation formed after the 1707 Act of Union, this effort was part of the myth-making process of fashioning a new, shared identity. The Gothic was a useful tool in this as both the Scots and the English could trace their heritage back to those ancient tribes and attribute their similarities to that joint ancestry. Thus when Edmund Burke would later praise the English constitution in 1790, for example, he specified the ‘Gothic and monkish’ education that the British received as the source of their firm respect for the wisdom of their forebears.[[33]](#footnote-33) These connotations did not erase the original associations of the Gothic with anti-Roman, anti-classical, anti-Enlightenment sentiment, rather its historical association with the barbaric Visigoths and its aesthetic link with medieval chivalry subsisted simultaneously. As Alfred D. Longeuil phrased it in 1923; ‘its difference in meaning represents not an unbroken semantic change, but the readapting of an old word in a totally new sense, motivated by a change in point of view’.[[34]](#footnote-34)

While Ann Radcliffe - often referred to as the mother of Gothic fiction - popularised the foreign setting during the 1790s then, the first Gothic fiction owed its domestic setting to its origins in another developing genre; the Historical Romance. As K. K. Mehrotra discusses, the vogue for chivalry manifested itself in a variety of ways, not least in the combinations of history and fiction that began to appear.[[35]](#footnote-35) For example, in the ‘Preface’ to *The History of Edward Prince of Wales, commonly termed The Black Prince* (1776), Alexander Bicknell stated that, ‘As my chief view has been to make this work entertaining as well as instructive, I have not interrupted the narrative with references to the original authors… nor have I been particular in noting the year in which every event happened’.[[36]](#footnote-36) Commenting on this, Mehrotra observes, ‘This is history being written in the manner of a novel; writers soon followed who tried to write novels in the manner of history’.[[37]](#footnote-37) This new literary style originated earlier than Bicknell’s history however, and can be observed in the first eighteenth-century Gothic novel; Thomas Leland’s *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury: An Historical Romance* (1762).

Set during the reign of Henry III (1216-75), *Longsword* follows the life and times of William, 3rd Earl of Salisbury, an illegitimate child of Henry II. At the beginning of the narrative, he returns from fighting in France to find that the despicable villain, Raymond, is attempting to usurp his title and marry his wife. While the protagonist is a real figure from history, nicknamed William Longespée meaning Longsword, the events of the novel are almost wholly fictional.[[38]](#footnote-38) *Longsword* was regarded on its publication as belonging to ‘a new and agreeable species of writing, in which the beauties of poetry, and the advantages of history are happily united’.[[39]](#footnote-39) Containing many of what would later become established as tropes among national Gothic novels – the returned, alienated hero; the ‘uncanny’ domestic landscape; the usurpation of hereditary identity; the failure of monarchical rule and legal control; the ultimate victory of British chivalry and military glory - *Longsword* popularised the English medieval setting and a degree of topical historical reference in the genre. It is a testament to the triumph of chivalry, loyalty and good governance over betrayal, conspiracy and deceit. Nick Groom describes Leland’s work as: ‘an attempt to dramatise and exemplify Hurd’s account of mediaeval values through the medium of a sentimental novel: it is effectively an illustrated conduct book of the Gothic virtues and a paean to national identity and the triumphs of British valour’.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Between 1754 and 1783, a span of three decades, the British underwent the Seven Years’ War and the loss of the American colonies. These two protracted conflicts complicated the way they viewed themselves as a nation and as an Empire.[[41]](#footnote-41) Leland’s patriotic novel and those that followed in its wake by authors such as Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, James White, T. I. Horsley Curties and Richard Warner, adopted the domestic medieval setting as an essential tool in the nation’s drive to refashion its own image.[[42]](#footnote-42) As James Watt explains, the Romance genre or ‘historical category of Gothic’ became ‘defined increasingly in terms of a proud military heritage’.[[43]](#footnote-43) These novels, like *Longsword*, re-imagined British national identity as one of medieval chivalry, military victory and Protestant patriotism.[[44]](#footnote-44)

As frequently occurs where the Gothic is concerned however, these sites and associations soon became contested. Horace Walpole’s novella, *The Castle of Otranto*, bearing in its second edition the subtitle of *A Gothic Story* was published in 1764, two years after Leland’s conservative Gothic novel. Its popularity, and the scandal surrounding the revelation that it was not a translated medieval fiction as originally purported but merely a work of modern fiction, developed the associations of the Gothic genre with frivolity and absurdity. Equally, both the British setting and the definition of patriotism became disputed as liberal, reformist writers began to make claims upon them in their Gothic fiction. The language of patriotism in the Eighteenth Century was ambiguous and carried radical and reformist connotations. During Robert Walpole’s period of office, the term ‘patriot’ had been used by the Tory and old Whig Country party to legitimise political opposition. The London radical John Wilkes, for example, cast himself as a plain and honest citizen, an English ‘patriot’, in his 1760s opposition to the corruption of the Crown and government. The Gothic rhetoric of democracy and liberty inspired reformist writers like William Godwin and Charlotte Smith to craft novels which, accidentally or otherwise, resemble Gothic novels and are in praise of these ancient, inherited national qualities. Thus, the British setting became a powerful tool for both conservative and reformist Gothic writers, both claiming the appellation of patriotism.

Godwin’s 1784 adaptation of Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, *Imogen: A Pastoral Romance, From the Ancient British*, constructed an idyllic, uncorrupted mythic past in order to highlight the corruption of modern, hegemonic forces. Pamela Clemit describes the work as a ‘proto-revolutionary narrative’ for the 1780s and *Imogen* certainly promotes reformist arguments against English imperialism and the decadent aristocracy in favour of individual liberty, social equality and a primitive, pastoral utopia. His later work, *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) continued this attack upon the English legal system which defends social inequality but, following the trend in reformist Gothic literature begun by Charlotte Smith, utilised a contemporary British setting. While Fiona Robertson has argued that this contemporary setting should disqualify the work of radical writers like Smith and Godwin from the category of Gothic, I would disagree. ‘A novel should not be categorized as Gothic’, she states, ‘if it makes no attempt to situate the events of its plot in a historical setting’.[[45]](#footnote-45) Instead, it would qualify as a ‘non-Gothic experimentation with Gothic conventions’.[[46]](#footnote-46) Judging by Charlotte Smith’s own comparison of her work to other Gothic authors, however, the limits that Robertson places on the genre’s boundaries may be too limiting. In her ‘Preface’ to volume two of *The Banished Man* (1794), Smith laments: ‘my ingenious contemporaries have fully possessed themselves of every bastion and buttress – of every tower and turret’ and that her previous castles have ‘taken so many of my materials to construct, that I have hardly a watch tower, a Gothic arch, a cedar parlour, or a long gallery, an illuminated window, or a ruined chapel, left to help myself’.[[47]](#footnote-47) Here she equates herself to her Gothic ‘contemporaries’ and the proliferation of ancient buildings and ruins in their fictions. Rather than excluding Gothic texts which do not adopt a historical setting, then, we should, as Michael Gamer states, expand our definition of the term. ‘While “Gothic” may be a notoriously shifting and complex object of study’, he argues, ‘its rapid changes and instabilities at the end of the Eighteenth Century, rather than frustrating us, should form part of our definition of the term. Certainly late eighteenth-century readers considered it thus’.[[48]](#footnote-48) Eighteenth-century readers would also no doubt have included Charlotte Smith’s novels, while set in the Eighteenth Century, among the Romances which modern critics now label as Gothic.

The Gothic, both as a term and a genre, has always been a site of contestation, debate and diversity. The Eighteenth Century witnessed a proliferation of Gothic novels which employed both foreign and domestic settings, for both reformist and loyalist narratives, promoting a range of political ideologies in both ancient and modern settings, and with varied debate on the use of the supernatural, the need for moral didacticism, the narrative styles of horror versus terror, and the suitability of audience. While Walpole’s *Otranto* has long been heralded as the origin of and prototype for all future Gothic novels then, and while his claim that it was ‘an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern’, has encouraged the idea that he was presenting the frame-work for an entirely new kind of fiction; neither of these is true.[[49]](#footnote-49) *Otranto* did combine many of the features that came to define the genre, several of which Walpole drew from Leland’s work, but there is a danger in providing the Gothic with an appearance of stability based on his established character-types and plot motifs. As subsequent writers responded to and built upon the work of their predecessors, a store of themes and tropes emerged that function as recognisable generic markers. The recurrence of these elements – such as medieval castles, supernatural agents, beleaguered heroines and corrupt patriarchs - can lead to a sense of unity in the generic tradition, but this imposed conformity risks overlooking the subtle nuances of adaptation and application that produced this varied and vibrant genre. As Nick Groom remarks, ‘*Otranto* has been retrospectively constructed as the founding text of a new literary movement, and its magical medievalism has eclipsed the much more intricate set of associations that the Gothic had at the time’.[[50]](#footnote-50)

As the Gothic genre grew in popularity and prevalence, contemporary reviewers commented on the similarity of the texts being published, noting what Eugenia C. DeLamotte described in her *Perils of the Night* (1990) as the ‘laundry-list approach’ to eighteenth-century Gothic fiction.[[51]](#footnote-51) They satirised the formulaic nature of the Gothic novel, drawing attention to the repetition of tropes and presenting them as a recipe for instant publication, if not literary success. Beneath these superficial similarities, however, the Gothic is a diverse and contested genre with originality and experimentation at its core. In many cases, the outward repetition of motifs throws into definition the differences between individual texts and the thematic changes authors chose to make to the stock model. Just as Walpole sought in *Otranto* to create a new kind of Romance, combining the fanciful and the realistic, so his successors wrote with imagination and novelty.

Defining the Gothic as a continuous tradition, then, neglects to address the tensions and antagonism that existed between different Gothic writers and their works. As I have discussed, what they shared was not so much a coherent set of tropes, but a collection of themes and formal elements that could be adopted and modified by novelists to suit their purpose. Even writers who borrowed from one another often rewrote previous publications with an entirely new set of ideologies. Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778), while being the self-proclaimed ‘literary offspring’ of *The Castle of Otranto*, significantly rewrote Walpole’s novel with a new respectable moral message.[[52]](#footnote-52) Walpole frequently dismissed his own work as a ‘trifling romance’ and wrote to Hannah More in 1784 that it was ‘fit for nothing but the age in which it was written… that required only to be amused’[[53]](#footnote-53), but Reeve wrote in her ‘Preface’ that her work sought to be ‘useful, or at least innocent’ and not merely ‘an entertainment for the reader’.[[54]](#footnote-54) Throughout its rich history the Gothic genre has frequently been the site of such debate and conflict. ‘Laundry-list’ Gothics have always been easy to identify, but the continuing expansion of the Gothic canon demonstrates that modern scholars are still wrestling with the boundaries and definitions of what it means for a text to be Gothic. Within this heterogeneous genre coexist a range of diverse political and ideological viewpoints which defy attempts to define a single generic intention.

Limiting the definition of Gothic risks failing to do justice to the diversity of the texts which either self-identified as such, or engaged with the popular genre. As such, texts which appear atypical can be excluded from academic assessments of the genre altogether. In the same way that eighteenth-century Gothic writers felt the need to defend their work with lengthy prefaces, critics often find themselves having to justify the Gothic credentials of their chosen authors. How, for example, can Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House* (1793) or Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley* (1814)be Gothic, if Horace Walpole’s work is the model of the genre? They lack the medieval setting, the supernatural agents and the anti-Catholicism of his original. Yet in both cases, these authors were engaging with the growing corpus of Gothic literature, and their work reveals a preoccupation with lost identity, usurped inheritance, and the national myth which marks them as Gothic. Even Ann Radcliffe, viewed by contemporary and modern critics alike as the epitome of the late eighteenth-century Gothic style, cannot qualify under the limits of Walpole’s Gothic specifications. In order to fully appreciate the scope of the genre, one must acknowledge its unstable boundaries and inclusive, heterogeneous nature.

As E. J. Clery has noted in her essay ‘The Genesis of ‘Gothic’ Fiction’, ‘The attachment of the term *Gothic* to the literature of terror is quite a recent development – and almost entirely accidental.’[[55]](#footnote-55) It only appeared as the subtitle for Walpole’s novel in its second edition when he also admitted that the work was in fact of modern conception, and the term was rarely used during the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In fact, there were only a handful of texts that incorporated ‘Gothic’ into their titles, including Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1777-8),Richard Warner’s *Netley Abbey: A Gothic Story* (1795) and Isabella Kelly’s *The Baron’s Daughter: a Gothic Romance* (1802). Indeed, due to the association between the term Gothic and the nation’s ancestors, the Visigoths, the majority of eighteenth-century texts which identified as Gothic were set in Britain for conservative, patriotic purposes. Those novels which we now identify as Gothic were much more likely to hold the appellations of a ‘Legendary Tale’, ‘Old English Tale’, ‘Tale of Ancient Times’, ‘Historical Story’, or ‘Historical Romance’.[[56]](#footnote-56) These subtitles emphasise the Gothic’s preoccupation with history, ancestry, and the national myth.

Despite Georg Lukács’ ambitious claim that Walter Scott founded ‘the classical form of the Historical novel’ without literary precursor with the publication of *Waverley; or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* in 1814, the Historical novel has a long history stretching throughout the Eighteenth Century.[[57]](#footnote-57) Leland’s 1762 Gothic novel was also a national historical tale, as were many of the Gothic novels published over the following four decades. The Historical novel developed as a genre alongside and in symbiosis with Gothic literature, and the two share a preoccupation with national history and identity. When Reeve reworked Walpole’s Gothic novel in *The Old English Baron* (1778), she moved the setting to Britain during the Hundred Years’ War and emphasised in the ‘Preface’ to the second edition that it was equally ‘distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners’.[[58]](#footnote-58) By changing the location, Reeve was appealing to a patriotic British audience who were avidly consuming historical romances alongside the modern genres such as the novel of manners, and sentimental and epistolary novels. Originally published anonymously in 1777, the novel bore the title *The Champion of Virtue*, but when it was republished in 1778 with Reeve’s name on the cover, it became *The Old English Baron*. This new title makes the link to England’s proud feudal past explicit to the audience and emphasises both the historical and the national content of the tale. Similarly, Sophia Lee’s popular novel, *The Recess* (1783-5), also united the Historical Romance with the Gothic novel. Set during the reign of Elizabeth I, it combined the domestic, British setting with many of the themes that would come to typify the Gothic genre; subterranean imprisonment, female persecution, intrigue, betrayal and destructive desire. Even Ann Radcliffe set her first novel *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne. A Highland Story* (1789) against a backdrop of medieval castles along the rugged Scottish coastline. Following her incredibly successful continental Gothic novels, she would later return to the British setting in her final work, *Gaston de Blondeville*, written 1802-3 and set in the Thirteenth Century in the court of King Henry III.

Applying Gothic tropes to a British, domestic setting continued to be popular with writers, alongside the better-known continental Gothic novels. Due to the soaring popularity of Radcliffe’s texts which employed a foreign setting and the multitude of imitations they inspired, however, continental locations have become a staple motif in the minds of modern readers and critics. The popularity of the European setting is often attributed to the genre’s gloating anti-Catholicism, as Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall suggest; ‘Italy, Spain and Southern France were chosen because, to the Protestant mind, they were firmly associated with the twin yoke of feudal politics and papal deception, from which they had still to emancipate themselves’.[[59]](#footnote-59) The ‘otherness’ of the foreign setting, its people and their culture is a constant source of terror and delight in Gothic literature. At the beginning of an age of nationalism, travel and cultural comparison were essential for conceptualising and cementing the concept of distinct nation states. British travellers recorded their experiences in Europe and had them published in journals for armchair tourists to enjoy; all of them engaging in the process of assessing cultural differences and using them to define and reinforce the boundaries of British national identity.

Equally, foreign settings supplied many authors with a geographically – and often temporally – distanced location upon which to displace domestic concerns. Gothic authors would frequently engage with sensitive issues presented at a safe distance from their source. Thus an exotic court, a far-away castle or a Catholic monastery presented an ideal locale in which to stage and explore contemporary social and political scenarios. For example, Radcliffe’s novel *The Italian* (1796) is set in Naples but, as Robert Miles convincingly argues in his ‘Introduction’ (2000) to the text, it was engaging with a host of domestic issues. Composed in a climate of political paranoia in Britain in the late 1790s, he rightly identifies that ‘*The Italian* is a tale of “forged plots, spies, informers, and false witnesses”, in a way quite unlike any of Radcliffe’s previous romances’.[[60]](#footnote-60) By displacing her action to the Continent, Radcliffe could reflect on the British government’s paranoiac attempts to suppress Jacobinism under the thin guise of the Roman Inquisition. Vivaldi’s imprisonment and psychological torture by the Inquisition can be read as a parallel to the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* in Britain, and the subsequent ‘treason trials’ of the London Corresponding Society.

Significantly, however, Radcliffe’s portrayal is subtle and nuanced. While the Inquisition may represent the authoritarian cruelty of a panicked government, she does occasionally focalise its depiction through the eyes of the Inquisitors themselves, allowing them a voice and preventing them from becoming dehumanised and demonised. Moreover, Vivaldi eventually comes to appreciate their wisdom and support their work, which confirms his own aristocratic identity in the novel. Even in her choice of foreign setting, Radcliffe was engaging with British politics, as Miles observes; ‘For British visitors… of a liberal persuasion, Neapolitans appeared to offer a version of themselves, a people apart who were instinctively opposed to the yoke of tyranny… yet loath to adopt revolutionary measures’ (p xiv). By choosing Naples, therefore, Radcliffe was engaging directly with the fierce pamphlet debates over the French Revolution and the concept of British liberty. Contemporary critics identified her engagement as one of escapism, praising her work for providing a legitimate form of ‘transport’ during a time of national crisis. While her tales of Catholic tyranny, banditti and feudal oppression supplied the British audience with an alternate reality to their own, her treatment of politics was frequently more subtle than mere anti-Catholicism would allow.

While Radcliffe popularised the foreign setting for writers such as William Beckford, Matthew Lewis and Charles Robert Maturin, the domestic landscape remained a popular backdrop until the genre’s decline in 1820. It was utilised by a range of writers with a variety of different ideological backgrounds and a disparate array of political intentions. Some Gothic writers were inspired by loyalist zeal or revolutionary fervour, others were afraid of the reactionary policies of the British government, still others feared French invasion or Catholic emancipation, and for many their authorial intentions are too ambiguous to be deciphered. From Charlotte Smith’s revolutionary fiction to Eliza Parson’s loyalist novels, the domestic setting was adapted and employed to suit a wide range of ideological messages. This thesis will explore the work of five authors in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, who all employed the domestic, British setting. While some, like Clara Reeve, William Henry Ireland and T. I. Horsley Curties, are widely acknowledged to be Gothic authors, Charlotte Smith and Walter Scott are frequently overlooked by critics of the genre and more commonly classified as sentimental or historical novelists respectively.[[61]](#footnote-61) Their work, however, displays a preoccupation with many of the themes central to national Gothic literature, and their awareness of and engagement with the genre makes their work – at the very least – part of the corpus of novels which are Gothic-inspired or Gothic-inflected.

These authors have been chosen from the long list of national Gothic writers because they display a range of socio-political influences that affected them as individuals and shaped their work. Clara Reeve (1729-1807), responding to Walpole’s frivolity, promoted nationalism, patriotism and moral didacticism in her work. She challenged the new Whig politics that Walpole embodied by endorsing an old Whig, middle-class morality. Thus her Gothic novels focus on inheritance and legitimacy with an emphasis not only on the restoration of hereditary rights and property, but with a commercial, middle-class interest in determining authenticity, establishing legality, and securing dynastic lineage. Not only does her fiction reveal contemporary anxieties concerning the historical basis of authority and social order, but as one of the first female Gothic authors, it demonstrates that women writers were not limited to domestic and quotidian subjects. The second chapter focuses on the revolutionary Gothic novels of Charlotte Smith (1749-1806) who abandoned the medieval setting, and instead set her fiction contemporaneously to promote social reform, endorse the ideals of the French Revolution, and voice concerns for the state of British liberty. Smith’s narratives contain subtle critiques of the government coded into her depiction of England: her hostile landscapes confront the cruelty of British imperialism, her crumbling castles are metonyms for the nation’s ancient institutions, and her pastoral idylls are a testament to the corruption of modern society. While Smith is rarely considered a Gothic author in critical appraisals of the genre, her work exploits the popular tropes of the genre to address these acute socio-political concerns.

The third chapter addresses the fiction of William Henry Ireland (1775-1835), the notorious Shakespeare forger. Ireland’s fiction belies a preoccupation with national identity and the myth making process of nation forming. A forger himself, his work explores the fabrication and performance of history involved in the eighteenth-century antiquarian revival, and his Gothic novels explore issues of national liberty brought to the forefront of the public consciousness by the American and French Revolutions. A keen concern in his fiction is to promote chosen leaders over hereditary monarchy, and thus his accounts of Robert the Bruce’s victories over Edward II are coded references to the rise of Napoleon in place of King Louis XVI. This theme follows into the fourth chapter on T. I. Horsley-Curties (1777-1858), a largely critically-neglected Gothic novelist serving in the Hanoverian court. Curties’s loyalist fiction draws extensively from Leland and Reeve’s examples of conservative Gothic by promoting a secure social hierarchy with a wise and just ruler at its head. He troubles these royalist narratives, however, by interrogating the qualities of a good ruler and concluding that primogeniture does not always favour the best candidate. In this he was responding not only to the contemporary political situation in France, but also to the growing concerns of the British public throughout George III’s mental illness and incapacitation. Writing in a period of strong but unstable patriotic fervour, Curties provided the reading public with nationalistic tales of Britain’s past glory and military success, but coded his own subtle critiques of British politics into these seemingly-straightforward royalist narratives.

Finally, I conclude the thesis with a chapter on Sir Walter Scott, a writer who has been extensively studied in relation to historical and national tales, but insufficiently associated with the Gothic genre as more than a critic. His work, however, is a testament to the symbiosis of the Gothic and Historical Romance genres as they developed and interwove throughout the latter half of the Eighteenth Century and the beginning of the Nineteenth. Scott’s Gothic novels, set in Scotland and England, are a sophisticated appraisal of the culmination of themes and concerns that national Gothic novels fostered throughout their spate of popularity. His work explores the formation of cultural identity through the curation of a shared antiquarian past, and considers the legitimacy of history, the narration of the past and the act of reclaiming national ancestry in the development of British identity.

Ultimately, by bringing these authors and their work into dialogue with one another, this thesis seeks to extend the limits of the Gothic to include tales set in Britain, and to explore the socio-political themes debated therein. The Gothic developed as a political, historical and cultural term regarding the origins of British national identity, and in consequence many texts which identified as Gothic were set domestically. These texts sought to define national identity from Britain’s own mythic, medieval past, rather than simply against a European, Catholic ‘other’. While divided by their widely-differing political perspectives and social backgrounds, all of the authors discussed here engage closely with contemporary domestic politics and share a preoccupation with national identity which references the genre’s roots in the Historical Romance and national tale. The narrative of the dispossessed, wandering hero who finds Britain an inhospitable, alien land reocurs throughout this national Gothic fiction. The authors examined here each lend the central theme something unique as they incorporate their personal politics, but the main crises of the Eighteenth Century can be traced throughout their novels. Returning soldiers, usurped inheritances, lost identities, dissolute rulers and unjust imprisonment all feature in their fiction and reference key issues that Britons faced after the 1707 Act of Union and throughout the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries. By analysing these texts, the thesis ultimately aims to produce a more nuanced, inclusive view of the heterogeneous Gothic genre; to foreground that genre in issues of national identity, British history and the antiquarian revival; and to explore how authors engaged with those themes in the light of contemporary political crises and societal tensions.

Chapter One

Clara Reeve: Refashioning the Nation

She had beside this another stimulus, to give a faithful picture of a well-governed kingdom, wherein a true subordination of ranks and degrees was observed, and of a great prince at the head of it.

* Clara Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793)[[62]](#footnote-62)

In her ‘Introduction’ to *Women’s Gothic*, E. J. Clery notes that there is an enduring perception of eighteenth-century women authors which revolves around ‘concealment, restraint, fear of criticism, self-censorship’.[[63]](#footnote-63) She observes that ‘it has been influentially argued that these unfavourable conditions left an indelible mark on their imaginations, and their style of writing, that it discouraged them from overt treatment of politics or philosophy in favour of a more safely ‘feminine’ focus on the domestic and the quotidian’.[[64]](#footnote-64) Even in the Gothic, a genre which can by no means be called ‘safe’, women’s fiction has been defined by its inward-looking focus on domestic spaces, family relationships and fears of entrapment. When Ellen Moers coined the term Female Gothic in a 1974 article in the *New York Review of Books* and then later in *Literary Women* (1976), she was identifying a mode of literature where 'woman is examined with a woman's eye'.[[65]](#footnote-65) As Gary Kelly expanded, qualifying literature is ‘written by women, featuring female protagonists […] and with distinctively feminine and feminist interests and tendencies’.[[66]](#footnote-66) Such literature employs certain archetypal ‘female’ narratives of imprisonment, sexual persecution and birth myths.

While critics have fiercely debated the value of a separate literary term for Female Gothic, they do agree that the repressed fears and desires referenced in women’s Gothic differ dramatically from those revealed by their male counterparts.[[67]](#footnote-67) As such, the divergent voices in Juliann Fleenor’s edited collection of essays, *The Female Gothic* (1983), disagree on the conservative or radical intentions of the genre, but do agree that at its core is a unifying ambivalence over female identity.[[68]](#footnote-68) Separating the work of women writers from the corpus of Gothic literature with the distinct classification Female Gothic can be problematic as it imposes limits on the scope of their work. A restriction on the narrative style, appropriate settings, descriptions, plots and characterisation of women’s Gothic not only encourages ahistorical gender essentialism, but also risks ignoring texts which do not fall within those proscribed boundaries. Meanwhile, setting aside these assumptions about women’s Gothic fiction and taking a closer look at the literary output reveals a wealth of politically and socially engaged work. These texts demonstrate that women writers did not feel compelled to confine their fiction to the limits of domestic life or to an examination of female identity. They reveal that they were as aware of wider national and international issues, and as capable of responding to them, as their male literary counterparts. Clara Reeve verbalised this in her ‘Preface’ to *The Memoirs of Roger de Clarendon* (1793) where she stated her intention to ‘give a faithful picture of a well-governed kingdom’ as a challenge to France’s ‘new philosophy [which] avows a levelling principle’.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Particularly in the Gothic genre, we see women writers pushing the boundaries of female propriety and overcoming significant social obstacles to find success in the literary sphere. One of the first novels to give itself the appellation of a ‘A Gothic Story’ was penned by a woman, and put in place many of the set-pieces that found their way into common usage, most notably; decaying haunted apartments, hollow groans from secret chambers, themes of guilt and retribution, and ghosts who reveal brutal murders. Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778) was written as a response to Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).[[70]](#footnote-70) In her ‘Preface’, Reeve took Walpole to task on his management of the supernatural and on the lack of morality in his work. She observed that Walpole’s supernatural machinery was ‘so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite’, and that having excited the attention, a Romance should ‘direct it to some useful end’ - which she implied his failed to do.[[71]](#footnote-71) While valid in their own right, these criticisms hint at a wider political opposition between Reeve and Walpole which centres around the extravagance and corruption of the ‘new Whig’ order.

By modelling her novel on the same theme as Walpole, but providing it with a democratic, ‘old Whig’, middle-class morality, Reeve was engaging in a larger social and political debate. This directly challenges the idea that men and women’s Gothic fiction is fundamentally different, or that women’s fiction was limited to the private sphere. To say that Reeve domesticated Walpole’s story is only to observe that she relocated the plot to medieval Gothic England in order to strengthen her observations on national politics, reinforce her links to the popular Historical Romance genre, and support her appeal to patriotism. Kate Ferguson Ellis’s view that *The Old English Baron* is ‘*Otranto* feminised’ seems misplaced in a text where the female characters remain marginalised and the narrative focus rests on the legal rights, social privileges and moral responsibilities of males.[[72]](#footnote-72) Beyond that, Reeve’s text deals with public events, historical figures, violence and politics just as much as Walpole, if not more so because her characters are plucking from the annals of English history. Indeed, the direct engagement between Reeve and Walpole’s texts, and the political conflict between them is, as Gary Kelly has argued, a qualifying feature of the Gothic genre: ‘individual works […] often seem[ed] to be in dialogue and dispute with one another – not so much taking up successful devices of a predecessor as redeploying those devices, or deploying different ones, to counter the predecessor’s cultural politics.’[[73]](#footnote-73) The conflicting socio-political opinions of the authors in this study is what brings their nationalist Gothic novels into dialogue with one another as they confront, challenge and accord with one another’s politics.

Interestingly, the dichotomy between Walpole’s frivolous and excessive ‘new Whig’ tale and Reeve’s virtuous and patriotic ‘old Whig’ fable is not as clearly defined as Reeve would have liked. Several critics have noted the differences between Reeve’s loyalist Gothic and Walpole’s casual entertainment, among them James Watt who states that; ‘Writers of Loyalist Gothic Romances modestly disavowed any claim after the recognition that ‘risk-takers’ such as Walpole and Lewis sought, and, perhaps most significantly, they chose to privilege the exemplary purpose of Romance rather than exploit sensational material or provide narratives of suspense’.[[74]](#footnote-74) This undoubtedly describes Reeve’s didactic work, but while she may have defined herself ‘against Walpolean frivolity’, their novels share more than a common plot dealing with the usurpation and restoration of the rightful owner or heir of a property and title.[[75]](#footnote-75)

The absence of strong male figures or heroes in *Otranto* carries the same message as *The Old English Baron*: a criticism of late eighteenth-century Britain and its declining generations.[[76]](#footnote-76) This is made clear early in *Otranto* when the protagonist’s weak and sickly heir, Conrad, is ‘dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet’.[[77]](#footnote-77) The ancestral past, rich with military glory and chivalric valour, rises up to crush the next generation before they can wrongfully inherit. While Reeve’s message was a more optimistic one of inspiration and restoration, the criticism of eighteenth-century Britain remains the same. Their shared desire to see England’s ancestral glory restored reveals a patriotism that is often overlooked in Walpole’s work. In her ‘Introduction’ to *The Castle of Otranto*, E. J. Clery observes that Walpole’s evocation of Shakespeare and condemnation of Voltaire makes his ‘fanciful tale take on the appearance of a nationalist enterprise’ and that his ‘few phantoms, or mixing comedy and tragedy, becomes almost a patriotic duty’.[[78]](#footnote-78) While Reeve’s nationalism was more than an ‘appearance’ and her patriotism more decided than an ‘almost’ duty, seen in this light their fiction was more similar than Reeve would have liked to suggest. They shared a criticism of contemporary Britain and a desire to see it restored to its former glory. That desire was never more keenly felt than during this extended period of international conflict when the concept of British nationality was being contested, and traditional values were deemed under threat.[[79]](#footnote-79) As Watt suggests, Reeve employed popular fiction as a didactic tool for political commentary and privileged the ‘exemplary purpose of Romance’ to improve her readers.[[80]](#footnote-80)

In the ‘Preface’ to the second edition of *The Old English Baron*, Reeve made it clear that she was responding to the flaws she perceived in Walpole’s text. While her work was ‘written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel’ she felt that he fell short of one very important goal.[[81]](#footnote-81) Given that the ‘business of Romance is, first, to excite the attention; and, secondly, to direct it to some useful, or at least innocent, end’, Reeve set out to add a moral message to Walpole’s design.[[82]](#footnote-82) In this she was conforming to the widely-held view that fiction had a responsibility to be a useful vehicle for instruction or moral improvement. She was unusual, however, in attributing this general principle to Romances. The strength of the Novel over the Romance was that its verisimilitude allowed it to positively influence its readers while the latter could not. In praise of Samuel Richardson’s work, Samuel Johnson wrote that fictions should ‘exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world’.[[83]](#footnote-83) Only then could they serve the role of instruction and guidance as ‘what we cannot credit we shall never imitate’. [[84]](#footnote-84) This rendered fanciful Romances useless as a moral tool. Interestingly, while Johnson set Richardson up in opposition to Romance, Reeve used him in her ‘Preface’ as an example of the ideal Romance author: one capable of combining excitement and usefulness.

The idea that a Romance, which employed wonder or fancy, could not be a vehicle for moral guidance recurs throughout eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literary criticism. Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s review of Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) stated that, ‘a Romance is incapable of exemplifying a moral truth’ because it does not reflect reality.[[85]](#footnote-85) He quoted Horace, whose dictum, ‘*incredulus odit*’ (‘what I cannot believe disgusts me’) exemplifies this neoclassical criticism of outdated Romances. This sentiment was still prominent in 1805 when Hugh Murray suggested that, ‘no good effect seems likely’ from reading Romances which inspire ‘fantastic and visionary expectations’ which only lead to ‘discontent with the uniformity of common life’.[[86]](#footnote-86)

Throughout her literary career, Reeve sought to style the Romance as a useful tool for impressing morality onto young readers and educating them about their national heritage. In 1785 she wrote *The Progress of Romance*, a history of prose fiction which analyses the evolution of the epic into Romance and then into the modern Novel. Her intention was simultaneously to justify Romance as a reputable genre by tracing its ‘progress’ from ancient and well-respected sources in European and British history, and to suggest it as an ideal instrument for instruction. The modern Romance, not to be confused with the Novel, was still a fantastical tale but used ‘some obscure parts of true history’ as a foundation for its action.[[87]](#footnote-87) While Reeve, through her mouthpiece Euphrasia, praised the increased probability this produced, she lamented that ‘truth and fiction were so blended together, that a common reader could not distinguish them’.[[88]](#footnote-88) The danger of this was that young readers would ‘imbibe absurd ideas of historical facts and persons’ instead of using history to inspire noble thoughts and actions.[[89]](#footnote-89) Reeve fiercely defended the Romance’s ability to promote values, stating that ‘The ancient and modern Romance, had each their peculiar *ton*, their *affectation*, their *absurdities*: - at the same time it must be confessed by those who despise them, that the enthusiasm they inspired was that of virtue and honour’.[[90]](#footnote-90) In her own Romance, Reeve emulated the modern recourse to true history while attempting to temper the innate ‘absurdities’ of the genre – by which she meant the heavy reliance on supernatural intervention – and emphasise its didacticism. By keeping *The Old English Baron* within the ‘utmost *verge* of probability’ she hoped to preserve the excitement stirred by the supernatural, whilst retaining enough semblance of reality to prove morally edifying.[[91]](#footnote-91)

It must be said that Walpole had also pursued ‘probability’ in his work, but of a different kind. As Walpole defined it, probability referred to characters acting naturally in unnatural circumstances, whereas Reeve understood probability to mean the overall actions and events of the plot and the way that they impact on reader response. Too many supernatural incidents would incite readers to laughter rather than fear or wonder, and Walpole’s particular brand of supernatural had no didactic purpose within the narrative. Reeve wanted to address these issues in her novel and by correcting the absent morality and the farce of Walpole’s work, make Gothic Romances respectable to critics and the reading public. While the genre would later become associated with subversion and rebellion – particularly during the 1790s when authors like Matthew Lewis and the Marquis de Sade were writing – Reeve’s work promotes an ideal conservative state. She advances the Gothic Romance as a model vehicle for a sober, stabilising morality to combat the ‘new philosophy of the present day [which] avows a levelling principle’.[[92]](#footnote-92) Such Romances would glorify medieval manners and customs, and depict England’s proud military heritage and political legacy; promoting democracy safely contained by a strong hierarchy of rank. ‘A faithful picture of a well-governed kingdom, wherein a true subordination of ranks and degrees was observed, and of a great prince at the head of it’, was the antidote she recommended to promote patriotism and social conservativism in the younger generation.[[93]](#footnote-93)

The drive to glorify England’s past and recommend its moral and chivalric code to her readers makes *The Old English Baron* a very didactic text which J. M. S. Tompkins rightly describes as ‘a conduct book with Gothic trimmings’.[[94]](#footnote-94) Just as Reeve praised Samuel Richardson in her ‘Preface’, her novel holds fast to the idea of ‘virtue rewarded’, the subtitle of his famous work *Pamela*.[[95]](#footnote-95) This world-view is linked to Reeve’s political affiliations as an ‘old Whig’, who believed the best constitution was a combination of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, where wealth did not dictate power, and restraints were placed on the monarchy for the good of the people.[[96]](#footnote-96) She thus combines a middle-class fable in which the hero must prove his worth in order to inherit and succeed, with a loyalist argument in support of a strict, but virtuous, social hierarchy, set in medieval England. The result is a strange depiction of chivalric England which demonstrates features of both the Fourteenth and the Eighteenth Century. Reeve’s preoccupation with money and exchange, travel and alienation are all very middle-class eighteenth-century concerns which she presents in a fourteenth-century context to draw parallels between medieval England and the modern day. As she suggests in the ‘Preface’ to her Gothic medieval fable of 1793, *Sir Roger de Clarendon*, the connection between ancient and modern England is essential to her design as young readers will be especially inspired by the ‘great men of their own country’.[[97]](#footnote-97)

In the well-governed England that Reeve represents, all strata of society are depicted as valuable assets to the nation as a whole, with the poor providing labour and loyal support upwards, and the wealthy ensuring financial aid and legal justice downwards. In her ‘Preface’ to *Sir Roger de Clarendon,* she states that she intended to show a ‘kingdom, wherein a true subordination of ranks and degrees was observed’, and this holds true for her earlier novel too.[[98]](#footnote-98) The protagonist of *The Old English Baron*, Sir Philip Harclay, is introduced on the first page of the novel swiftly followed by his Greek servant Zadisky, who is bound to his master by ‘tyes of friendship and gratitude’.[[99]](#footnote-99) The reader quickly realises that Reeve means to demonstrate the value of mutual loyalty between the classes. She goes on to introduce the young peasant John Wyatt who serves Harclay, and then the hero Edmund with his old servants Joseph Howell and Father Oswald, who served Edmund’s father and now help him in his quest to reclaim his inheritance. Their loyalty is returned with gratitude and financial reward by their masters and thus Reeve depicts a class system which functions for the greater good.

The characters not only have value in terms of their roles in the social system, but also a financial value as objects of circulation, trade and exchange. This is thematised from the start in the history of Zadisky: a Greek soldier raised by a Saracen Officer, captured by Harclay - an Englishman in service to King Henry V and then the Greek Emperor - who converts him to Christianity and relocates him to England. Both servant and master are introduced in terms of international travel and commodity value, which is reinforced throughout the novel as human beings continue to change hands. Joseph Howell and Father Oswald served Edmund’s father, Lord Arthur Lovel, then briefly his kinsman and murderer, Lord Walter Lovel, then the eponymous English Baron, Lord Fitz-Owen, and finally Edmund Lovel. Young John Wyatt is hired by Harclay during his travels but is later given to Edmund with the words, ‘I give you to him for an attendant on his person, and would have you show your affection to me by your attachment to him’.[[100]](#footnote-100) Edmund is similarly an object in circulation within the novel; raised as a peasant and employed in errand-running for the Fitz-Owens, rewarded for his integrity and wit by being educated, and ultimately regarded by the Baron Fitz-Owen as ‘a faithful servant of the upper kind’.[[101]](#footnote-101) From there he is nearly given to Harclay, but requests to stay with Fitz-Owen, before travelling to France as a soldier. Upon his return he seeks refuge with Harclay, and his quest to discover his heritage takes him to the Scottish marshes for a trial by combat, before returning to his paternal seat. The circulation of these characters both geographically, and via ownership and employment, creates a fluid economy in Reeve’s novel. This is reinforced by Edmund’s rise through the ranks from peasant to servant to aristocrat, and by the ready circulation of money between the characters.

Charity and payment for goods are present throughout the novel as a constant reference to monetary exchange. Not only is this a reference to Reeve’s middle-class concerns, but also to the Christian morality she was trying to encourage in her readership. When Harclay stays with the Wyatts, Reeve repeatedly makes reference to him paying for their hospitality. When he takes John into his service his father is quick to discuss his ‘terms’, and the narrator calls the exchange a ‘bargain’.[[102]](#footnote-102) Elsewhere, Harclay is repeatedly associated with financial ‘support’; of his servants and tenants as well as ‘twelve old soldiers who had been maimed and disabled in the wars, and had no provision made for them; also six old officers who had been unfortunate and were grown grey without preferment’ and ‘many others who eat of my Master’s bread and drink of his cup’.[[103]](#footnote-103) The depiction of Harclay crossing the barren landscape with bare provisions, whilst providing charity and compassion for the poor and advising the rich, has strong Biblical connotations which are solidified in John’s reference to bread and wine.

Reeve’s concern with the allocation of wealth and power can also be seen at the end of the novel, when Edmund shares his new-found capital out among his loyal friends and servants, and even among his one-time enemies and abusers, saying ‘look upon this as paying a debt, and not bestowing a gift’.[[104]](#footnote-104) This democratises the act by framing it in middle-class terms - as payment for services rendered - rather than charity from the aristocracy down to the masses. It also locates heroism in social interchange and Christian generosity, rather than merely in individual action for one’s own glory. The last pages of the novel contain an extensive and detailed account of the legal arrangements surrounding the hero’s inheritance, down to the distribution of ‘plate, linen, and furniture’, ‘farming stock and utensils’.[[105]](#footnote-105) The emphasis Reeve places on material objects and money hints at her middle-class preoccupations. James Watt suggests that this drawn-out ‘disposal and distribution of property [occurs] among characters who seem to belong… more to the middle classes of the Eighteenth Century than the aristocracy of the Fifteenth Century’.[[106]](#footnote-106) Indeed, throughout the novel there is a modernising emphasis on earthly reward alongside the more traditional spiritual salvation offered to the characters.[[107]](#footnote-107)

While it was certainly Reeve’s intention to promote middle-class values, she did so by resorting to the past in order to present a model for overcoming the corruption and decadence of the ‘modern’ age. Ruth Perry’s observation that *The Old English Baron* ‘can be read as the narrative of one kind of family [aristocratic] dissolving into another [middle-class]’,[[108]](#footnote-108) and Gary Kelly’s description of Reeve’s work as one which projects, ‘late eighteenth-century middle-class virtues onto the social and political conflicts of late-medieval England, showing their triumph over courtly intrigue and plebeian “superstition”’, are therefore problematic.[[109]](#footnote-109) Reeve desired neither the ‘dissolution’ of the aristocracy nor to criticise late-medieval English society. Instead, she wanted to provide a reassuringly patriotic fable to an audience suffering through a time of national crisis, and a moral and educational tool for young readers. Alongside her promotion of middle-class values and virtues, therefore, exists what James Watt describes as, ‘a rigid and hierarchical, if harmonious, system of class relations’.[[110]](#footnote-110) Reeve parallels the late-medieval aristocracy and the eighteenth-century middle-classes in the hopes that her readers would mimic medieval virtues. Thus, while Edmund upholds middle-class ideology by proving his worth and earning his wealth, he is also inherently aristocratic. When he is still believed to be ‘the son of a cottager’, for example, Baron Fitz-Owen claims that his ‘uncommon merit, and gentleness of manners, distinguishes him from those of this own class’.[[111]](#footnote-111) His nobility shines through his poor appearance and characters frequently comment on it, with the servant Joseph remarking that ‘I cannot help thinking you were born to a higher station than what you now possess’.[[112]](#footnote-112) Reeve presents the social hierarchy as a natural state of being where each level supports and aids the others. Her aristocracy is therefore possessed of the redeeming merit absent in Walpole’s medieval tale, just as her servants are loyal and hardworking, in contrast to his comical ones.

Reeve’s interest in the circulation and possession of goods and wealth carries strong connotations of trade which are linked to the numerous accounts of travel in the novel. These range from the international travel that Harclay, Zadisky and the banished Lord Walter Lovel undertake, to the domestic travel that takes in the span of the English, Welsh and Scottish landscapes. As a nationalist work of Gothic literature, it comes as no surprise that the domestic landscape is central to Reeve’s narrative, with detailed accounts of journeys and geography from the start. Unlike Walpole’s narrative which is almost completely contained within the bounds of the eponymous castle, Reeve’s novel more closely resembles the quests of the ancient Romances she used for inspiration. In *The Progress of Romance*, she quotes Dr Percy’s work on Romances of the middle ages as displaying a ‘fondness of going in quest of adventures [and] that spirit of challenging to single combat’ which are ‘all of Gothic origin’ and can therefore, Reeve argues, be traced to the shared British ancestry.[[113]](#footnote-113) In *The Old English Baron,* Reeve maintains the themes of travel and conflict from the ancient Romance and combines them with contemporary anxieties surrounding the alienation felt by soldiers and traders returning from abroad. From the beginning there is a focus on location, relocation and dislocation. This becomes central to a narrative of usurpation, written during a period that witnessed the loss of some of Britain’s oldest and most populous colonies, and the consequent refashioning of British identity.

When she first introduces Harclay he is returning from ‘thirty years travel’ abroad, fighting first in France for King Henry V and then in Greece to defend it from the Saracens.[[114]](#footnote-114) During his absence his family seat in Yorkshire has been ‘sequestered in the hands of Commissioners’.[[115]](#footnote-115) After proving his identity by the testimony of some old servants, he regains possession, establishes his household and travels to the west of England to visit his friend, Lovel. Despite repeated reference to Harclay ‘returning home’, his time abroad has made him a stranger to all but the oldest servants in his employ. His mother and sister have died during his absence and his estates have been appropriated by the nation. With no ties to hold him there, he stays in Yorkshire only long enough to settle his affairs and then begins travelling again.

Harclay’s sense of dislocation, and the accompanying isolation, continues as he travels west with one servant who quickly falls ill and dies, leaving Harclay under some concern for himself ‘being alone in a strange place’.[[116]](#footnote-116) Furthermore, when he reaches his friend’s seat, where he expects to encounter the familiar and homely, he is told that no one knows of Lovel. At this point, only four pages into the narrative, Harclay reflects that ‘this world has nothing for a wise man to depend upon. I have lost all my relations, and most of my friends; and am even uncertain whether any are remaining’.[[117]](#footnote-117) This foreshadows the news that Lovel is in fact dead and after briefly meeting the new owner of the estate, Fitz-Owen, he returns to Yorkshire. These ancestral estates are a fundamental part of the nation on both a geographical and social level, emphasised by the repetition of ‘neighbourhoods’ to refer to the land surrounding the castles. The change in ownership therefore functions within the narrative as a physical change to the material landscape of England. This newly-unfamiliar domestic setting leaves Harclay displaced and estranged in his native land.

Throughout the course of Reeve’s novel, Harclay moves across an ‘uncanny’ landscape belonging to what Sigmund Freud would later characterise as, ‘that class of frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar’.[[118]](#footnote-118) Harclay’s home has become irreparably altered during his absence and his presence there is tenuous and ghostly, to such a degree that he is tempted to ‘give up the world, and retire to a religious house’.[[119]](#footnote-119) Struggling to find his place within the new society he sees around him, he searches for a home that will complement his consuming sense of isolation. The *unheimlich*, or ‘unhomely’, nation that Reeve presents at the beginning of the novel is inhospitable, individualistic and unsustainable; a place where vice can thrive at the expense of justice. Not only the people, but the essential structure of England has changed in his absence, and Harclay devotes the rest of the novel to restoring it by achieving justice for his friend, reinstating Edmund to his rightful seat, and uniting the disparate parts of the nation.

This theme of ‘uncanny’ domestic spaces recurs throughout national Gothic literature. As Freud explained, the German word *unheimlich*, which semantically equates to ‘uncanny’ or ‘eerie’ in English but which etymologically translates to ‘unhomely’, refers not to that which is frightening because it is unfamiliar but to that which is frightening because it is strangely familiar.[[120]](#footnote-120) The majority of Gothic novels set in Britain feature narratives of protagonists who return from abroad, or travel home from another part of the nation, to find ‘what was once well known and had long been familiar’, irreparably altered.[[121]](#footnote-121) These displaced, wandering heroes find themselves usurped from their ancestral inheritances, deprived of their identities, and therefore dispossessed in this newly-unfamiliar Britain. In order to regain their place in society, they must reach back into the national past via the Gothic trappings of ruins, found manuscripts and ghostly ancestors, to re-establish their identities and reclaim their birth right. Harclay’s alienation upon his return to England, the unfamiliar domestic landscape, and the theme of internal betrayal that runs through the novel, are all references to the political turmoil in Reeve’s contemporary Britain. The representation of which is, of course, filtered through her personal politics, that clearly dictated what kind of ‘useful’ message her novel would promote.[[122]](#footnote-122)

Reeve’s English setting allowed her to parallel the political events of the 1420s with those of the contemporary day, and present her critiques to the more well-informed reader without being openly polemic. This is a technique that future Gothic writers would take up, including several radical authors whose fiction was designed to inspire revolutionary reform in Britain. Reeve’s conservative literature and William Godwin’s first liberal fiction, *Imogen: A Pastoral Romance, From the Ancient British* (1784), for example, share a historical national setting intended to subtly present their critique of contemporary British society and their opinions on its need for restoration or reform. Reeve’s tale takes place during a long period of instability when an ineffectual child-King ruled England and baronial factionalism threatened to ignite a civil war; one that would ultimately erupt as the Wars of the Roses. It was a time of conflict, with threats of revolt in Wales, and the English defeat looming in the Hundred Years’ War with France. Contemporary readers would have been able to trace current 1770s events in Reeve’s representation of this earlier period in English history. In 1778, the year of publication, conflict with France was still raging in the wake of the Seven Years’ War, while colonial rebellion in America was leading to an unpopular war imposed by royal will, which resurfaced arguments concerning royal prerogative. Civil unrest continued at home, with party factionalism in Parliament, and riotous extra-Parliamentary reform agitation spearheaded by John Wilkes. The political resonance of Reeve’s novel would extend through to the Nineteenth Century, when the Napoleonic Wars fuelled British patriotism, and the growing demand for reform of royal and oligarchic power sought to re-create Britain as a modern liberal state.[[123]](#footnote-123) Reeve’s first paragraph details the historical context before introducing Harclay, a knight ‘esteemed for Christian virtues’ as well as ‘deeds of chivalry’.[[124]](#footnote-124) It is clearly Reeve’s intention for the reader to follow his example of stoic patriotism, piety and charity during the corresponding contemporary national struggles.

Reeve’s invocation of chivalry throughout the novel is particularly interesting when read against this national historico-political context. Helmut Nickel traces the cultural construct of chivalry back to a ‘wave of Germanic warriors, the Normans, [who] came to northern France and took up the horsemanship of the Alanic gentry’.[[125]](#footnote-125) The Germanic tribes would of course be quoted by eighteenth-century antiquarians as an originating source of British liberty and the nation’s democratic institutions. As Sheila Cottrell observes, this notion of ancestry was essentially:

[…] an idealisation of continuity, which was glorified as a virtue and an achievement of itself. It was the fulcrum upon which the very notion of British identity turned. Continuity conferred legitimacy, it proved efficacy, it was the test of character.[[126]](#footnote-126)

The discussion of national origins was essential for constructing national identity and, consequently, national difference. Chivalry was a feudal tradition originating in the hierarchical society introduced to England by the Saxons, along with the principles of freedom and representation that formed the Anglo-Saxon constitution. This was important for the definition of national identity because the ancient German source of England’s constitution provided a ‘non-Roman and anti-Gallic source of constitutional history’.[[127]](#footnote-127) As Michèle Cohen states, ‘Liberty was the inalienable ancestral trait characterising Britons as it had the ancient Germans’ and in contrast to the French who were stereotypically viewed not as ‘free people’ but as incapable of liberty.[[128]](#footnote-128)

The irony inherent in this national myth of feudal liberty, inherited from the Germanic tribes, however, is that the major component of chivalry was inherited from the invading French Normans. Richard Hurd notes this in his *Letters of Chivalry and Romance* (1762) where he traces the traditions of chivalry back to France, ‘where unquestionably they made their first appearance’, and then later in ‘England and in Germany; but not till the feudal policy had spread itself in those parts’.[[129]](#footnote-129) Having read Hurd and other antiquarian writers, Reeve perhaps hints at the French origins of chivalry as she has Harclay spend several years fighting with Henry V in France. Furthermore, his return from Greece would have necessitated him passing once more through that country. The alienation that Harclay experiences when he reaches England suggests that he felt more at home on the continent and was treated with more hospitality there than on his native shores. The subtle criticisms that Reeve directs at England in the early part of the novel are made in contrast to Harclay’s long residence in Europe, and specifically in France. This indicates a respect for feudal France and its contribution to British society, which in turn highlights her severe condemnation of that nation’s ‘new levelling principles’.[[130]](#footnote-130)

Harclay and Zadisky can also be read as representatives for the origins of the Romance genre itself. From the 1760s to the end of the 1780s the debate over the origins and character of Romance gradually escalated. Three rival theories took shape: the eastern theory headed by William Warburton, arguing that Romances originated in the east and were brought over during the Crusades or during the Moorish rule in Spain; the northern theory championed by Thomas Percy which located Romances in the Norselands to be disseminated by the Normans; and the Celtic theory supported by the Welsh antiquarian Even Evans.[[131]](#footnote-131) As the universalist assumptions of neoclassical criticism dictated, these theories all presumed that there was a single generic source. Reeve, however, followed the example of her predecessor, Richard Hurd, by positing that Romance developed out of native social structures, not through migration. As Reeve, again through Euphrasia, assures the reader; ‘Romances or Heroic fables are of very ancient, and I might say universal Origin. We find traces of them in all times, and in all countries’.[[132]](#footnote-132)

Reeve hopes to prove the progression of Romance from ‘the delight of barbarous ages’ to its standing among ‘the multiplied amusements of more refined and cultivated periods’.[[133]](#footnote-133) While she promotes the geographical and temporal scope of Romances, however, Reeve does participate in the single-origin debate by stating that ‘few have taken proper notice of the Greek Romances, which may justly be deemed the parents of all the rest’.[[134]](#footnote-134) E. J. Clery notes that Thomas Warton’s eastern origin theory was matched by orientalist elements in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Old English Baron*, which both have Crusade contexts, but the analysis of *The Old English Baron* can be extended further.[[135]](#footnote-135) Zadisky’s history as a Greek soldier, influenced by Saracen culture and then converted to Christianity and relocated to England, is much like her proposed origin story for the Romance genre. It too originates in classical Greek culture, is influenced by ancient eastern tales of wonder like *The Arabian Nights,* and then inspires Christian imitations in England. Reeve uses Zadisky and his adventures with Harclay to depict the progress of Romance from its neoclassical origins through to its usage in contemporary British culture.

As future female Gothic authors would continue to do, Reeve combines the microcosm of domestic events with the macrocosm of the nation as a whole, drawing parallels between the private and the public. The tale of family betrayal and internal revolt which centres on Edmund, as the proverbial cuckoo in the nest, is a metaphor for the American colonists’ revolt that began in 1775. As Reeve was writing *The Old English Baron,* ready to publish in 1777, she was in the midst of the early political upheaval that surrounded it. With the political stability of the nation threatened and anxieties surrounding internal and external relations rising, the reading public needed a heroic fable to champion the steady solidarity of Great Britain, founded in the 1707 Act of Union. Drawing from the longstanding comparison of the kingdom to a family, Reeve provides a domestic tale of jealousy, intrafamilial violence, plotting and betrayal that represents the contemporary struggles of the nation and its colonies abroad.

Early on in the novel Edmund’s enemies accuse him of betraying the family that has adopted him and conspiring with friends in the house who will ‘assist his ingenious contrivances’.[[136]](#footnote-136) For Toni Wein, this bears a resemblance to contemporary arguments laid against the colonists whose revolt, aided by the French, was often depicted as a child rebelling against their parent.[[137]](#footnote-137) While betrayal appears throughout the novel and is roundly condemned by Reeve, in this case Edmund is exonerated and the criticism falls upon his accusers, the Baron’s relatives. They represent a more serious threat to national – and familial – stability: an internal evil that emanates through the household and turns them upon one another. Edmund and the old servants who served his father may live within the castle but they are depicted as outsiders to the family, while the Baron’s relatives represent the British politicians who destabilised the nation from the core. Edmund’s restoration as the rightful heir, and the purging of disaffected members from the extended household, once again reveals the nationalist ideal within Reeve’s Gothic fiction.

In order to reinforce this ideal, Reeve ends the novel with her own recreation of the Act of Union through a series of marriages and alliances that tie families from Scotland, England and Wales together. At the beginning of the novel, we learn that Lord Arthur Lovel was returning from accompanying the King against ‘the Welsh rebels’ when he was murdered by his kinsman.[[138]](#footnote-138) Equally, Scotland functions in the novel as a liminal space that borders England but is exempt from its laws, therefore providing a place for the men to ‘decide the quarrel’ for themselves in a trial by combat.[[139]](#footnote-139) Both nations are depicted as distinct and separate from England, but by the end of the novel those boundaries have been overcome for mutual benefit. The marriages that take place draw together families from the marches of Scotland, Yorkshire, Cumberland, the west of England and Wales. Edmund is at the centre of the network, having inherited property in Yorkshire from Sir Phillip and in the west of England from Lovel. His marriage to Fitz-Owen’s daughter brings in the family property in Wales, while Fitz-Owen’s son marries into property in Cumberland, and Cumberland is in turn united with Scotland. These newly allied families compose a network across the nation which replaces the lost affiliation of the kinsmen expelled for their self-interest and betrayal. As well as representing a strengthening realistcof political ties between the nations, cemented in light of the colonists’ revolt, it also suggests the importance of replacing lost economic routes with home markets. Overall, Reeve is promoting a specifically British identity forged from the various parts of the kingdom and united by geographical, political, and economic ties in the face of foreign threats and competition. Her use of geographical space throughout the novel makes *The Old English Baron* a realistic read and provides a fitting backdrop for her patriotic fable.

A nuanced analysis of Reeve’s political views is essential to a thorough reading of *The Old English Baron*. As Gary Kelly has observed, she ‘aimed to displace Walpole’s work and its aristocratic and elitist Whig ideology with the more bourgeois-democratic politics she promoted in all her fiction’.[[140]](#footnote-140) Politics are at the core of the novel and affect every aspect of it, from the title and location, to the plot devices and characters. When it was originally published in 1777, it bore the title *The Champion of Virtue: A Gothic Story*. The title referred not to Edmund, the hero of the novel, but to a seemingly secondary character, Harclay, whose role is to aid the hero in reclaiming his birth right and inheritance. Harclay embodies the Gothic values of heroism, patriotism and chivalry that Reeve wanted to inspire in her readers, and that this first title conjures up. This original title also evokes Reeve’s medieval setting through its ‘champion’ and reference to the ‘gothic’ period. Interestingly, while *The Champion of Virtue* may suggest a damsel in distress in the form of Una and the Redcrosse Knight from Edmund Spencer’s epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590), the actual ‘virtue’ of the title belongs either to the hero, Edmund, or to the British nation at large. Like Walpole and his sickly heir, Conrad, Reeve highlights the need for a new generation of British champions to rise up to defend their national virtue and sovereignty.

Her second title, *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story*, this time referring to her character Baron Fitz-Owen, makes her national, patriotic loyalties explicit. Old Whigs were highly critical of the decadence, extravagance and corruption of the ‘modern’ age and often sought a substitute in the past, the ‘old’ and, by extension, the Gothic. By Gothic they were referring to Germanic tribes who they believed introduced an ancient free constitution, valued by the Anglo-Saxons, later suppressed by the Norman Conquest, and gradually reinstated by civic-minded generations down to the old Whigs themselves.[[141]](#footnote-141) As Nick Groom explains, the ‘characteristic Gothick Constitution discussed so energetically in the Seventeenth Century as a form of government that embodied natural rights of freedom and was inimical to tyranny and absolutism, appealed strongly to Whigs’.[[142]](#footnote-142) It suited their mercantile concerns and their preference of natural order and human rights over absolutism. It was believed that the Goths ‘did not blindly follow their leaders, but engaged in political enterprises in return for shares in land and government’, promoting a polity based on feudal land management rather than parliamentary representation.[[143]](#footnote-143) By renaming her novel, then, Reeve promotes England and its aristocracy as well as favouring the ‘old’ above the ‘new’ or ‘modern’. This title sets forward the primary function of the novel; to challenge the new Whig ideology of *The Castle of Otranto* and its author.

When Reeve condemns the sensational excesses of *Otranto*, she parallels her literary critique with a political one aimed at Walpole and his notorious father, Sir Robert Walpole.[[144]](#footnote-144) As Kelly notes, ‘to an old Whig, *Otranto* could seem formally and thematically characteristic of its author, his family, his political associations, and his public character’.[[145]](#footnote-145) The elder Walpole was despised by the old Whigs as both corrupt and corrupting; exhibiting himself and encouraging in others a drive for power, wealth, and pleasure.[[146]](#footnote-146) And, while Horace Walpole thought of himself as an old Whig, partly in revolt against his father, Reeve and her fellows regarded him as following in his father’s footsteps.[[147]](#footnote-147) As Kelly observes, Horace Walpole was seen to have ‘corruptly enriched himself while holding public office arranged by his father’ and ‘indulged himself largely, disposing of his wealth in infamously conspicuous consumption at his pseudo-Gothic mansion, Strawberry Hill’.[[148]](#footnote-148) Robert Walpole and his son represented the decadence and excess of the new Whigs that Reeve wanted to decry.

This old Whig use for history - to provide a ‘striking lesson to posterity’ - was provided by Reeve as the purported reason why the text was compiled in its original Old English manuscript form.[[149]](#footnote-149) In the second edition she let the masquerade of a translated manuscript fall away, as Walpole did before her, and admitted to writing the novel. Her version of Walpole’s lie is telling, however; where his text purported to be translated from a book originally designed to reinforce popular superstitions, hers was originally compiled by order of ‘the champion of virtue’ to educate the generations to come. This alteration functions in the same way as her relocation of Walpole’s novel from southern, Catholic Europe to a remote English past – it creates a less alien, more morally-enlightened fictional world for her use. In short, *The Castle of Otranto* represents the ‘Gothic’ past as barbarous, uncouth and unpolished, while *The Old English Baron* uses the old Whig sense of a ‘Gothic’ past, characterised by Germanic independence, liberty and virtue.

This Teutonism was widely embraced throughout the Eighteenth Century, providing a way of making sense of the new nation of Great Britain after the 1707 Act of Union, and seemed to literally come to pass with the Hanoverian succession in 1714. Where Walpole depicts – ostensibly as a warning – the consequences of unbridled desire and violence, Reeve presents this Gothic past as a model of self-discipline, civic virtue and patriotic loyalty. Her villain, Walter Lovell, does embody Walpole’s Gothic excess and commits a crime of passion, but the emphasis of the novel is on the benefactors who right wrongs, rather than the evildoers who commit them. As such, Lovell appears late and is quickly banished from the narrative and the nation. He is guilty of murdering his kinsman to inherit his ‘title, fortune, and his Lady’, a crime which is temporally remote from the narrative.[[150]](#footnote-150) Despite this shocking betrayal, he can in no way compare to Walpole’s Manfred, who remains a central figure throughout the novel as an antagonist who drives the plot forward via his selfish machinations and dictatorial acts. Instead, Lovell functions as a warning against immorality. His confession is littered with references to ‘the judgements of Heaven’ and the ‘eye of Heaven’ which has witnessed his crimes and seen fit to punish him in a suitably Gothic way: ‘I am childless, and one is arisen from the grave to claim my inheritance’.[[151]](#footnote-151) Reeve’s work focuses on the rise of the hero rather than the demise of the villain. Lovell is a weakly-drawn antagonist used to reinforce Reeve’s closing moral of ‘the over-ruling hand of Providence, and the certainty of RETRIBUTION’.[[152]](#footnote-152)

The Protestant morality that Reeve affixed to Walpole’s new kind of Romance was an important step in making the genre more acceptable to the reading public. Obviously, this was something that authors like Matthew ‘Monk’ Lewis would later undermine, but Reeve paved the way for respectable writers like Ann Radcliffe, Isabella Kelly and Eliza Parsons to embrace the Gothic genre. Unlike the technique of the ‘explained supernatural’ that Radcliffe would later make popular, Reeve retained Walpole’s supernatural machinery and made them the useful agents of Providence. When *The Castle of Otranto* was published, *The Critical Review* accused Walpole of resorting to ‘rotten material’ in his use of Catholic superstition and preternatural events.[[153]](#footnote-153) To avoid similar criticism, Reeve naturalised the supernatural, making it a part of the everyday Christian belief system. As she states in the ‘Preface’; ‘we can conceive, and allow of, the appearance of a ghost’ so long as it is reconciled to respectable religious beliefs.[[154]](#footnote-154) The hero, Edmund, is aided throughout the novel by ‘the over-ruling hand of Providence’ which intervenes to reveal his identity and protect him from harm through a series of dream visions, accidental circumstances and benevolent ghosts.[[155]](#footnote-155) Edmund’s enemies find themselves surprised that ‘every attempt [they]… make to humble this upstart, turns into applause, and serves only to raise his pride still higher.[[156]](#footnote-156) Equally, we are told that ‘providence interposed in his [Edmund’s] behalf; and, by seemingly accidental circumstances, conducted him imperceptibly towards the crisis of his fate’.[[157]](#footnote-157)

While Edmund claims that ‘heaven assists us by natural means’, Reeve did include the ghosts of Edmund’s murdered parents in the narrative.[[158]](#footnote-158) They fit less easily into Reeve’s realistic landscape than the predictive dreams and divine intervention, but she still manages to reconcile them to an appropriately Protestant framework. They appear for the most part in a series of dreams, but there are two actual sightings – the first by Edmund’s mother before the beginning of the narrative, and the second during the story. When they do interfere it is in pursuit of justice, as when Edmund’s mother claims that she knows that ‘her dear Lord was basely murdered’ because ‘his ghost had appeared to her, and revealed his fate’; or when Edmund’s young tormentors are unceremoniously expelled from the apartment destined for the true heir of Lovell by the ghost of Edmund’s father.[[159]](#footnote-159) This is central to Reeve’s Protestant message, as the ghost is only a threat to the wicked while those favoured by Providence have nothing to fear. Walter Lovell is terrified into leaving the castle by the ghost of his murdered kinsman, but when Edmund is plunged into darkness and hears a ‘hollow rustling noise’ in the haunted apartment, he exclaims, ‘What should I fear? I have not wilfully offended God or man; why then should I doubt protection?’.[[160]](#footnote-160) By alleviating his fears with prayer he implies that the ghosts are part of a divine system, which is confirmed when his mother’s ghost assures him that they are ‘employed in thy preservation’.[[161]](#footnote-161)

Reeve adapted Walpole’s new generic model to educate her readers about their chivalric medieval past and inspire them to imitate their ancestors’ acts of patriotic valour. Rather than using the supernatural to excite terror and confusion as Walpole had done, Reeve used it to foreshadow events and ease her readers through the emotional tribulations of her narrative. As Clery notes, ‘Unlike *Otranto* its methods are tentative, in the knowledge that due to inexperience the reader would need only the lightest touch to resonate with the feelings depicted’.[[162]](#footnote-162) Through a series of distancing techniques including the ‘strange and incoherent’ dreams, forewarning, temporal and geographical distance, narrative layering and repetition of events, Reeve preserves the excitement of the Gothic whilst attempting to relieve the violent emotions it could excite.[[163]](#footnote-163) Ultimately, Reeve retains the Gothic elements of Walpole’s original novel but uses them to reinforce concepts like lawful inheritance, justice and charity. It is important to remember that the entire narrative hinges on Edmund proving his right to inherit his father’s property. This overarching theme of birth right and inheritance contains a political commentary surrounding the rights of the monarchy, the government and the people. With its strong associations to the Germanic tribes from whom the British had allegedly inherited their inherent love for liberty, the burgeoning Gothic genre was a useful vehicle for discussing political freedom.

As Toni Wein has charted, from the early Seventeenth Century, ‘Gothic tradition had two, principally democratic, meanings: the Saxon custom of *witenagemot* and the Kentish institution of *gavelkynde*’.[[164]](#footnote-164) ‘*Witenagemot* meant free tribal assemblies, which invested power in elected chiefs’, and ‘*gavelkynde* equalized heritable property distribution’.[[165]](#footnote-165) These ancient political legacies of liberty were believed to descend to the present day and bequeathed a system of elective parliament whose members selected a provisional king. In 1604 James I had the first Society of Antiquaries abolished due to these seditious notions, but he could not prevent the spread of this national myth of liberty and democracy. Debates over England’s Gothic origins and the egalitarian practices of *witenagemot* and *gavelkynde* fed into arguments over whether the monarchy was an inheritance or a gift given by the people to a representative. This of course came to a head as 1688 approached, with Charles’s opponents drawing on Gothic nationalism to challenge his increasing claims of royal absolutism. The Glorious Revolution brought together ‘modern’ politics with the political myth of Gothic legacy as Englishman asserted their right, descended from the *witenagemot*, to hold a king to Constitutional prescriptions. This seventeenth-century appeal to the unbroken continuity of Gothic traditions in English politics demonstrates the idea of Gothic as a locus of traditional English liberty. Eighteenth-century novels which claimed the term as an epithet cannot therefore be read as divorced from these political associations. Reeve’s decision to subtitle her novel as *A Gothic Story* signposts the narrative’s engagement with political debates surrounding the right to rule Britain and the limits that should be imposed on a ruler.

Reeve’s work often charts her conflicting values. With her old Whig ideology, she favoured the inherited traditions of *witenagemot* and *gavelkynde*, which regulated the power of kings and the influence of the aristocracy. She was also engaging with a post-Civil War audience whose belief in inherited nobility was weakened; where the fundamental relationship of lineage, political right and power was tenuous; and where the divine working of Providence had replaced the divine right of kings, and meritocracy replaced hereditary right.[[166]](#footnote-166) Alongside her democratising principles however, Reeve still maintained a loyalist defence of lineage, nobility and inheritance, albeit mediated through a virtuous aristocracy and a show of personal merit. As previously discussed, her hero possesses both innate nobility – an aristocracy by birth - and commits honourable actions to prove his aristocracy by character. While his hidden parentage implies a world where lineage is no longer valued, the ending of Reeve’s novel reinstates the tradition of primogeniture. Equally, Sir Philip Harclay heads up a meritocracy where the lower-classes emulate their masters and internalise their noble manners, distinguishing themselves from criminals and the ill manners of the false ‘nobility’. This extension of noble manners to characters across the ranks reinforces her democratic principles and resembles the rise of the eighteenth-century middle-class more closely than feudal England.

The wide scope of the burgeoning Gothic genre provided Reeve with an opportunity to unify her respect for tradition with her desire for democratic reform, by foregrounding the tradition of British liberty and political freedom. The dramatic impact of the narrative stems from the idea that a man could have been betrayed and killed, his wife abused, his child abandoned, his lands and title stolen, and no one know enough to persecute him - and for all this to have taken place in England. As discussed in the ‘Introduction’, in 1817 Jane Austen’s heroine Catherine Morland would attempt to dismiss the possibility of Gothic crimes being acted out in England, reflecting that ‘in the central part of England there was surely some security […] in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age’. [[167]](#footnote-167) Reeve confronts her reader with this very reality. The power of Reeve’s Gothic narrative is that the atrocities committed and the injustices done are carried out in England and must be discovered by an English Baron and punished by English law. The frequent repetition of the word ‘justice’ (occurring twenty times in total) demonstrates Reeve’s preoccupation with the idea of inherited British liberty, assured and defended by an ancient tradition that made it every Briton’s inherited right.

It is worth noting here that despite writing in the wake of the 1707 Act of Union which joined Scotland to England and Wales to form the new nation of Great Britain, Reeve’s title still refers to a specifically English Baron. This is largely due to her medieval setting predating the creation of the British nation, but it also hints at certain domestic tensions in the Eighteenth Century. As Linda Colley notes, while Scotland and England had been drawing closer since the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century, the Union of the two countries still raised tensions. Just as many Scots mourned the loss of their independent sovereign identity, many of their southern neighbours disapproved of ‘English’ and ‘England’ giving way to ‘British’ and ‘Great Britain’.[[168]](#footnote-168) By referring to the old English Baron then, Reeve references a lingering loyalty to England as a sovereign nation, and appeals to her majority English reading audience, as well as indicating the historical setting of her novel which predates the creation of Britain.

Reeve’s nationalist politics resurface in her 1793 novel *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, the natural son of Edward Prince of Wales, commonly called the Black Prince; with anecdotes of many other eminent persons of the fourteenth century*. As the title suggests, it is for the most part a history book that charts the inglorious reign of King Richard II, via accounts of Sir Hugh Calverly and, after his death early in the novel, his family, and then via the life-story of Sir Roger de Clarendon who was King Richard’s illegitimate half-brother. The narrative is stunted by laborious descriptions of fourteenth-century hobbies, living arrangements, dress and eating habits, and by lengthy lists of ‘great men’ that Reeve has her characters recite as part of the evening’s entertainment. The reason for this, as Reeve explains in her ‘Preface’, is that the novel was not intended to amuse so much as to inspire. She states that her intention was to mimic Plutarch’s practice of writing the lives of great men in order to learn to regulate his own life, and to inspire his readers to mimic their virtuous acts. By reading their histories he could ‘carefully transcribe the most beautiful and remarkable passages of their lives into my own memory, as patterns for my imitation’.[[169]](#footnote-169) Reeve intended to supply such ‘patterns for imitation’ to her eighteenth-century readers in order to promote the glory, valour and virtue of their national ancestors.[[170]](#footnote-170) This practice is fundamentally linked to her nationalist politics as she states that ‘the actions of great men of their own country’ work upon the reader’s mind much more strongly than tales of foreign heroes, and that ‘when we read of our glorious ancestors, their actions ought to stimulate us to equal them, to support and maintain the honour of our country: to be ashamed to degenerate from our forefathers’.[[171]](#footnote-171) To further justify her work she therefore includes quotations from the revered English authors, Shakespeare and Pope, and locates the practice of glorifying national ancestors back to approximately 200-175 BCE with a quotation from *The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*.[[172]](#footnote-172)

Her ‘Preface’ is defensive and forceful and reads like a manifesto of her old Whig politics. It is riddled with anxiety surrounding the growing ‘indolence and effeminacy’ of modern society which is encouraged by ‘the new philosophy of the present day [which] avows a levelling principle’.[[173]](#footnote-173) This is a blatant reference to France in the wake of the Revolution which ‘declares that a state of anarchy is more beautiful than that of order and regulation’.[[174]](#footnote-174) She makes direct reference to the ruin and disorder that commences when a populace overturn their government and try to frame a new constitution, replacing it repeatedly with new but equally unsuccessful systems. This is, of course, a nod in the direction of France’s various constitutions which they drew up and discarded in quick succession during the course of the Revolution. Within the text itself, Reeve describes various battles between the French and the English for land and, while naturally biased, she is still positive about a historical France that laboured under a respectable monarch. Her intention is to display a ‘faithful picture of a well-governed kingdom, wherein a true subordination of ranks and degrees was observed, and of a great prince at the head of it’, and she does this on both sides of the Channel.[[175]](#footnote-175) As in *The Old English Baron*, she represents a society which ‘makes different ranks and degrees of men necessary to each other, and leads them to co-operate together in order to promote the good of the whole’.[[176]](#footnote-176) Her masters are generous and noble, her servants loyal, helpful and brave, and her female characters strong and determined whilst simultaneously thriving within a solely-domestic environment.

While this seems an idyllic and unrealistic image of hierarchical society, Reeve is careful to provide her characters with natural flaws. ‘I have endeavoured to show princes and heroes as men, not as angels’ she assures us, and encourages the reader to ‘select the good and reform the evil’ of the society that she depicts.[[177]](#footnote-177) Her characters fall prey to greed, lust and fear throughout the course of the novel but Reeve’s villains possess the combined weaknesses that she hopes to prevent in her readers, ‘vile indolence, effeminacy, and [the] extravagance of modern life and manners’.[[178]](#footnote-178) As Linda Colley discusses in *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (1992), there was a general public anxiety from the 1740s onwards that the rampant Francophilia in the fashionable and governing classes would lead to social, political and economic disaster in Britain. Their penchant for French fashion, culture and imported luxuries took jobs away from English traders, manufacturers and artists. Even greater was the threat that the indolence, decadence and dandyism that accompanied Francophilia would weaken the British and irreparably damage the national fibre.[[179]](#footnote-179)

Reeve’s engagement with the French and their Revolution is as fraught as these contrasting observations suggest. On the one hand she praises their historical prowess in battle, but on the other fears their contemporary weakness and political philosophy. The French Revolution tested the views of all old Whigs, not just Reeve, forcing them to simultaneously praise the instigation of a constitutional monarchy but condemn their ‘levelling’ politics. Reeve’s views on the Revolution are difficult to unravel, but *Sir Roger de Clarendon* is definitely at the centre of them. Like many, Reeve initially welcomed the Revolution, and in April 1791 she wrote to Joseph Cooper Walker, a public servant and amateur antiquarian living in Dublin, that she had ‘been reading nothing but Politics for some time past’ and declared; ‘I am a friend to liberty, and the security of property, and the rights of man. I wish well to them and all those who defend them’.[[180]](#footnote-180) She told Walker that she would intervene in the Revolution debate herself through her fiction, claiming, ‘In my Gothic Story my principles will appear, it will speak to men, to citizens, to Princes, & to the People; in the character of one bad prince I have delineated thousands, in a good one, I fear very few’.[[181]](#footnote-181) *Sir Roger de Clarendon* appeared two years later.

While Reeve would have begun her novel during this optimistic period when the Revolution represented the triumph of liberty, after the September Massacres at Paris in 1792 she began to realise that liberty in excess was the dangerous unleashing of the mob. She wrote again to Walker, ‘What times do we live in? – My politics are all overthrown’, and feared that France had ‘strengthened the hands of the enemies of liberty, who will now boldly assert, that mankind are not to be trusted with it’.[[182]](#footnote-182) *Sir Roger de Clarendon* had the arduous task of proving such critics wrong by presenting a model for liberty that was compatible with a structured hierarchy. Unfortunately, as even the staunchly loyalist *British Critic* had to admit, ‘Morality alone […] cannot support a novel’, and the *Critical Review* noted that it was ‘for history too trivial, and for romance too dull’.[[183]](#footnote-183) In a reverse of the usual assessment of Gothic literature, *Sir Roger de Clarendon*’s entertainment value can be questioned, but its patriotic morality is beyond dispute.

Reeve’s novel is intended to prevent the spread of France’s dangerous ‘levelling’ principle and its excessive liberty by presenting a model society productive of great men. It is a patriotic appraisal of the age of Kind Edward III, credited as being ‘one of those most fruitful of [producing] eminent men […] deserving our respect and admiration’.[[184]](#footnote-184) While the novel cannot be regarded as Gothic by many modern criteria, it uses the English medieval setting that was already in generic use in order to explicitly glorify ‘our Gothic ancestors’.[[185]](#footnote-185) With the exception of a prophetic dream sequence, *Sir Roger de Clarendon* lacks the preoccupation with the aesthetics of terror that usually feature in Gothic fiction, but its use of Gothic times, manners and architecture, combined with its strong political message, link it directly to early examples of the genre. Reeve employs the national past as a remedy for the present day by conjuring up images of military valour and frugal virtue, to combat the effeminacy and excess of modern day. She observes that ‘our ancestors were magnificent in some respects, while in others they were mean and uncomfortable; they were ignorant of the […] refinements in luxury’.[[186]](#footnote-186) In the world of Reeve’s novel, such decadent things lead the way to degeneration and national decline. Alongside her account of the glories of Edward III’s reign – the Battle of Crecy, the Battle of Neville’s Cross, the founding of the Order of the Garter, the Building of St George’s Chapel at Windsor, and so forth – she also details the failures of his successor, Richard II. Early on in the text, Reeve condemns him as being ‘too fond of dress and gewgaws’, loving ‘everything that indicated a light, vain, and frivolous mind’.[[187]](#footnote-187) The failings that Sir Roger notes in his monarch – that ‘he is weak, vain, dissipated and extravagant’ – impact not only him personally, but the nation at large.[[188]](#footnote-188) It leads to his manipulation by close advisors, and to his political and military mistakes, which threaten England and her interests overseas. Equally, the protagonist’s close relation to the king ensures that Reeve can parallel domestic situations with national concerns as she had done in *The Old English Baron*.

The national setting ensures that Reeve’s political and social commentary has impact. By representing the successes and failures of the nation’s past, she can provide a conduct guide for her readers in the present day. Her work is both anti-revolutionary and antimonarchical at times, condemning both the levelling principle and the rampant tyranny of unrestrained nobility. As we witness later in T. I. Horsley Curties’s fiction, this does not make Reeve anti-royalist.[[189]](#footnote-189) Rather, she interrogates the qualities of a good ruler, and praises strong monarchs while condemning weak ones. As in *The Old English Baron* she finds her ideal in a socially-aware, patriotic aristocracy who support the needy and inspire loyalty and virtue in their dependants. Sir Hugh is described as ‘a most tender husband and affectionate father; he was beloved and respected by his neighbours, tenants, and dependents; he was an exemplary landlord, friend, and master’.[[190]](#footnote-190) The importance that Reeve places in being a good landlord and master is equal to that which she pays to being a brave and noble knight. While the drive to fight for England and its overseas interests is paramount, such ventures can only be successful if domestic harmony is ensured through a proper subordination of ranks.

The value of this hierarchy is represented through Sir Roger and his servant Bertram. When Bertram requests employment, Sir Roger assures him that he is currently poor and persecuted and cannot afford to pay him for his service, but Bertram assures him that he will ‘serve [him] as faithfully as those who received money for it’.[[191]](#footnote-191) Having removed financial incentive from their relationship, Reeve shows a growing attachment between them which is repeatedly tested by Sir Roger’s constant persecution at the hands of his relatives and enemies. When Sir Roger is attacked and seeks shelter with Sir Hugh’s family, he has taken a vow of silence to hide his identity and Bertram is not only tasked with his care but also with speaking for him. The trust that Sir Roger places in Bertram by allowing him to represent him in a noble man’s house is emphasised when the family note that Bertram ‘is no common servant’ and cannot be bribed for information on his mysterious master.[[192]](#footnote-192) The intense loyalty that Bertram shows is clearly linked to Sir Roger’s care as a master, and upon meeting Sir Hugh’s family Bertram introduces him as the ‘dearest and best of men’ and ‘one of the noblest knights upon earth’.[[193]](#footnote-193) Reeve represents the bond between them as one forged from mutual charity and virtue, and presents them as an ideal product of the social hierarchy at work. This is confirmed when Sir Hugh’s youngest daughter, Mabel, returns after eloping with Sir Roger accompanied not by her husband but by Bertram who acts as a double of his master. He represents Sir Roger and signals to the family who Mabel has been with during her absence, and his confident demeanour in dealing with the family is more reminiscent of an aristocrat than a servant. Here Reeve demonstrates the value of a social hierarchy built upon mutual love and respect as a model for the ideal nation state.

Reeve’s novels are heavy with political, social and moral messages that impacted upon her readers and the Gothic genre at large. While only two of her novels qualify for that appellation, their influence on her successors is extensive. The motifs that she devised in *The Old English Baron* and augmented in *Sir Roger de Clarendon* can be seen repeatedly throughout the roster of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic novels. Her title as the first Female Gothic writer does nothing to diminish her influence by and upon male authors. At one side she draws on the themes of chivalry and romance featured in Thomas Leland’s *Longsword* (1762), engages with the Gothicism of Horace Walpole, and the realism of Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson, and later enters the Revolutionary debate alongside prominent politician, Edmund Burke. On the other we see her political Gothic adapted by male writers for loyalist or radical causes, her ‘uncanny’ domestic landscapes, usurped ancestral piles, dispossessed heroes and benign ghosts manifested in works of Male Gothic.

The themes of isolation and alienation found in *The Old English Baron*,and the ‘uncanny’ national landscape she depicts, recur in a range of Gothic works from William Godwin’s Jacobin Gothic *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), to Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1819). In defiance of the perceived divide between male and female Gothic concerns later in the genre, Reeve demonstrates how domestic and national spheres can be paralleled. She questions the idea of the home as a safe space through the references to violence, wild passion, sexual desire and torture within the private sphere during the persecution of Edmund’s parents in *The Old English Baron* and the conflicts of *Sir Roger de Clarendon*. In this she complicates the home in the same way she does the nation; making it an ‘uncanny’, alienated version of something once perceived to be familiar. This is something that the popular radical writer Charlotte Smith took up in her own work. In her Gothic fiction, she used the representation of domestic structures and the national landscape to question Britain’s politics, and the inherent freedom of its populace that Reeve so assiduously promoted.

Chapter Two

Charlotte Smith: Reforming the Nation

[…] If even here,  
If in this land of highly vaunted Freedom,  
Even Britons controvert the unwelcome truth,  
Can it be relish'd by the sons of France?

* Charlotte Smith, *The Emigrants* (1793)[[194]](#footnote-194)

Owing to frequent inconsistencies in form, tone and subject matter, Charlotte Smith’s work does not lend itself easily to a generic study. Consequently, her poetry and prose has been variously labelled Sentimental, Romantic or Gothic. Recent critical attention has justly acknowledged her ‘centrality to the formation of Romantic-period poetics’[[195]](#footnote-195) and has recognised her engagement with national and domestic politics as providing a ‘prominent cultural voice in [her] generation’.[[196]](#footnote-196) She has been heralded as one of ‘the first coterie of women intellectuals to intervene in British reform politics’ and is credited with contributing to the development of a ‘professionalised gender’ for middle-class women.[[197]](#footnote-197) While it is agreed that she was a prominent and popular writer of the Romantic period, there are still conflicting opinions when it comes to categorising her work. She has been included in several anthologies of Gothic literature and studies of female Gothic novelists by critics such as E. J. Clery, Diane Long Hoeveler, Rictor Norton, Angela Keane, Jerrold E. Hogle, David Punter and Glennis Byron, Robert Miles, Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall.[[198]](#footnote-198) Among this extensive list, opinions on her contribution to the genre vary from a ‘minor Gothicist’ (Baldick & Mighall) to ‘co-creator of the School of Radcliffe’ (Norton).[[199]](#footnote-199) Meanwhile, all of the major Romanticism anthologies, companions and collections, as well as critics such as Stuart Curran, Anne K. Mellor, Edward Copeland and Jacqueline Labbe, have discussed her work in relation to the conventions of Romance.[[200]](#footnote-200) Addressing the progression of Smith’s literary career, Curran suggests that ‘her first three novels are plotted around the expectations of sentimental fiction’, with *Desmond* (1792) introducing ‘local and world politics’ to her fiction.[[201]](#footnote-201) He goes on to say that her ‘concentration on class, gender, economics, and power relations’ qualifies her as ‘the leading realist novelist of the decade’, following on from Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett.[[202]](#footnote-202)

There is no reason, of course, why Smith’s work cannot be classified as both Gothic and Romantic, or Gothic and Sentimental, but as we have already seen, Gothic and Realist are widely regarded as contradictory terms. In the Eighteenth Century the Realist Novel was often defined in contrast to improbable Romances; those texts which we now term Gothic. Samuel Richardson made this explicit when he recommended the Novel specifically because it would turn young readers away from ‘the pomp and parade of romance-writing’ and the ‘improbable and the marvellous’ with which they abound.[[203]](#footnote-203) This refers to only one aspect of the Gothic genre, however, which is by no means a coherent or homogenous entity. If interpreted solely as fiction engaged with the supernatural and fantastical, then Smith’s work, alongside a wide range of Gothic texts, appears largely atypical of the genre. Indeed, while she has been included in several studies, Smith is often marginalised as a writer who employs only occasional Gothic-inflected scenes. When considering the Gothic’s preoccupation with national history, with the formation of national identity and with re-establishing connections to the national past, however, Smith’s work is key.

By responding to and building upon the work of her predecessors and contemporaries, Smith takes the emerging generic motifs of the Gothic and transposes them onto a contemporary British setting. She retains the national backdrop and political engagement of Clara Reeve, but dispenses with her temporal distancing and invocation of medieval cultural heritage. Instead, Smith, like many reformist authors, sharpened her political critique by embracing a contemporary setting and showing ‘things as they are’.[[204]](#footnote-204) Her fiction therefore forms a nexus in this heterogeneous and frequently contradictory genre by linking the historical romances of her precursors to both the Female Gothic and Jacobin Gothic traditions. She uses Gothic imagery to explore ideas of heritage, power and oppression, most specifically in her architectural metaphors for the state. Throughout her work, Gothic buildings – castles, great houses and abbeys – act as metonyms for the nation at large.[[205]](#footnote-205) While allowing her to articulate a political critique, this device also draws attention to the parallels between domestic and national spaces with regards to control and exclusion. As noted in several studies of Smith’s poetry and prose, exclusion is a central theme in her work which is relevant to both Female and Jacobin Gothic traditions. Smith’s works are inspired by Reeve’s dispossessed, wandering heroes, and are populated by exiles, émigrés and orphans. While Reeve’s criticism of society was its lack of patriotic British values, however, Smith’s wanderers embody her censure of a society which has become unfamiliar, unknowable and hostile to reformers who challenge the shared national identity.

Smith’s British setting and interest in a broader historico-political discourse is drawn from the Gothic’s roots in the Historical Romance and its desire to trace an imagined national past. An awareness of this allows us to see her work, and other domestically-set Gothic Novels, not as tangential to the genre but as representative of one form of this versatile and diverse mode. Such an approach contextualises not only the work of ‘atypical’ writers like Smith, Eliza Parsons and Regina Maria Roche, but also the national works of canonical writers like Reeve and Ann Radcliffe. For example, Radcliffe’s *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826, written c.1802) were both set in the British Isles. It is also inclusive of the established canon of Jacobin Gothic fiction, including the work of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. As a contemporary of Radcliffe, Smith’s work informs and is informed by the Female Gothic style. Particularly in her early novels, she conforms closely to this recognisable Gothic mode, with an emphasis on female persecution, the domestic space and the explained supernatural. As Hoeveler claims, ‘[Smith’s] first novel, *Emmeline*, clearly stands as the forgotten urtext for the female gothic novel tradition’.[[206]](#footnote-206)Curran notes, however, that ‘even within the conventionality of their frameworks Smith begins to reveal the breadth of interest that impels her more mature fiction’.[[207]](#footnote-207) She demonstrates how domestic issues such as money, marriage and patriarchy are inherently linked to wider national social concerns, blurring the boundary between what has become recognised as Male and Female Gothic motifs. These latent politics become actualised in her fourth novel, *Desmond* (1792), which engages directly with the French Revolution as a prominent exponent of the Jacobin gothic. As this brief synopsis shows, Smith’s work once again defies the generic subdivisions with which we attempt to categorise it. Equally, the divisions themselves are problematic due to the matrix of Gothic authors and their fiction. When Thomas Mathias accused Smith of being ‘tainted with democracy’, for example, he was not referring to her later Jacobin Gothic but to *Celestina* (1791) and her other early works of supposedly quotidian Female Gothic.[[208]](#footnote-208)

Having acknowledged the genre’s concern with representing an imagined past and the legacies of that feudal myth on gender, power, rights and national identity, Smith’s fiction can be substantially reassessed. In particular it allows us to analyse the political implications of Smith’s Gothic British landscapes and architecture which feature in her first three novels, *Emmeline* (1788), *Ethelinde* (1789) and *Celestina* (1791), as well as in her most successful novel *The Old Manor House* (1793) and a novella from her final work, *The Story of Edouarda* (1800). By examining texts from the beginning, middle and end of her writing career, we can see that her exploration of history, heritage and belonging is sustained throughout her work. Once these are viewed as Gothic tropes, this removes her from the margins of the genre and establishes her as one of the most prolific Gothic authors of the Romantic period. Indeed, while remembered today as relegated to the shadow of Ann Radcliffe and other pioneers, Smith’s work is in many ways more Gothic than that of her contemporaries. While she replaced the medieval setting, Smith retained the British locale and the focus on national politics that early Gothic writers took from the popular Historical Romance genre.

The Gothic genre was easily adapted to Smith’s desire to combine a domestic tale of family affairs with a national critique of government and society. She dispensed with the temporal distance that characterised the work of Reeve and Sophia Lee and set her first novel *Emmeline; or, The Orphan of the Castle* (1788) in present-day Wales. In it Smith directly questions the traditions surrounding inheritance, courtship and marriage that are part of the feudal legacy. More importantly, she links this critique to wider political concerns about the ruling classes and the governing of the nation. The novel’s focus on legitimate and illegitimate identities and legacies, and who should therefore inherit Mowbray Castle, are coded references to the validity of parliamentary control and the monarchy in Britain. In a novel preoccupied with the nation then, geography, architecture and landscape are particularly important features which are imbued with special symbolic meaning and narrative significance.

Smith’s decision to set Mowbray Castle in Pembrokeshire distances it from London; the central hub of contemporary society and its vices. This is important to Smith’s narrative, which is highly critical of contemporary Britain and its corrupted use of natural and historical national resources. Wales acts as a primitive, medieval vision of England, divested of this modern corruption. It provides Smith with a picturesque retreat where her heroine, Emmeline, can grow up in Rousseauian freedom. We are told that:

On those evenings in summer […] she delighted to wander among the rocks that formed the bold and magnificent boundary of the ocean, which spread its immense expanse of water within half a mile of the castle. Simply dressed, and with no other protection than Providence, she often rambled several miles into the country, visiting the remote huts of the shepherds, among the wildest mountains.[[209]](#footnote-209)

This description of the fourteen year old Emmeline associates her youth and innocence with her upbringing in an almost mythologised, uncultivated Welsh landscape. Protected from the ills of civilised society, she embodies what Jean-Jacques Rousseau termed the ‘primitive state’.[[210]](#footnote-210) This gentle stage of development sees humans ‘placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes, and the pernicious good sense of civilised man’.[[211]](#footnote-211) Smith introduces Emmeline as a product of nature, not society, and in the style of the early Romantics, defines her against the sublimity of the untamed landscape and its picturesque qualities. In this extract she is drawn against the vast expanse of water and the wild mountains. Smith emphasises both Emmeline’s vulnerability in the natural setting as she walks ‘simply dressed’ and ‘with no… protection’, and the strength which she will one day embody as a product of undomesticated nature.

Smith’s treatment of Britain separates the Gothic into two distinct parts; the Gothic setting and the Gothic threat. While the setting is in Wales and dwells on the ancient ruins, untamed landscape and native superstition, the threat is provided by English interlopers. Smith’s representation of Wales more closely resembles that of eighteenth-century native Welsh writers, than of English writers narrating Wales. As Jane Aaron notes, in the novels of Welsh authors, ‘Wales is consistently presented as the abode of peace, innocence and civilized democracy, in contrast to the savage barbarities of English high society’.[[212]](#footnote-212) Smith uses this technique for her reformist Gothic, which praises the British landscape, the architectural vestiges of national history, and the rustic kindness of the Welsh, while condemning the corrupting influence of Londoners and the English aristocracy.

Wales presents an alternative national space for Smith’s Gothic; unfamiliar, remote and with strong ties to the nation’s Celtic past. As James Henderson has discussed, from an English perspective the Welsh and their nation were particularly suited to host the Gothic: ‘With its plentiful Norman ruins, its geographical isolation, its peculiar national customs tinged with a suggestion of former barbaric glories […] Wales must have powerfully attracted the romantic temperament’.[[213]](#footnote-213) In 1816 Griffiths ap Griffiths, author of *The Sons of St David: A Cambro-British Historical Tale of the Fourteenth Century*, made a similar remark about Welsh nationalism, stating that, ‘few nations have shown so strong an attachment to the customs, the traditions, and the long-traced descent of their ancestors’.[[214]](#footnote-214) Later, in 1867, Matthew Arnold also observed that the Welsh character had, ‘sentiment as its main basis, with love of beauty, charm, and spirituality for its excellence’, making it inherently that of a Gothic hero or heroine.[[215]](#footnote-215)

Wales therefore seems ideal for Smith’s combined sentimental and national mode of Gothic, but she is not interested in it as a distinct nation, but in its resemblance to a historic England. Indeed, her choice of Pembrokeshire draws attention to this, as the southern area of the county has been called ‘Little England beyond Wales’ since the Sixteenth Century, not least due to its use of the English language and certain cultural similarities.[[216]](#footnote-216) The absence of specific Welsh culture, customs or heritage therefore makes Pembrokeshire into a model of England prior to the rise of modern politics and society. This view of the Welsh as primitive Englishmen was encouraged by the nation-wide cultural Celtic revival, which promoted a sense of fraternity between Britain’s three realms. As such, ‘“Ancient Britons”, that is, the Welsh’, Aaron informs us, ‘were reconfigured as colourful ancestors to modern-day Britons; though they might be poor relations – countrified and unsophisticated – they were nevertheless part of the family’.[[217]](#footnote-217)

Smith’s depiction of Wales as a ‘little England’ is reinforced by her political castle, which features centrally to the Welsh landscape she depicts and functions as a microcosm of the British nation and its government. The association between Wales and a historical legacy expressed by Griffiths is therefore exploited by Smith to reflect on contemporary British politics. Linking her work back to that of her predecessors, her opening line sets the scene of a typical Historical Romance:

In a remote part of the county of Pembroke, is an old building, formerly of great strength, and inhabited for centuries by the ancient family of Mowbray; to the sole remaining branch of which it still belonged, tho’ it was, at the time this history commences, inhabited only by servants; and the greater part of it was gone to decay.[[218]](#footnote-218)

Smith delays revealing her contemporary setting, and her reference to ‘this history’ implies that she is employing the medieval time period used in previous Gothic texts. Once the reader realises the shift, the political commentary inherent in the old building becomes especially poignant, but supposed temporal distance does not detract from Smith’s political observations here. The building is England, ‘formerly of great strength’ and ruled over by an ‘ancient family’ – the monarchy. The diminished and absent family, the custodians and the gradual decay are coded references to King George III’s longstanding mental illness, the increasing power of the Tory prime minister, William Pitt, and the consequent societal decline Smith feared.

In November 1788, the year that *Emmeline* was published, George III experienced his worst episode of madness to date, and parliament set about arranging the terms of regency during the King’s incapacity. His previous brief lapses into insanity were known to the general populace and, as Linda Colley has observed, were discussed and debated in an unceremoniously public way.[[219]](#footnote-219) It was also widely understood that as the King’s authority diminished, that of parliament, and Pitt in particular, grew. For Smith and her fellow reformers, the ascendancy of the Tory party was a cause for concern. Thus her work is frequently preoccupied with finding the most suitable owners for her political castles, and by metaphorical extension the most suitable leaders for the state.

Issues of heritage, primogeniture and inheritance are central to the Gothic genre, and no less so to Smith’s Jacobin Gothic, which uses disputed ownership as a political message of reform. Mowbray Castle’s uncertain possession, its absent owners, and the restorations that it would undergo were Emmeline to inherit it, reveal it as a political metaphor for the nation state and its ancient institutions. It is a central part of the national scenery, a ‘magnificent feature’ which, despite being ruinous and crumbling, stands ‘still frowning in gothic magnificence’ across the surrounding countryside.[[220]](#footnote-220) The castle is described as ‘embosomed’ by the landscape, with a ‘rapid stream that washed the castle walls’ to one side, ‘bounded by a wood of oak and pine’ on another, ‘a rich and beautiful vale’ in the foreground, and framed by the sea to the West and to the East ‘a chain of mountains which seemed to meet the clouds’.[[221]](#footnote-221) Like the inherited institutions of the state, the castle is fundamental to the national landscape and imposing in its age, but weakened somewhat by its lack of improvement.[[222]](#footnote-222) These institutions are the legacy of Britain’s medieval past - a past which eighteenth-century writers and antiquarians were fascinated by - and which Smith depicts from a contemporary perspective as damaged by time.[[223]](#footnote-223) Emmeline’s description of the citadel, ‘which was totally in ruins and covered with ivy, crowning the whole’, reveals that Smith’s criticism is not aimed at the institutions themselves, which she treats respectfully, but at their mistreatment by the inheritors of the state.[[224]](#footnote-224) While she emphasises that they are in desperate need of renovation, she still reveres them as an essential component of the nation and has them ‘crowning’ the British landscape.

At the same time, Smith differentiates between the positive legacies of Britain’s past which made it great, and the superstition and oppression that threatens the nation from its feudal past. The castle’s ‘appendage’, a ruined monastery whose connection to the castle can still be traced in the ‘broken arches […] grey and mouldering walls, and mounds covered with slight vegetation’, stands in for the dangers of the past.[[225]](#footnote-225) These vestiges of association between secular authority and the Papal church linger on into Emmeline’s present and the society of the 1780s in a way that Smith represents as threatening to society’s advancement. While paying tribute to beneficial traditions and inherited rights, Smith warns against indiscriminately valuing all aspects of the nation’s past. In this she aligns herself with Mary Wollstonecraft’s proto-revolutionary stance in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), her response to Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Wollstonecraft warns against allowing ‘unprincipled filial affection [to excuse] the venerable vestiges of ancient days’ when we discover them to be flawed.[[226]](#footnote-226) Such ‘gothic notions of beauty’, she continues, would allow the ivy to destroy the tree trunk which supports it just because it is beautiful.[[227]](#footnote-227) Like Wollstonecraft, Smith advises caution when assessing the value of Britain’s historical institutions.

Smith’s concern with power, control and tyranny manifests itself in *Emmeline* as a plot concerning her identity, her right to inherit, and the appropriate ownership of Mowbray Castle. As well as functioning as a political metaphor for the mismanagement of the state, Smith’s castles partake in the emerging tradition of Female Gothic. Reflecting women’s notably precarious socio-political position in eighteenth-century society, Female Gothic redeploys the Gothic castle or ruined site to confront women’s status as male property.[[228]](#footnote-228) Originally supposed to be poor and illegitimate, Emmeline is not a suitable wife for the estate’s heir, Frederic Delamere. In a revealing depiction of women as patriarchal property, Delamere sees her illegitimacy – her lack of ownership by a male relative - as a valid pretext for attempting to rape her. Emmeline’s intimate knowledge of the castle saves her, however, when she is able to escape through the labyrinthine corridors which he cannot fathom. The home, which should be a haven of domestic protection, is transformed in the Female Gothic into a place of incarceration, violation and death. In the political metaphor, the symbiotic relationship between heroine and castle suggests that she is the rightful owner who will similarly save the estate and renovate it for the present day. Meanwhile, Delamere, a representative of the next generation of patriarchal leaders, is shown to be neglectful and flippant about the responsibility of property ownership. Indeed, he is only interested in the ‘venerable mansion’ because he supposes that ‘Miss Emmeline is to be included in the inventory’.[[229]](#footnote-229)

Significantly for Smith’s political metaphor, the library which houses inherited national wisdom – represented through the volumes of Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare and Pope that Emmeline finds there – is the most neglected part of the house. ‘The present proprietor had determined to lay out no more than was absolutely necessary to keep one end of the castle inhabitable,’ the narrator informs us, and so ‘the library, which was in the most deserted part of it, was in a ruinous state, and had long been entirely forsaken’.[[230]](#footnote-230) With regards to the state, Smith is therefore suggesting that its leaders have neglected the venerable institutions which they have inherited from their forefathers, and instead concerned themselves with preserving only a superficial element of the whole. Meanwhile, Emmeline educates herself with this inherited national wisdom, forming herself into an ideal heroine and inheritor for Smith’s political narrative. She becomes a product of Britain’s literary heritage and the ‘two or three volumes of the Spectator’ - a publication which promoted Whig values and interests - that Smith casually includes between Milton and Shakespeare ensure that she will also imbibe these values.[[231]](#footnote-231)

As well as storing these works of national genius, the library is described as having been ‘well furnished with the books of those ages in which they had been collected. Many of them were in black letter; and so injured by time, that the most indefatigable antiquary could have made nothing of them’.[[232]](#footnote-232) From these piles of mouldering parchment, which have been used as nesting material for the birds that inhabit the library, ‘Emmeline turned in despair to some others of more modern appearance’.[[233]](#footnote-233) In this we can see Smith’s metaphor for reform: the new improver, sorting out the old wisdom that should be preserved from the outdated ideas that can be discarded. She once again warns against accrediting value to age without assessing its usefulness for modern society. Her reference to ‘black letter’ books serves the same purpose that Sue Chaplin ascribes to Walpole’s discovered manuscript being ‘written in the black letter’: to ‘guarantee its Gothic pedigree’.[[234]](#footnote-234) The term ‘Gothic’ here reverting to its early associations with barbarity, these ‘black letter’ texts are the relics of the past that Smith does not regard as useful for the present. Emmeline cannot understand them and, more importantly, even a professional antiquary would fail to do so. To continue to use such texts to inform modern policy would therefore require a fabrication of the content. While the castle as a whole deserves to be restored, the individual books which have been ‘injured by time’ are suitable only for the birds. Emmeline has no romantic attachment to these relics and prioritises the usefulness of the modern texts above the aesthetic of their medieval counterparts.

When Emmeline inherits the castle at the end of the novel, it is implied that her love of the old building will inspire her to reopen and renovate the neglected rooms. Smith suggests that it will require a combination of preservation and innovation to return the estate to its former glory. Interestingly, Smith’s concept of reform here appears to closely resemble that which Burke would express in his 1790 treatise *Reflections on the Revolution in France* - a text which she would vehemently condemn. The respect for national legacy that Smith demonstrates is echoed by Burke’s later claim that Britain’s ‘old settled maxim, never entirely nor at once to depart from antiquity’ had made the British constitution the foremost in the world.[[235]](#footnote-235) Following on from that, Burke recommends the same combination of conservation and improvement to the French that Smith promotes; instead of discarding their heritage and traditions they should attempt ‘at once to preserve and to reform […] when the useful parts of the old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained’.[[236]](#footnote-236) This coincides with Smith’s treatment of Mowbray, but where the two of them differ is in the definition of what is ‘useful’ in the old establishments.

In *Desmond*, she would write in open opposition to Burke, and have her reformist character Montfleuri pull down the ‘original structure’ of his ancestral home, preserving nothing but what is ‘useful to himself’, which is ultimately very little.[[237]](#footnote-237) Like the romantic reader who would cherish the black letter books of Mowbray’s library because of their age, despite their being indecipherable, Smith sees Burke’s blind veneration for tradition as troubling. His celebration of the aristocratic ideals of benevolent paternalism, patrilineal succession, and chivalry are at odds with what she finds useful in Britain’s history to advance society. It was the same criticism that Mary Wollstonecraft levelled against him when she wrote:

[…] that we are to reverence the rust of antiquity, and term the unnatural customs, which ignorance and mistaken self-interest have consolidated, the sage fruit of experience: and that, if we do discover some errors, our *feelings* should lead us to excuse, with blind love, or unprincipled filial affection, the venerable vestiges of ancient days. These are gothic notions of beauty…[[238]](#footnote-238)

Burke’s ‘blind love’ for tradition will interfere with logical progress and improvement. If reverence and respect for established customs do not hold back change, Wollstonecraft suggests, then emotional investment in the legacy of an imagined national past will. Even as early as 1788, Smith makes this claim in *Emmeline*, warning against the ‘gothic notions of beauty’ found in aesthetically pleasing and antiquated objects and ideas, which are inherently dangerous to stability and growth. Still responding to Burke in her later novels, Smith would go on to demonstrate the damage caused by delayed or ineffective restoration due to a desire to preserve the status quo. Many of her venerable mansions are left in ruins, like Eastwoodleigh in *Marchmont* (1796), or are unsuccessfully renovated, like Sandthwaite Castle in *The Young Philosopher* (1798). Both are metaphors for mismanaged nation states, left in the hands of antiquarian and romantic politicians like Burke. As early as *Emmeline*, however, Smith still argues for preserving the accumulated wisdom of ancestral generations represented in the Constitution, while reforming it to suit modern society.

In her second work, *Ethelinde; or the Recluse of the Lake* (1789), Smith develops her domestic Gothic castles as political markers for the state and its social organisation. She introduces a two-castle model to emphasise that these ancient buildings, like governments, can be used for oppression or security. As Angela Wright has recently observed, ‘the buildings portrayed in *Ethelinde* in particular mark one of the Gothic’s central concerns. Castles, as Ann Radcliffe would later also demonstrate in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* […] can either be places of tyranny or places of refuge’.[[239]](#footnote-239) Just as in *Emmeline*, Smith sets her ‘refuge’ far away from London, this time in a rural idyll on the Scottish border. By setting her novel in Cumbria, located at the northernmost extent of England, Smith is utilising another national Gothic space. It is a liminal location on the divide between two nations, removed from London and its ‘civilising’ influence, and therefore mysteriously ‘other’. While England and Scotland had been joined since the Act of Union in 1707 and many, including Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, had recorded their travels through Scotland, the Scottish landscape was still somewhat alien and remote.[[240]](#footnote-240) Maps of Scotland date from the 1560s, but detail of the area, and particularly the Highlands, was not available until the Ordinance Survey maps were drawn in the 1840s.[[241]](#footnote-241) Its border with England therefore created an ‘uncanny’ space that was both familiar and unfamiliar, domestic and alien.

The Cumbrian setting also calls into question the constructed national identity that Scotland and England share. Much like the Gothic genre, which originates ‘not in the feudal culture and customs to which it refers, but in 18th-century constructions and inventions, in fake origins’, Great Britain is an eighteenth-century construct.[[242]](#footnote-242) It was forged by the Act of Union, which drew together three very distinct nations via their shared religion, over and above their varied cultures, customs and outlooks. The nation itself, then, with which the Gothic is so preoccupied, is an imagined past that depicts a united realm in place of three separate territories. By locating her political castle on the boundary between two countries – a border imagined by men and superimposed on the natural landscape – Smith highlights the frailty of the shared national history that eighteenth-century Britons were so invested in.

*Ethelinde*’sGrasmere Abbey, like Mowbray, is depicted as being at one with the surrounding Cumbrian landscape: ‘embosomed among the hills, and half concealed by old elms, which seemed coeval with the building’.[[243]](#footnote-243) The corresponding age of the Abbey and the trees around it stress the absorption of the building into the immediate scenery. It is a product of past ages, more akin to the natural landscape of British antiquity than to modern society. This is emphasised by the fashionable Lady Newenden’s dislike of the Abbey and its rural setting, and her desire to return to the social scenes of London. As James Foster reflects, ‘Lady Newenden hates Westmoreland scenery, the ruinous condition of her husband’s country seat… and languishes for London and Bath. What more could be said to confirm us in the certainty of her depravity?’[[244]](#footnote-244) As many other Gothic novelists would later do, Smith does indeed associate a regard for nature with a noble character. Lord Newenden travels to the Abbey with his wife, his sister and his cousin, young Ethelinde, and tests the worth of each of the three ladies by their ability to appreciate the scenery they pass through. His admiration of the ‘wild grandeur’ of the summits is sharply contrasted to his wife’s observation that she sees ‘but little beauty in those dreary looking mountains’, and emphasises at this early stage in the novel that they are a mismatched couple.[[245]](#footnote-245) His sister in turn prefers the flat turf surrounding Dorsetshire or Hampshire, and only Ethelinde, who alone has learned to ‘see the face of nature with the taste of a painter, and the enthusiasm of a poet’, contemplates the ‘novelty and grandeur of the scenery’.[[246]](#footnote-246) In Smith’s novels, an appreciation of nature is also a respect for England’s history and heritage, and a desire to restore and improve it.

This is at odds with the creatures of modern society who are greedy for wealth, ignorant of politics and preoccupied with fashion. Smith’s heroes and heroines, who delight to wander in nature and have a keen sense of political justice, are a prototype of the well-known Radcliffean model. They are immersed in the sublime and the picturesque, distanced from modern society, and gifted with a natural artistic flair.[[247]](#footnote-247) Radcliffe and her successors would employ the same sentimental character traits, producing a generic motif for the Gothic. Implicit in these characters, and central to Smith’s critique, is the Rousseauian theory that removal from society instils a natural sense of morality and goodness in the individual.[[248]](#footnote-248) From this natural morality stems a balance of regard for legacy, and desire for innovation, that produces Smith’s ideal reformist state.

From the opening line of *Ethelinde*, Smith introduces this focus on new and old which will occupy the rest of the narrative: ‘On the borders of the small but beautiful lake called Grasmere Water, in the county of Cumberland, is Grasmere Abbey, the old seat belonging to the family of Newenden’.[[249]](#footnote-249) In the original typeface of the first edition printed by T. Cadell in 1789, it is doubly emphasised by a line break in the script so that the fourth line begins with ‘old’ and ends with ‘New’, with the rest of the family name continued over to the next line.[[250]](#footnote-250) Ultimately, *Ethelinde* is a novel about contemporary society and how it has used, abused and disregarded its national heritage. It dwells in particular on money and marriage, on the patriarchal traditions of primogeniture and inheritance, and on the gender relations that inform them. This is contrasted throughout to Grasmere and its idyllic scenery, which haunts the text with memories of ancient national heritage divested of their bloody or threatening associations.

Smith provides a detailed history of the Abbey from its founding by the Earl of Chester for forty Cistercian monks, to its dissolution by Henry the Eighth, by whom it was given to the family of Brandon, and from them descended to the Newenden family through marriage. The estate passes to the current Lord Newenden heavily mortgaged, but he marries the heiress to an immense fortune acquired in the East Indies and so retrieves his wealth and disembarrasses his estates by the alliance. This extensive introduction to the property shows its progression from ancient times through to the modern day. It has witnessed the great changes of the nation; a new national religion, several monarchs and three royal houses, the rise of ‘new money’ families and the decline of the ‘old money’ aristocracy. Additionally, Lady Newenden’s East Indian fortune complicates the concept of an insular British nationalism by raising the spectre of colonialism. The ancient British family of Newenden must look not only to ‘new money’ for financial support, but to the fruits of the British Empire, and dilute aristocratic wealth with the proceeds of trade and colonialism.

The Abbey is a remnant of the past, ‘bearing everywhere the marks of great antiquity’, which Smith presents as a foil for contemporary society without suggesting that it should be resurrected to replace it.[[251]](#footnote-251) Indeed, while attempts have been made to improve it for its owners use, the Abbey resists modernisation:

In some of the windows the heavy stone work still remained, and they were totally darkened at the top by stained glass; in others, sashes had been substituted; and the windows had been contracted by brick work to make them appear square within; but even in these the stained glass had been replaced, which generally represented the arms of the Newenden surcharged with those of Brandon.[[252]](#footnote-252)

The original stained glass prevents light from entering the building, but despite this inconvenience it is replaced in the new sash windows. It is clearly valued by the owners’ because it bears the arms of both families and therefore reinforces the ancient legacy of the building, but its presence hinders the improvements to the building’s utility. The Abbey’s past is seen to directly hamper attempts to modernise or renovate it. If viewed as a metaphor for the state, this would suggest that Smith was endorsing the revolutionary view that the old institutions could not be adapted for the modern day. However, Grasmere is not just an emblem for the state of England, but a retreat from present day civilization. It provides Lord Newenden and Ethelinde with an idealised space, an ancient refuge that harkens back to a better age. While Smith would later criticise Burke’s reverence for ancestry and inheritance, she endows the good Lord Newenden with a healthy esteem for his family line. We are told that he was ‘much attached to Grasmere Abbey, which he venerated as the abode of his ancestors’, while the degenerate Lady Newenden calls it a ‘great, cold place… as damp as a family vault’.[[253]](#footnote-253) Smith once again tempers her desire for reform and advancement with a respect for heritage.

The novel begins and ends at Grasmere, and the castle provides a moral pole throughout the novel and an ideal to which the protagonists frequently aspire. The urban, social settings of London and Bath appear sordid against the halcyon descriptions of the Cumbrian countryside and the sanctuary of Grasmere. Smith dwells on the extravagance and debauchery that the upper classes amuse themselves with, particularly focusing on gambling and adultery to demonstrate their love of excess. Meanwhile, Montgomery, the hero of the novel, lives with his mother in a cottage by Grasmere Waters, far away from this corruption. She remarks to Ethelinde that ‘from the little I saw of modern young men of fashion during my short stay in London, perhaps I ought rather to rejoice that my son is thrown at a distance from the contagion of their example, and that with all their spirit, he is free from their vices’.[[254]](#footnote-254) These vices are present in the London attendants that Lady Newenden brings with her from the capital. We are told that ‘the women quarrelled with the old house-keeper, and saw ghosts in every passage of the abbey; the men bewildered the steward by their London assurance, and distracted him by their extravagance’.[[255]](#footnote-255) The London personalities are a sharp contrast to the rustic goodness and honesty of the Cumbrian peasants who, like Ethelinde and Montgomery, are appalled by their decadent consumerism. In a novel devoid of supernatural machinery - with the exception of Ethelinde’s brief projected vision of her dead father come to comfort her - we see Smith mock the London maid’s fear of ghosts. The southern servants populate the ancient Abbey with spectres, but Smith is clearly preoccupied with what there is to fear in reality. The desperate pursuit of money, the misery caused by mis-marriage, and the steady decline of society into decadence are represented as much more threatening than the imaginary ghosts of the past.

At the centre of these social vices is the novel’s second Gothic castle, Abersley. This house, owned by Ethelinde’s uncle Lord Hawkhurst, represents the patriarchal hierarchy with which she must contend for her inheritance and her right to choose a husband. It houses her brother Harry just as it provided a home for her father in his youth, but Ethelinde, the female descendant, feels unwelcome there. The patriarchal castle is a place of intrigue, scheming and secrets, where family ties are sacrificed to greed and the selfish pursuit of wealth and inheritance. It is undoubtedly the most gothic of Smith’s castles so far and hosts her first foray into the supernatural when Ethelinde’s desperation produces a vision of her dead father. We are told that Ethelinde, having been spurned by the family:

[…] walked alone through the spacious apartments and galleries of the house. At the end of the gallery she came into a room that seemed to have been forsaken by the family… she was struck instantly with [a portrait] of her father… the likeness was so strong, that it gave her instantly the idea of him as she remembered.[[256]](#footnote-256)

As Ethelinde moves farther away from the family, she distances herself from the present and passes along the gallery into the past where her father’s portrait reinforces her right to inherit the family wealth. This temporal shift brings her into a Gothic space, where ‘deep red clouds’ fill the sky and the room descends into ‘that gloom and obscurity which inspired and encouraged the most melancholy thoughts’.[[257]](#footnote-257) As the light fades around her, taking with it the comfortable scepticism of rationality and realism, Ethelinde regresses to a state of superstition and fear. At this point she glimpses through the old stone-framed windows the family mausoleum where her father lies buried and as she cries out to him for help, ‘a gust of wind rushed through the long gallery’ and she becomes convinced that she is seeing her father, exclaiming, ‘surely he hears me, and comes from the grave to meet me!’[[258]](#footnote-258) Ethelinde sees him ‘standing there and beckoning to her to follow him’, like the ghost of Hamlet’s father, but as she steps forward towards the vision she is struck by lightning and rendered immobile.[[259]](#footnote-259)

Such a scene is Gothic in its excess, but unlike the spectres of her predecessors and successors, Smith’s ghost has no practical role to play. He does not provide aid, or warning, or illuminate a long-buried secret; rather he is a projection of Ethelinde’s extreme loneliness and despair in her new family. He represents the old order which cannot be restored or called upon for help in the face of a new, ruthless patriarchy which refuses to acknowledge her claim for familial protection. As Loraine Fletcher observes, ‘the lightning bolt marks her as a passive victim… the heroine never returns in triumph to Abersley… and there is no sense of a possible rejuvenation of the old order’.[[260]](#footnote-260)

As part of Smith’s critique of modern society and the way that it has failed to improve on the rights that are its historical legacy, she condemns capitalist society and demonstrates one of its greatest evils – that of privileging money above family. Ethelinde’s brother Harry, who begins the novel as a likeable character, despite his propensity to gamble beyond his means, becomes increasingly antagonistic as the novel progresses. As his debts worsen, his cruelty increases, and Ethelinde eventually realises that he hopes to inherit the whole of their benefactor’s estate and leave her penniless. Smith is careful to show that money is at the root of his degenerating morality, and that by representing this rift in the traditionally sacrosanct brother/sister relationship, she is testing her heroine in new, uglier ways. The breakdown of their sibling bond, Fletcher claims, ‘sets up tensions between the ‘real’ world, the world of *Ethelinde*, and the conventional novelistic world with its standard trials’.[[261]](#footnote-261) Here, Smith is pushing the boundaries of the Sentimental Novel in order to highlight the harsh realities of contemporary British society that fiction commonly overlooks. Ethelinde’s visit to Abersley fails to reconcile her to her family and instead reinforces her brother’s heartlessness towards her and confirms his complicity in the ruthless patriarchal order.

*Ethelinde* concludes with a self-consciously convenient happy ending which interrupts the social realism, but Smith maintains her critique of Abersley and the patriarchy that it represents right to the end. Ethelinde does not return there triumphant at the conclusion of the novel; she does not renovate it and reconcile it with the modern age. The family portraits and the mausoleum where her father lies are lost to her, along with the home of her ancestors. Rejuvenation of the old order is denied. Instead, Ethelinde returns to Grasmere, supported by the generosity of a rich and late-discovered relative of Mrs Montgomery that provides the protagonists with enough money to start a family. This retreat allows Smith to end the novel without offering hope for the restoration of English society. As a refuge from London and its fashionable vices, Grasmere provides Ethelinde with an alternative lifestyle to embrace away from corruption. Her retreat back there at the end of the text shows her complete rejection of the urban space and those who inhabit it. Thus, while Smith’s sublime descriptions of Grasmere emphasise the grandeur of Britain and the importance of preserving it from a wasteful and decadent culture, she fails to offer practical techniques for doing so. Instead Ethelinde retires from society, depriving it of her good example, and leaves the reader to dwell on the various criticisms that Smith has raised and left unresolved. The conclusion raises the question of whether Ethelinde’s superior moral values are tenable in modern society, and her retreat to a nostalgic vision of pastoral Britain suggests not.

Smith’s two-castle model is used again in *Celestina* (1791), where they embody England and France. The action surrounding them plays out the respective social revolutions that Smith desired to see made a reality. It was publishedin 1791, two years after the fall of the Bastille and engages with the revolutionary cause, with national politics and with Burke’s *Reflections* in a way that Smith would continue to do throughout her career. *Celestina*, then, marks a shift in Smith’s fiction as she becomes more openly political. This is indicated in the lack of subtitle, associating *Celestina* much more closely with her polemic *Desmond* rather than with the more Sentimental *Emmeline; or The Orphan of the Castle* and *Ethelinde; or the Recluse of the Lake*. As Fletcher notes, ‘*Celestina* focuses on rank and the authoritarian state, in its microcosm, the family, and in the wider world’.[[262]](#footnote-262) In this way Smith addresses the revolution on a domestic and a nation level, paralleling the tyranny of the monarchy to that of a family patriarch.

The first of the two castles is Alverstone, set between Sidmouth and Exeter on the south coast of England. It represents the mismanagement and gradual decline of Britain from its ancient glory. It is the ancestral seat of the Willoughby family and the cost of its upkeep and enhancement has ruined their fortune. We are told that the late Mr Willoughby had expended ‘large sums’ on aesthetic improvements to the grounds and building, and that his son George has inherited this attachment and desire without being aware that the family is in financial ruins.[[263]](#footnote-263) Mrs Willoughby has kept their embarrassment a secret but knows that it is doubtful that George will be able to afford to ‘reside in this favourite place, with the splendour and hospitality for which his ancestors had for centuries been eminent’.[[264]](#footnote-264) From the first the house is tied to issues of family, fortune, inheritance and marriage; areas of British society in which Smith saw desperate need for reform.

The estate is not described with the poetic detail that Smith afforded her earlier houses except to highlight the areas that George wants to visually improve, that is ‘to encrease the roar of the water, or deepen the shade of the wood that fringed its side’.[[265]](#footnote-265) To the knowing reader George’s projects appear frivolous beside the larger issues we know he will have to contend with. These include choice between marrying for love and abandoning his ancestral seat, or marrying his rich heiress cousin, an act through which ‘the family might be restored by a union of its two remaining branches’.[[266]](#footnote-266) As in her earlier novels, Smith draws attention to weakened aristocratic families who are struggling to sustain their lavish lifestyle and continue their ancient line. This is a central theme in Gothic fiction dating back to Walpole and his predecessors in the Historical Romance genre. *The Castle of Otranto* begins by stressing Manfred’s failing lineage which relies upon his son Conrad, a ‘homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition’.[[267]](#footnote-267) After Conrad’s death, the plot revolves around Manfred’s desperate attempts to resurrect his family by divorcing his wife and marrying his son’s young fiancé. The failing lineage plotline recurs throughout the Gothic genre and betrays anxieties concerning heritage, legacy, rupture and continuity on a personal and national scale. In *Celestina*, the Willoughby family’s financial trouble and George’s decision on who to marry is a statement about Britain’s mismanagement under its current leadership and the need for reform. When he ultimately decides to marry Celestina, he breaks from established tradition in favour of a new system of national management. Together they represent a reformed order, directly descended from an ancient lineage but newly revitalised and strengthened, and therefore sustainable.

On the other side of the English Channel stands Smith’s second castle, Rochemorte, which holds the secret of Celestina’s parentage and is a microcosm for the French Revolution at this early stage. Much like Burke’s *Reflections*, however, her observations about France are always just as much about England and the comparison between the two countries. Rochemorte has undergone a domestic revolution of its own, with the younger generation rebelling against the old authoritarian order. The castle belongs to the aristocratic de Bellegarde family and is hidden in the Pyrenees, close to a Benedictine monastery. As in *Emmeline*, we see the proximity of the castle and abbey as a metaphor for the united institutions of state and church which attempt to oppress individual liberty. This is played out in the inset narrative of Genevieve, Celestina’s mother, who is abused by her autocratic father, harassed by the attentions of a Spanish Jesuit priest, and is ultimately killed by their combined cruelty and neglect: a victim of the *ancien régime*.

When Willoughby first visits the castle, he is told that the Benedictine monks have abandoned their vows and left during the early days of the Revolution. Meanwhile, the castle is ruinous in parts but is still an imposing monument, ‘bearing every where the marks of great antiquity, but of such ponderous strength, as time alone had not been able to destroy’.[[268]](#footnote-268) It has passed from the hands of the old order into those of the new generation, and Willoughby sees the castle in the process of transformation from an austere prison to a natural haven:

The whole was composed of grey stone; the towers, at each end, rose in frowning grandeur, above the rest of the building; and having only loops, and no windows, impressed ideas of darkness and imprisonment, while the moss and wall flowers filled the interstices of the broke stones; and an infinite number of birds made their nests among the shattered cornices, and half-fallen battlements, filling the air with their shrill cries.[[269]](#footnote-269)

We can see parallels to *Emmeline*’s Mowbray Castle here, in the ‘frowning grandeur’ and the assimilation of the structure into the surrounding landscape. However, unlike the neglected Mowbray, whose absorption into nature was the result of modern mismanagement, Rochemorte is seen undergoing a positive change from stagnation to vitality. This castle, a symbol for the *ancien régime*, is adapting, growing, and changing as the Revolution takes hold. The impression of darkness, imprisonment and stasis is contrasted to the burgeoning life that is erupting in the gaps and cracks – the necessary destruction sustained during the rise of a new order. The significant changes that are taking place here once again highlight the superficiality of the alterations George is making to Alverstone. Oblivious to the family’s financial troubles, he busies himself with minor aesthetic improvements while the larger problems go unnoticed. By contrasting this to Rochemorte, Smith implies that Britain needs to address key issues in the constitution before things progress to a stage where only revolution will correct them.

Rochemorte was clearly constructed in part as a response to Burke’s *Reflections*, in which he too used the metaphor of the castle as an emblem for the state. Thus the preservation or demolition of a building reflected loyalist or revolutionary tendencies. In addressing the French, Burke admitted that the *régime* had its flaws, but regretted their decision to destroy it rather than improve it:

[You] possessed in some parts the walls, and, in all, the foundations, of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls, you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution was suspended before it was perfected; but you had the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished…[[270]](#footnote-270)

He used the symbol of the magnificent crumbling house extensively, warning that such an edifice should not be pulled down and rebuilt ‘without having models or patterns of approved utility before [the] eyes’.[[271]](#footnote-271) He saw the Revolution as a destructive force that shattered the old system without having a better one in mind. While Rochemorte sustains damage, however, Smith is careful to show that it is not destroyed during the transition from old to new owners. The shattered stones, broken cornices and half-fallen battlements do not affect the main structure of the castle, whose walls are still strong and whose inhabited chambers are still comfortable. The old building, or ‘dead rock’ as Rochemorte literally translates to, is reanimated in the hands of its new anti-clerical and revolutionary owner. Impressed by the seemingly peaceful success of the Revolution, Smith depicts Rochemorte as a symbol of change and improvement. While preserving the stable structure, it has thrown off the weight of its outmoded feudal policies and taken its first steps towards a better future, just as Smith believed France had, and hoped that England would.

Smith’s next novel, *Desmond* (1792), was a politically-explicit celebration of the Revolution and an exploration of the debates that it fuelled in England. It deviated from her first three novels through its epistolary style, male protagonist, overt political focus, and subsidiary courtship narrative. *Desmond* continued her critique of British politics, but her focus moved away from subtle representation and adopted the more direct approach of narrating debate and action. It is an impassioned novel, written in response to Burke and other critics of the Revolution, and penned as events in France unfolded, which left little time for reflection. Consequently, this premature celebration of a peaceful revolution was criticised and censured once violence became widespread. This had a big impact on Smith’s next novel, *The Old Manor House* (1793). Removed entirely from a contemporary political setting, the plot begins and concludes in rural England, with a middle section set in America during the American Revolution. These different locations can lead to a fragmented reading of the novel which divides it into two or three distinct sections to be analysed independently. When studied as a sustained commentary on Gothic views of history, however, the English and American episodes inform one another. Indeed, in a novel preoccupied with the construction of British national identity, the American Revolution - and by extension the French Revolution - play a crucial role.

The title of the novel indicates that its main focus is on inherited property. Smith is signalling her move away from heroine-centred Sentimental Romances and courtship narratives, while reinforcing her roots in the Gothic tradition through her reference to Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*. By specifying her focus as ‘old’ Smith is also distancing herself from the contemporary politics of her controversial previous novel. This was particularly important as its publication coincided with the year that Britain entered the war with France. The manor house’s established history and uncertain future are coded references to the nation. Like Grasmere Abbey, Rayland Hall has witnessed the country’s progression from the medieval age through to the modern day. It combines several architectural styles dating back to the Gothic turret that houses the heroine, Monimia, and forward to the unused staterooms with their late seventeenth-century decor. It is a symbol of historical continuity and aristocratic dominance, and as such Smith ensures that the Hall is inherently flawed. Mocking Burke’s comparison of the ancient institutions of the state to ‘majestic edifices’ only in need of ‘repair’, Smith’s house-keeper character complains that the wainscoting in the house is ‘as rotten as touchwood’, having been up ‘above an hundred years’.[[272]](#footnote-272) ‘We may patch it, and patch it, and yet be never the nearer’ she despairs, ‘but, for my part, I suppose it will last my time’.[[273]](#footnote-273) Mrs Rayland, who is inordinately invested in the feudal history of her antiquated house and family line, insists on patching the rotten wood instead of replacing it with new materials.[[274]](#footnote-274) Smith parallels this to Burke’s desire to maintain the status quo rather than reform state policies for the greater good.

Not only is it structurally unsound, but Rayland Hall’s composite architecture encourages illicit activity within the house. Its hidden passages, thin walls, Gothic vaults and secret chambers aid those who seek to undermine Mrs Rayland’s feudal rule. Her autocratic dominance ensures that only covert agency remains available to the rest of the household who scheme and plot among themselves to undermine her. The house represents a feudal hierarchy, which appears imposing but is intrinsically weak. The seventeenth-century staterooms, for example, are described in detail as being of great luxury, but therefore frail and unsound. Smith lists the rich furnishings of ‘cut velvet or damask’, ‘gilt cornices’, ‘coloured velvets, fringed with silk and gold’, ‘gilt feet’, ‘fine japanned cabinets’, ‘beautiful pieces of china’, ‘large glasses’ and ‘valuable pictures’.[[275]](#footnote-275) The description of these central rooms as ‘rich, but old fashioned’ make them indicative of Rayland Hall’s traditional values.[[276]](#footnote-276) While imposing and impressive, they are also depicted as fragile, and Smith observes that ‘the oak floors were so nicely waxed, that to move upon them was more like skating than walking’.[[277]](#footnote-277) Displayed in all their shining glory, these rooms, like outmoded feudal values and laws, are theoretically pleasing but not practical. They are not put to use for their intended purpose, but merely preserved for their nostalgic appeal, and using, analysing or enforcing them reveals their weakness and tenuity.

This exploration of power is continued by its host of characters, who are representative of the English social hierarchy. Mrs Rayland represents the old order; a backwards-looking aristocrat, the last of a weakened dynasty, a feudal ruler and a tyrant. She is a product of the past, preoccupied with her family’s proud military history, and with outmoded concepts of chivalry and glory. Smith describes her as ‘the last of a race which she was thus arrogantly boasting – a race, which in a few years, perhaps a few months, might be no more remembered’.[[278]](#footnote-278) This preoccupation with the past makes her vulnerable and unreliable as a ruler. Despite her apparent authority, her vanity and pride are easily manipulated, and she is often revered only for her money. The housekeeper, Mrs Lennard, often uses past honours, family ghosts and historical politics to distract and influence her, while General Tracy, who ‘cared not a straw if the whole race of Raylands had been swept from the memory of mankind’, adopts an interest in ‘the glory of her ancestors’ in order to gain favour.[[279]](#footnote-279) Mrs Rayland’s pride and consequent refusal to marry has already resulted in no heir for the estate, and her decision to bestow the Hall on Orlando becomes dependent on him earning the honour of a place in her prestigious family by embracing a military career. Her fixation on the past distances her from reality and she accordingly ‘contemplate[s] the honours, and [thinks] little of the dangers of war’.[[280]](#footnote-280) She idealistically interprets battle in terms of valour and victory, being ‘rather desirous he should justify her partiality to him, by emulating the fame of the heroes of her family, than afraid of what might happen in the experiment’.[[281]](#footnote-281) Her irrational attachment to an idealised past seriously threatens the future of the estate and destabilises the hierarchy that she heads.

Mrs Rayland’s flaws are apparent throughout the text, but Smith is also sympathetic in her treatment of her. Her actions are often the result of superstition and prejudice rather than cruelty, and her growing affection for Orlando and Monimia makes her increasingly appealing to the reader. Indeed, there is a sense that a glorious, if imagined, past has been lost when Orlando learns of her death. The growing attachment to Mrs Rayland is now predicated upon a fear of what will follow. Even her feudal rule is preferable to the ascension of the greedy servants who represent the trading class, or duplicitous schemers like Dr Hollybourn and General Tracy. As seen in their manipulation of her, the new orders are already encroaching in her lifetime. Alongside Mrs Rayland reside ‘new money’ families such as the Stocktons, whom she refuses to acknowledge but who repeatedly trespass on her grounds to hunt. As Labbe observes, ‘Smith dramatises the emergence of a money-based economy that is literally contiguous to the land-based economy represented by Rayland Hall’.[[282]](#footnote-282) Neither receives a positive representation in the novel. Trade and the new economy is condemned as gaudy and greedy, while inheritance is judged as immoral. Orlando’s older brother embodies Smith’s critique of primogeniture. He is a typical eldest son; arrogant, wasteful, entitled, and despised by Mrs Rayland. Smith’s condemnation of both new and old money hierarchies leaves only the ‘levelling principle’ adopted by the French and so feared by Reeve in her fiction.[[283]](#footnote-283)

Beneath Mrs Rayland are the aspiring commercial, lower-middle and lower-classes represented in the upper and lower servants. They scheme and jostle for position in the household and hope to inherit a part of Mrs Rayland’s fortune. Smith astutely depicts the house and estate as a whole, populating it with the activities of servants as often as those of the protagonists and gentry. She also makes the link between domestic and public spheres explicit with repeated use of the word ‘politic’ to describe the machinations of the household.[[284]](#footnote-284) The wider resonance to national politics is also emphasised when Mrs Rayland is called ‘another Elizabeth’ or when Smith remarks that, ‘In a great house there are among the servants as many cabals, and as many schemes, as among the leaders of a great nation’.[[285]](#footnote-285) The upper servants mirror the professional class of politicians, but being ‘politic’ applies to most of the characters in the novel, including Orlando’s well-meaning but misguided father, and the hero himself.

While this little nation, with its representative population, can be seen to mock and diminish national political structures, Smith is clearly addressing serious concerns in the social hierarchy. Her novel critiques all levels of the social strata and addresses issues of social mobility, gender relations and power. Smith is particularly attentive to money-making schemes, and is both critical and sympathetic in her depiction of the need and drive to make money in modern Britain. The servants Pattenson and Snelcraft engage in smuggling, which is discovered and they are dismissed, while Lennard marries a suitably Gothic villain who uses her to inherit Mrs Rayland’s wealth before imprisoning her in an attic. The servant Betty uses her sexuality to get ahead, and the criminal Jonas Wilkins exploits the weaknesses of society and Rayland Hall to survive. Her sympathetic treatment of many of them at the end of the novel suggests that she views their intrigues as a consequence of social pressures rather than inherent wickedness. Despite her cruelty to Monimia, Lennard is ultimately brought back to live at the Hall once Orlando inherits it, having helped him to find the hidden will that proved his right to the property. Betty elopes with Orlando’s brother, Philip Somerive, and ends up rather well in London with her own carriage. Meanwhile, the most socially mobile character is Monimia, who is classless and orphaned at the beginning but moves up through the ranks to servant, to governess, and finally to mistress of Rayland Hall.

Smith’s metaphor for England is realistically complex and her characters reflect this through their various shades of virtue and vice. This is particularly evident in the case of Rayland Hall’s representative of England’s large criminal underclass, Jonas Wilkins. With Pattenson’s assistance, the Gothic chapel, vaults and cellars of the Hall are used to store smuggled goods by Wilkins and his gang. Surprised by Orlando one night, Wilkins shares the history of how he was shaken off by society, and the sympathetic and liberal-minded Orlando regards him with ‘a mixture of horror and pity’, gradually coming down on the side of the latter.[[286]](#footnote-286) The true villains of the piece are the educated criminals – lawyers and clergymen – who vie for power and manipulate the system. When Orlando returns from America, he finds Rayland Hall in the hands of a conniving clergyman who, with the help of Mrs Lennard’s lawyer fiancé Mr Roker, has hidden Mrs Rayland’s last will and claimed the property for himself. This criticism runs throughout Smith’s work. In the ‘Preface’ to *The Young Philosopher* (1798), for instance, Smith described lawyers as ‘stand[ing] in place of the giants, and necromancers, and ogres of ancient romance’, while the attorney in *Marchmont* is actually called ‘Vampyre’.[[287]](#footnote-287) Equally, clergymen are often figures of ridicule in Smith’s novels, and the vestiges of religious authority haunt many of her Gothic landscapes.

Her condemnation of lawyers draws attention to the parallels between land-based and money-based economies. While they appear to be representative of two different social orders, both the Rokers and Mrs Rayland serve the same narrative purpose – to stand between Orlando and his inheritance. Equally, both equate money to power, and have a vested interest in seeing the continuity of feudal laws. After all, it is the continued use of these laws which keep the landed gentry in power through a system of primogeniture, inheritance and entailment. The set-piece scene of the tenants’ feast highlights that the true source of Mrs Rayland’s power is her wealth, for which she is courted and obeyed. Her link to a money-based economy is reinforced in the nature of her hereditary title. Her beloved ancestor, Sir Hildebrand, was a baronet, which, as Deborah Russell has observed, is ‘a somewhat anomalous honour that is more modern than the feudal references might suggest’ as ‘James I created the title so that he could sell it, in effect commercialising the honours system’.[[288]](#footnote-288) Mrs Rayland’s power therefore stems from her wealth, just as it will in the rising money-based economy of trade and industry that she despises.

Inherent here is also a critique of the myth-making process of individual and national identities. The facts of Mrs Rayland’s ancestry have been edited and fabricated to emphasise glory and remove stain, just as Britain’s national history has been neatened and polished. Significantly, the central theme of money and property also takes precedent over the romantic plotline. Given the choice, Orlando refuses to elope and marry Monimia, choosing instead to combine his desire for her with his desire for wealth and inheritance. He will either return from America and claim both his property and his wife, or he will not return. Tellingly, much like Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*, the romance plot is resolved quickly and incidentally, while the rest of the narrative focuses on inheritance. Romance is therefore subsumed to property, and the novel’s happy ending revolves around his possession of Rayland Hall, not his union with Monimia.

Throughout the novel, the plot is preoccupied with questions surrounding the ownership of the estate and whether its legal owners are the most suitable and deserving for the role. This is a coded reformist argument about the leadership of England; the over-privileged few and the dispossessed masses. The ancient Rayland family’s pride has created the problem of the novel as the three daughters of Sir Hildebrand Rayland, ‘could never be prevailed upon to lessen [their estate], by sharing it with any of those numerous suitors, who for the first forty or fifty years of their lives surrounded them’.[[289]](#footnote-289) Unwilling to marry and give their inheritance to a husband, when two of the sisters die it falls to Mrs Rayland – who, despite her title, is also a spinster – to find an heir. She passes over the eldest Somerive son for the same reason that she refuses to take a husband; he is entitled and arrogantly assumes the right to her property. The younger son however, with no legal right to inherit, is grateful for her favour and becomes a modern-day vassal to do her bidding. Here, Mrs Rayland’s obsession with the feudal past is manifested in an unnatural and unsettling relationship with young Orlando. He is constantly referred to as ‘Sir Knight’ by his elder brother and is torn between his desire for Monimia and his desire to please Mrs Rayland.[[290]](#footnote-290) While the heroine is styled the ‘sweet nymph of the enchanted tower’, Orlando dedicates most of his time to Mrs Rayland and is described as ‘the creature of her smiles’.[[291]](#footnote-291) This dynamic of sexual tension is just one example of the unnatural order within the Hall which has been distorted by Mrs Rayland’s fixation with the past. While outwardly respectable, the estate is riddled by illegal and illicit activities, various lovers’ meetings, and acts of cruelty and violence that are permitted to continue because Mrs Rayland is an absent and arrogant ruler.

The aristocracy’s preoccupation with power and control results in the family line dying out and the estate must be entailed away to a new generation of owners who appreciate the privilege of ownership. The issue of primogeniture and inheritance is a central theme of historical romances, and was handed down to the Gothic genre to become a staple trope. Radcliffe’s heroines are often heirs to their fathers’ estates, which puts them in a precarious position – vulnerable, but valuable. They are pursued by rogues who attempt to trick them out of their birthright or take it by force, but ultimately they retain their property and marry what Diane Long Hoeveler calls the ‘ritualistically wounded husband’.[[292]](#footnote-292) By this she means ‘safe’ men who have been metaphorically castrated by their confrontation with the patriarchy. In order to survive the Gothic novel and live as passive or equal partners to the landed heroine, the Gothic hero must often endure quests, imprisonment, torture and combat. They are often both physically wounded in conflict and socio-politically wounded by the loss of their inheritance.[[293]](#footnote-293) Smith does not follow through to this conclusion in her early prototype, and Orlando is still the one to inherit the estate, but she does hint at it through Orlando’s residual trauma from the war and Monimia’s growing confidence. A bundle of sighs, tears and silence at the beginning of the novel, Monimia is forced to be stronger after Orlando leaves her to go to war, and when he returns she narrates her own story despite his frequent interruptions. The novel concludes with the birth of their son, ‘to whom [Orlando] gave his own name’, which he had in turn been given in memory of Mrs Rayland’s ancestor.[[294]](#footnote-294) He also purchases a baronetcy, in accordance with Mrs Rayland’s will, and so furthers the traditions of the family. In this Smith shows the acceptable continuation of minor traditions, while the significant governance of the estate has changed hands to individuals capable of advancing it for the greater good.

Orlando and Monimia are depicted as being the most appropriate heirs to the estate whilst holding no legal or inherited right to the property. If read against the historical context of the Revolution and Smith’s hopes for British reform, we can see how even the most innocuous sentence would reverberate with meaning for a politically-aware, contemporary audience. Thus the narrator’s comment that Snelcraft the coachman ‘foresaw that the time could not be far distant when Rayland Hall, and all the wealth that belonged to it, must change its possessor’ becomes a coded reference to the fall of the *ancien régime*, and a hopeful prediction for British society.[[295]](#footnote-295) Contemporary critics largely overlooked the veiled critique of national politics. *The Critical Review*, for example, remarked that there was nothing in it but ‘the most ordinary and trivial occurrences in life’.[[296]](#footnote-296) *The Monthly Review* noted that ‘once or twice, but very sparingly, political ideas and opinions are introduced, and the author takes occasion to express [a] spirit of freedom’.[[297]](#footnote-297)

Her sustained engagement with politics was most likely overlooked because of her displacement of Anglo-French politics onto the American colonies – an episode which merits only a brief mention in one of the above reviews, and is completely disregarded in the other. While France was becoming an untenable setting for an increasingly patriotic British audience, Smith could use the American Revolution of the 1770s to present her liberal politics without being politically explicit. Jacqueline Labbe drily observes in her ‘Introduction’ to the text that: ‘clearly, by 1793 the events of 1775-1783 were the distant past’ and therefore entirely unrelated to the current Revolution in France.[[298]](#footnote-298) Smith’s interest in America is purely in how it reflects on Britain and its national identity. She presents the American Revolution as a successful model for British reform: not bloodless, but victorious in gaining independence from the yoke of traditional government. While fighting the revolutionaries, Orlando observes the terrible treatment of the British troops by their officers, the just cause of the American ‘rebels’, and the gross barbarity of the English army who have hired American ‘savages’ to butcher on their behalf.[[299]](#footnote-299) Orlando views the American party with ‘pity not unmixed with respect’ and the American Indians with ‘abhorrence, mingled with something like veneration’, but the British soldiers are depicted as mindlessly obedient and the British government as ruthless and greedy.[[300]](#footnote-300) Smith is quite explicit about the moral message the reader is to take away from the American section of the novel, and how this is to colour their view of the French Revolution. Having attributed the violence of the Iroquois to the unjust treatment of the British, and included lengthy footnotes about the conduct of British troops and allies, she entreats readers who would judge the French harshly to reflect that ‘there are savages of all countries – even of our own!’[[301]](#footnote-301)

While challenging the British national identity as morally-superior colonisers and warriors, Smith also draws attention to the effects of war on the home nation. This is particularly poignant as Britain was once again entering war with France – a war which reformers like Smith disagreed with, and compared to Britain’s illiberal stance against the American struggle for liberty. During his time in America, Orlando receives letters from Monimia which document the gradual degeneration and growing corruption at Rayland Hall. Smith makes it clear that this domestic decline is linked to the war, as the harbingers of death and destruction begin while Orlando is still overseas. He is woken from ‘the most delicious dream of Rayland Hall’ by the ‘loud shriek’ of the night hawk, a ‘messenger of supposed ill tidings’ that ‘announces [the death of a chief] to his distant survivors’.[[302]](#footnote-302) Upon returning to England, he consequently finds that both his father and Mrs Rayland – who both appeared in his dream – have died. This link between the war and the destruction of family life is further reinforced by the sale of Orlando’s family home and the ruinous state of Rayland Hall. Like Reeve’s treatment of her returning soldier, Harclay, Smith makes England into an ‘uncanny’ landscape, familiar but irreparably altered from the home that Orlando left. As such, the Hall is populated with ghosts of the past; ‘[h]ideous spectres seemed to beckon to him’ from the gallery, and Mrs Rayland’s bed ‘looked like a mausoleum […] and Orlando could have fancied that the corpse of Mrs Rayland lay on it’.[[303]](#footnote-303)

Orlando himself is transformed into a ghostly likeness of himself, and assured that, ‘Young ‘squire Orlando is dead a long while ago in parts beyond sea’.[[304]](#footnote-304) When he is finally recognised, it is only as ‘Master Orlando’s ghost’.[[305]](#footnote-305) Meanwhile, Monimia has been sent away by her Aunt, and Orlando ultimately finds her in a frozen, Gothic landscape populated by ruins. To gain access, he is forced to follow a ‘rugged road’ to a little-trodden path through the woods, passed ruins ‘mantled with ivy’ and under ‘broken arches and buttresses’ until he comes across Monimia ‘seated on a mass of fallen stone’.[[306]](#footnote-306) This journey reads like the hero quests of historical romances, as Orlando passes through an almost-mythical ‘uncanny’ British landscape where ‘dead silence was interrupted by no sound’.[[307]](#footnote-307) The ancient ruins that surround Monimia reiterate the fall of the aristocratic families occasioned by the deaths of Orlando’s parents and Mrs Rayland during his absence. Monimia notes the change that has occurred in the novel as superstitious fears have been superseded by society’s actual horrors. ‘Good God! How weak I was to add imaginary horrors to the real calamities of my situation’ she declares.[[308]](#footnote-308) As always, Smith’s Gothicism is based not in explained, real or imagined supernatural terrors, but in the actual horrors of modern society.

Significantly, the Gothic imagery in the novel is also tied up with the property narrative. The ghostly voice that terrifies Monimia in the first volume belongs to Wilkins as he directs his gang to move stolen goods; and the climax of the final volume, when Orlando breaks into the now-derelict Rayland Hall to find the will, is the most gothic scene of all:

[…] as silently they ascended the great stair-case, and traversed the long dark passages that led towards the apartment in question, Orlando could not, amid the anxiety of such a moment, help fancying, that the scene resembled one of those so often met with in old romances and fairy tales, where the hero is by some supernatural means directed to a golden key, which opens an invisible drawer, where a hand or head is found swimming in blood, which it is his business to restore to the inchanted [sic] owner .[[309]](#footnote-309)

Here Smith alludes to the classic scenes of her Gothic forerunners like Walpole, Reeve and Lee. The historical tales or ‘old romances’ that were the inspiration for the genre were preoccupied with property narratives and resolving issues of inheritance and primogeniture. Just as her predecessors carried these themes forward into Gothic literature, Smith transfers them into her modern setting to illustrate that these issues are still at large in contemporary society. The enforcement of these traditional and outdated laws has prevented Britain from progressing beyond the flaws of its medieval precursor. Equally, while Orlando reminisces about the ‘supernatural means’ in fairy tales, Smith does not feel the need to include such machinery in her work. Here, as in *Ethelinde*, the corruption of society and the wicked schemes of her characters require no additional supernatural element to become the subject of Gothic terror. As such, the ‘hand or head found swimming in blood’ may remind Orlando of a fairy story, but for Smith’s contemporary reader it would bring to mind the burgeoning violence in France. Penned between 1792 and 1793, Smith would have been aware that the Revolution was entering a violent and unpredictable stage as she was writing. While the reign of terror had not yet begun, King Louis XVI was executed in January as Smith finished the novel, and it is impossible not to associate the head that Orlando imagines with the growing number of beheadings that were being carried out across the Channel.

Equally, Orlando’s reference to the bloody hand at this crucial stage in the property narrative recalls Burke’s Gothic depiction of mortmain in his *Reflections*. Arguing in favour of primogeniture and inheritance as British traditions, Burke claimed that it ensures conservation and transmission whilst not excluding improvement and advancement. ‘Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims,’ he assures the reader, ‘are locked fast as in a sort of family settlement; grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever’.[[310]](#footnote-310) Mortmain derives from the post-classic Latin *manus mortua* which literally means ‘dead hand’ and, used here in reference to family settlements, it is impossible not to imagine the withered hands of dead ancestors rising from the grave to grasp at their property.[[311]](#footnote-311) This particularly resonates in Smith’s text as old Mrs Rayland is said ‘from peculiarity of temper’ to be ‘averse to naming her successor’ and in fact only does so in the last moments before death.[[312]](#footnote-312) Her reluctance to relinquish the estate is reinforced by Orlando’s struggle to claim it when he returns from America. The Hall remains clasped in Mrs Rayland’s ghostly mortmain until the hidden will is located and the property can be restored to its rightful owner. Significantly, these inheritors are a couple not only unrelated to the hereditary owners, but of meagre or unknown family origin. One can easily see that she is representing the ownership of England passing to a new set of owners, divorced from past generations, with their staid and outmoded traditions.

Over the following seven years, Smith would publish several novels as well as poetry and educational works, but they do not significantly develop her political castles or her treatment of the British landscape. *The Banished Man*, published in 1794 does present an interesting treatment of another Welsh seat, however. Rock-March is home to the autocratic Lord and Lady Aberdore, and offers hope for British reform. Selfish, irresponsible and cruel, the couple represent the corrupt English elite, and are nearly responsible for the destruction of the emblematic castle through their capricious demands on exhausted servants. Rock-March is saved from fire, however, unlike several castles on the continent which are overwhelmed by the Revolution’s destructive force. This is clearly a warning that Britain could face a similar upheaval if change is not forthcoming. She provides a hope for future improvement in their son Lord Aurevalle, an intelligent young man who shows promise to become a responsible landowner one day. Her description of Rock-March is dismissive: ‘Of this great house it shall only be said, that it was like other great houses’, but she still dwells on the surrounding British landscape; ‘but, courteous reader, if thou art spared a minute description of this Welsh palace, the country in which it stood must be a little more considered’.[[313]](#footnote-313) Here again we see a hope for Britain if it accedes to reform: while the estate itself is dismissed as a product of a decadent society, her love for the nation has not faded, and she still represents it as a place of grandeur and beauty, worth preserving.

The optimism offered in *The Banished Man* is missing from Smith’s emblematic castles by the time she writes *The Young Philosopher* (1798). Written as the Revolution drew to a close, this novel and the ones that follow, illustrate Smith’s disappointment in its failure and her growing disillusionment about the prospect of reforming British institutions. England is represented through the estate of the lascivious Sir Harry Richmond, ‘a tyrant both from nature and habit’.[[314]](#footnote-314) The manor house and the landscaped gardens are a showcase for visitors to admire, and for Sir Harry’s daughter to exhibit with pride. Underneath this veneer however, is the sordid secret of Sir Harry’s ‘chalets’, a series of houses with ‘fine improvements’ and ‘*curiosities*’ in which he hides abducted young women for the entertainment of himself and his friends.[[315]](#footnote-315) This estate, an outwardly-respectable restored Gothic manor, riddled with social and moral depravity, reveals some of the hypocrisy and corruption that Smith saw in British society. As in earlier works, she focuses on adultery and gambling as entertainment for the elite, and shows the impact of these vices on the poor, who are often exploited for amusement like Sir Harry’s chalet girls.

Smith’s criticism of Britain leads her to re-evaluate the concept of national identity in *The Young Philosopher* and, in response to the inhospitable nature of Britain, she valorises a cosmopolitan, transatlantic citizenship. Thus, America becomes a refuge for the world’s exiles in stark contrast to Britain:

I had been used to the hospitality of America, where the stranger, of whatever nation or persuasion, is received with the simplicity of patriarchal kindness; and though I had observed nothing that at all resembled it in London… yet I believed, at so great a distance from the metropolis, might be found such generous welcome as in America I had been accustomed to see.[[316]](#footnote-316)

In Smith’s earlier works, her hero Delmont would have been correct in assuming that rural Britain would offer a warm, if rustic, welcome, like that of America. In this novel, however, Smith depicts the vices of London seeping out across the landscape, spreading to the country seats of the landed gentry. In the metropolis or the countryside, Delmont encounters scenes of ignorance, depravity or cruelty inflicted on the weak by the strong. Disgusted by this, he ultimately leaves his English estate and the ugliness of London life for a new start in America. The entire novel is saturated with a feeling of disappointment, culminating in another self-consciously unrealistic happy ending that reveals its own artifice. The novel’s only recourse is to nature, which offers a retreat from civilization. Smith’s rejection of society is too complete for her to forge a castle or great house as a refuge for one of her hunted heroines, so instead she finds a cave where ‘the contemplation of vegetable nature [provides her] a melancholy, pleasure in existence’.[[317]](#footnote-317) *The Young Philosopher* is as much a political novel as Smith’s other works, but it is more reflective, less immediate, and with the benefit of hindsight, reflects on past failures but fails to provide any hope for the future of England.

The growing pessimism of Smith’s novels, her mounting disgust with British society and her increasingly negative depiction of the domestic landscape, culminate in her last and most Gothic text, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1800). The collection of novellas was intended to be in six volumes, the first three of which were published in 1800, but the sixth volume was never completed. The last was proposed to be the story of the frame narrator, the Wanderer, but as his tale is missing he remains an ambiguous character, grief-stricken for unknown reasons. He is an endless traveller trying to escape what he calls ‘the tedious routine we call society’ in ‘the appearance of desolate and uncultivated nature’.[[318]](#footnote-318) Like the ‘desolate and despairing poet-figure’ that Labbe remarks upon in Smith’s poetry, and the social outcasts that inhabit several of her novels, the Wanderer is another embodiment of Smith’s favourite protagonist model.[[319]](#footnote-319) He both shuns society in pursuit of freedom, and is rejected by it because of his non-conformity. As Labbe notes in Smith’s Sonnet LXII, the protagonist ‘forsakes the domestic space… strays – leaves the marked path, the public way – because only straying affords any measure of freedom’ but is, at the same time, excluded, associated with ‘connotations of disbarment from sanctuary, even from salvation itself’.[[320]](#footnote-320) The Wanderer is Smith’s last émigré, a figure which had haunted her work since *Elegiac Sonnets* in 1784. This last work also revives the epistolary form that Smith chose for *Desmond*, but in a tenuous, dislocated way. The letters have no names, dates, addresses or responses. Like the letters that many of Smith’s characters write in times of personal despair, they are therapeutic rather than practical.

The first of the five novellas takes place in Yorkshire and is called, ‘The Story of Edouarda’. The Wanderer pieces the tale together from several reports and rumours. Demonstrating Smith’s critique of primogeniture, it follows a fanatical Catholic, Sir Mordaunt Falconberg, who is manipulated by two priests into doubting his younger children’s paternity. Keeping his eldest son and heir, he sends his young son and daughter abroad and locks his wife in the vaults of Palsgrave Abbey for eighteen years. The eldest child is pampered until he is sickly and weak, completely unfit to inherit and govern an estate. After his death the younger children return to their father’s house, only to be rejected and imprisoned in an ordeal which culminates in the father murdering his son and choking to death on his own blood. Edouarda’s mother then dies of grief, leaving Edouarda to inherit the estate, renounce Britain, and leave the barren wilderness of the English moors to seek refuge in Switzerland.

There is nothing redeeming about the Britain that Smith depicts in this novel. The landscape is vast and empty, but the tale of madness and imprisonment is claustrophobic. The family estate is a gothic pile, ‘old and spacious’ and set in an extensive park ‘thickly wooded with oak and pine, of great antiquity’, until it ‘bore rather the appearance of a forest than a park’.[[321]](#footnote-321) With no ‘taste for improvement’, the family have allowed the estate to fall to disrepair and it has been reclaimed by the wilderness around it.[[322]](#footnote-322) But the ‘birds of a cheerful note… have fled from the mournful neighbourhood’ and only ‘multitudes of wild pigeons’, ‘stags’ and ‘several great bloodhounds’ now inhabit the grounds.[[323]](#footnote-323) This is not the neglected Mowbray Castle, crowning the surrounding landscape, or the rural retreat of Grasmere, but a relic of the Dark Ages still lingering into the present day. It is a shrine to outmoded values and traditions, where Catholicism holds sway, younger children are sacrificed for primogeniture, and women are literally imprisoned in marriage. The ancient building closes in around the unhappy family and confines them until insanity, illness and grief kill them off one by one. Edouarda can seek no help from the surrounding gentry as the families live in isolation from one another, and the young man who does attempt to help is a product of a weak and decadent culture. Mr Hartington is pompous, feeble and selfish, unable to save Edouarda or protect the family from their mad patriarch.

The characters once again reflect the different strata of the British hierarchy, but here they are all oppressed and unhappy. The servants are subjected to the autocratic rule of the household priests and the whims of their mad master; the gentry live unfulfilling lives in their isolated country estates; and the innocent victims of tyranny have no recourse in law or human compassion. As such, Smith offers no optimism at the end of this final work. Unlike her previous novels, even interpersonal relationships cannot transcend the institutional tyranny that bears down upon her characters. The novella ends with a description of Edouarda’s melancholy future:

Young, lovely, and affluent, Edouarda had many offers of marriage; but she dismissed all her lovers in terms so decided, that hardly any of them ventured to make a second application. Ideas of her father’s malady, and the shocking catastrophe it had led to, were ever present to her. She could not bear to suppose that she might transmit such a deranged intellect to her posterity; and in philosophic retirement, with books, and two or three friends whom she occasionally saw, she endeavoured to endure a life, from which her early misfortunes had taken every hope of domestic happiness in the bosom of a family of her own.[[324]](#footnote-324)

The governing patriarchy, having degenerated into madness, is prevented from further rule by Edouarda’s refusal to reproduce. The line fails with her, but Smith does not offer hope through new inheritors as she did in *The Old Manor House*. Instead, the Abbey is abandoned and left to fall into ruins with the slow decay of time, haunted in local legend by the ghosts of the mad patriarchy. Edouarda is even denied the Rousseauian retreat of Smith’s previous protagonists, as her heritage casts a permanent shadow over her future.

If we compare Smith’s early fiction with this last novella, we can see the progression of the Gothic genre during the Eighteenth Century. Its roots in the Historical Romance and the themes of inheritance, imprisonment and revenge remain unchanged, but the terror of Reeve, Lee and Radcliffe’s early gothic has become the horror of the Marquis de Sade, Matthew Lewis and Charles Robert Maturin. The climax of the novella, when the mad father attacks his family, is vivid and grotesque:

His furious looks then fixed on young Falconberg, who had thrown himself before his mother and sister. He advanced towards him, and with the iron instrument he held struck him so sudden and violent a blow on the temple, that Henry Falconberg fell senseless […] The wretched maniac, whose diabolic passions were now roused to the wildest degree of phrensy, would very probably have repeated the blow on [his wife] or his defenceless daughter […] but his keeper… by force withheld him. His efforts, however, to commit farther violence on his miserable family were so great, that a blood-vessel burst in his lungs; and, as he was torn from the scene of murder by the attendants, his raving was half stifled by the blood which streamed on the floor.[[325]](#footnote-325)

The violence of this scene, with the young son lying dead upon the ground, the helpless mother and daughter pleading for mercy, and the mad father vomiting blood, would not look out of place in Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) or Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). As de Sade predicted, the gothic genre had been greatly influenced by the horrors of the French Revolution. The new, more violently explicit gothic was ‘the necessary fruit of the revolutionary tremors felt by the whole of Europe’.[[326]](#footnote-326) For him, the misery that was so commonplace in the aftermath of the Revolution had made the Novel ‘as difficult to write as it was monotonous to read’.[[327]](#footnote-327) At the height of the Reign of Terror, reports were flooding England of the atrocities committed by the bloodthirsty mob and writers had to ‘appeal to hell for aid’ in making their fiction more shocking than reality.[[328]](#footnote-328) Smith’s final work reflects this new trend for violence and horror, as well as the themes of paranoia, imprisonment and social exclusion that characterises the work of Gothic writers in response to the Revolution.

At this early stage in the Gothic genre’s development, Smith undoubtedly had an enormous impact on its trajectory. Her incorporation of picturesque and sublime landscapes into her Gothic narratives, her development of property as a symbol for the state, and her focus on beleaguered heroines and female imprisonment, would all become staple narrative tropes of the genre. Equally, many aspects of her narratives remained central to national Gothic fiction, including her engagement with and commentary on contemporary British politics, and her critique of the fabrication of a shared national identity. As the government began to introduce reactionary policies in a paranoid attempt to suppress Jacobinism and avoid revolution, however, some of her contemporaries would find Britain an untenable location for their fiction. Several prominent Gothic writers chose to relocate to continental climes in order to distance themselves from the politically-charged domestic space. Thus, as the Gothic genre increased in popularity and scope, it became associated with foreign, Catholic settings, causing both contemporary and modern critics to overlook the numerous domestic examples. One of these oft-overlooked Gothic writers is William Henry Ireland, much better remembered for his infamous Shakespeare forgeries. As a supporter of the French Revolution, he shared Smith’s desire for British political reform, and his depictions of the nation interrogate the idea of a shared national identity and the myth-making process of nation-formation.

Chapter Three

William Henry Ireland: Narrating National Identity

Then think how much the writer here hath toil’d

To please, and show, in this our Harry’s Reign,

The pride and glory of our English land,

The unstain’d thunder of our regal lion.

* William Henry Ireland, *King Henry the Second* (1805) [[329]](#footnote-329)

The infamous Shakespeare forger, William Henry Ireland, had a fraught relationship with his native England. In his patriotic ‘Shakespeare’ plays, like that quoted above, he demonstrates a strong national interest, toiling to show ‘The pride and glory of our English land, / The unstain’d thunder of our regal lion.’ Like Reeve before him, he was engaging in the eighteenth-century drive to refashion the nation; to emphasise its proud heritage, glorious ancestry, supremacy as an island nation, and oneness as a newly-united kingdom, and to celebrate its noble monarchy stretching back through the ages. In his youth, and in his self-appointed capacity as the mouthpiece of the national bard, Ireland recalls that it was his ‘intention to have completed a series of plays from the reign of William the Conqueror to that of queen Elizabeth; that is to say, I should have planned a drama on every reign the subject of which had not been treated of by Shakspeare’.[[330]](#footnote-330)

However, this patriotic desire to engage with national history and venerate its public figures changed significantly in the aftermath of his public humiliation at the hands of Edmund Malone and his fellow literary critics. Once his Shakespeare forgeries were exposed, Ireland was roundly condemned by the press and dismissed by the reading public. Ultimately, he was forced to write under a series of *noms de plume* to avoid the ‘base wretches’ who ‘almost hunted him from the face of the earth’, and eventually left his native shores entirely to take up residence in Napoleonic France.[[331]](#footnote-331) Drawing heavily from his own experiences, his fiction is burdened with the conflict of identity – personal, national, generic, authorial. His Gothic novel *Gondez the Monk* (1805), for example, combines the personal quest of his orphaned hero, Avinzo, as he searches for his identity, with the national plight of fourteenth-century Scotland trying to preserve its sovereign identity apart from England. It also seeks to reinforce a more didactic, moralistic identity for the Gothic genre, divorced from the grotesque horror of ‘Male Gothic’ which gained increasing prominence during the French Revolution.[[332]](#footnote-332)

*Gondez the Monk* (1805) represents a bleak fourteenth-century England gripped in a gruesome war to suppress its noble and freedom-loving Scottish neighbour. The novel’s themes of paranoia, persecution, and social, political and religious corruption, are recognisable from the earlier Gothic works of Reeve and Smith. Like Smith, Ireland channels these themes from his own unhappy life and uses the Gothic novel to express his increasing alienation from modern English society. As such, his Italian-born hero, Avinzo, is both a displaced orphan, searching for the truth of his parentage and his identity, and an outsider to both Scottish and English society. Ireland also depicts the English landscape as desolate and inhospitable in a way which echoes the ‘uncanny’ England encountered by the characters in Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1778). Like his predecessors, Ireland adopts the Historical Gothic model to discretely highlight the corruption of modern society and culture while distancing himself from further critical ire.

Moving on from his toils to show the ‘pride and glory of our English land’, Ireland resorts to relating the darker, crueller side of English society that he experienced after the discovery of his Shakespeare forgeries and which he saw developing in response to the French Revolution. His complete rejection by the literary intelligencia that he so desperately wanted to impress, by his one-time friends and even by his own family, is reflected in his depictions of a bleak, unforgiving fourteenth-century England and its persecuted hero. As well as this personal complaint, Ireland follows in his precursors’s footsteps by employing the national setting as a backdrop for larger social, political and cultural criticisms that he aims at England in the wake of the French Revolution. His narrative of Scotland fighting for independence against the powerful political and religious regimes of England maps neatly onto France’s struggle to overthrow its church and state. Within an apparently staunchly anti-European novel, then, Ireland hides a revolutionary message of support for the French.

While *Gondez* contributes to the mass of Gothic literature which engaged with the Revolution and critiqued British policies, by 1805 it had overshot the critical climax of the 1790s. Its publication came a year after Napoleon Bonaparte had proclaimed himself *Empereur* and brought to a close the republican phase of the Revolution. Ireland therefore represents his Scottish revolutionaries gathered beneath the banner of one stalwart leader – Robert the Bruce – who will lead them to freedom, rather than the democratic revolutions found in the earlier works of Charlotte Smith or William Godwin.[[333]](#footnote-333) Equally, he does not represent Bruce as a rebel rising against his King, but as a King in his own right. Throughout the four volumes, Bruce is called King Robert Bruce or Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, and referred to as ‘good’, ‘noble’, and ‘magnanimous and renowned’.[[334]](#footnote-334)

Ireland’s resurrection of this crucial period of national history, when the kingdoms of Scotland and England were at war, is significant considering he published two years before the centenary of the 1707 Act of Union, and during a period of strong patriotic feeling evoked by the ongoing war with France. In part he was engaging with a contemporary trend for historicism that burgeoned in the Eighteenth Century. This saw the publication of books and articles on ancient Britain, the republication of works by medieval writers, and an increase in novels set historically. Robert Bruce featured prominently in many of these histories and narratives, and was widely heralded as a figure of national liberty, bravery, military prowess and heroic quality. In 1794 the republication of John Barbour’s *The Bruce; or the History of Robert I. King of Scotland.* (1489) was widely advertised and reviewed to great acclaim. As the reviewer for the *Monthly Review* observed, ‘Many persons […] have lately bestowed considerable pains in furnishing their respective nations with correct and elegant editions of the works of their antient [sic] original writers; and the labour is useful and commendable’.[[335]](#footnote-335) Histories of Scotland which prominently feature Bruce were published, such as Robert Heron’s, *History of Scotland, from the earliest Times, to the Era of the Abolition of the Hereditary Jurisdictions of Subjects, in the Year 1748*,[[336]](#footnote-336) or the anonymous *Scots Magazine* article series, ‘Reflections on the State of Ancient Scotland’.[[337]](#footnote-337)

Alongside this, however, Ireland also wanted to draw attention to contemporary political issues, such as the qualities of a good king, the action to be taken against an unjust ruler, England’s claim as a nation of liberty, and its treatment of other nations seeking reform or independence. He was by no means alone in using Bruce to discuss the French Revolution. When sending his patriotic song ‘Robert Bruce’s March To Bannockburn’ to his publisher in 1793, Robert Burns commented that he had been inspired by Bruce’s ‘glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient’.[[338]](#footnote-338) While Ireland’s novel was published long after the general tide of popular opinion had turned against the French and their bloody revolution, he still promotes the fight for liberty against an unjust ruler. From the outset of the novel, Ireland makes it clear that he is siding with the Scots in their fight against the English invaders. *Gondez* enters into the narrative of the Wars of Scottish Independence ten years after the First War began in 1296. We encounter King Robert the Bruce during the Battle of Methven in 1306, a confrontation where the English rejected the gentlemanly conventions of feudal warfare and adopted less orthodox tactics. Having refused to meet Bruce on the battlefield, they waited until his army made camp and then attacked at night while they had the element of surprise and the cover of darkness. Bruce’s small army was nearly completely destroyed, and Bruce was forced to flee to the Scottish highlands with a few loyal followers. Ireland no doubt chose to start his narrative at this stage in the conflict because Bruce had recently been crowned, providing him with some legitimacy, and because the Battle of Methven captures the English and Scottish forces as Ireland wanted them portrayed – one villainous and the other virtuous.[[339]](#footnote-339)

The novel begins in the midst of battle with the stirring feeling of immediacy: ‘now raged on every side the direful battle’s carnage…’.[[340]](#footnote-340) Ireland describes how the ‘valour of the Scottish clans was humbled by the fury of the British lion’, reducing the English to a rabble of berserkers while the Scots retain the heroism of civilised men.[[341]](#footnote-341) His terminology also foreshadows the ultimate outcome of the war; the clans are ‘humbled’ but not defeated nor broken, and will eventually gain their independence. Ireland was writing in the recent wake of two successful – albeit bloody - revolutions for freedom: the first in America from beneath English rule, and the second in France from beneath church and state. With these events in mind, Ireland’s readers would undoubtedly recognise his reference to the ‘fury of the British lion’, both with regards to international and domestic policy.

To many Britons, the national stance against the American and French Revolutions seemed hypocritical, coming from a people famed for their love of liberty. It appeared to be fuelled by politics and a thirst for power rather than moral principles. Ireland highlights this in his acknowledgements of Edward’s sadistic drive to defeat the good King Robert the Bruce and bring about ‘the total annihilation of the Scottish race’.[[342]](#footnote-342) His persecution of the Scots is personal rather than political, much like the titular villain of Ireland’s 1795 play, *Vortigern*, which depicts the fifth-century conflict between the English warlord and the Scots. The main action concerns the murder of King Constantius of the Britons by Vortigern, who publically blames the Scots for the act and appeals to the Saxons for help in the ensuing war. Few are deceived by Vortigern’s scapegoating, but it provides him with a desired excuse: ‘Know, Vortigern did always hate the Scots […] the keen tooth of hatred and revenge, With double fury now will shew itself’.[[343]](#footnote-343)

Like Vortigern, in *Gondez* Edward I exploits Bruce’s murder of his elected sovereign Baliol to satisfy his own desires to ‘annex all Scotland to his own dominions’.[[344]](#footnote-344) Equally, the accusation of playing out private feuds in public, under false pretences, is not aimed at Edward alone. Continuing his critique of Britain’s reaction to France’s bid for independence, Ireland accuses the rapacious English of following their bloodthirsty king into battle to gratify old hatreds and plunder their neighbours: ‘Thousands flocked around the banner of the English King, urged by the thirst of plunder; while others, inimical to the Scotch, thirsted to wreak their vengeance, and spill the blood of Caledonia’s sons’.[[345]](#footnote-345) A prominent subplot in *Gondez* focuses on two patriarchs, the Scottish Laird Douglas and the English Earl of Pembroke, who are both deeply prejudiced long before the war begins. Even after Edward I’s death and the ‘cessation of hostilities between the two countries had taken place’, the ‘dreadful hatred of Laird Douglas to any English alliance’ and the ‘rooted antipathy of the Earl of Pembroke’ persists.[[346]](#footnote-346) Luckily for the young couple who rely on their blessing to marry, they are ultimately reconciled at the end of the novel.

Ireland condemns King Edward and his refusal to grant the Scots liberty from beneath the yoke of English rule, and criticises the English public for being manipulated into an unjust war. When Avinzo is in need of shelter and succour, for example, he is welcomed in by a kind family of English peasants whom he praises extensively for their Christian charity, their ‘uncontaminated simplicity’ and the ‘satisfaction’ they gain from ‘acting towards others as we would have them do in regard to ourselves’.[[347]](#footnote-347) Even these generous individuals, however, are contaminated by that violent bias with which King Edward has infected the realm. The cottager prays that his ‘dauntless Monarch’ might ‘tame the pride of the rebellious Scotchman’.[[348]](#footnote-348) Avinzo has to keep his sympathies to himself as he perceives his host to be ‘one of those characters who would have proved equally inimical to him as he then was friendly, had he but known the real sentiments of [his] mind’.[[349]](#footnote-349) The natural goodness of the English public is therefore tempered by a prejudice based on misinformation and ignorance.

This speaks to the pamphlet propaganda debates that sprang up in the 1790s in response to the beginning of the French Revolution, and which sought to influence common opinion. Inspired and informed by events in France, both reformists and loyalists began to publish pamphlets and treatise in support or critique of political reform, as well as a proliferation of chapbooks, handbills, songs, poems and cartoons to that end. It began with Richard Price’s sermon, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country* (1790), where he asserted that the British were ‘duped by the forms of liberty’, followed by a response from Edmund Burke in his, *Reflections of the Revolution in France* (1790), which, while reflecting on France, was at least as much about England and English liberty.[[350]](#footnote-350) Thomas Paine, author of *Rights of Man* (1791), highlighted the class issues in the debate, which was continued by Mary Wollstonecraft in her contribution, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790). Godwin joined the debate with his novel, *Things As They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), which was an attempt to circulate the political ideas of his weighty work, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), among an audience whom ‘books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach’.[[351]](#footnote-351)

Class prejudice was particularly central to the pamphlet debates, not only because it was fundamental to the French Revolution, but also because the early 1790s saw the first significant involvement of working men in British politics. As Gwyn A. Williams insisted, ‘no matter how radical the differences between the two countries, in both Britain and France, it was in 1792 that ‘the people’ entered politics’.[[352]](#footnote-352) Radical and loyalist propaganda began to circulate among the great mass of the British population that year, which saw the growth of popular radical societies like the London Corresponding Society and the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information, followed by the loyalist counterpart; the Associations for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers. Cheap weekly subscriptions of one penny ensured that working men could become members and contribute to political debates, which were fuelled by the circulation of cheap abridged copies of published works like Paine’s *Rights of Man*. The propaganda that developed around the French Revolution debate was consequently directed towards two distinct audiences: the landowners, yeoman farmers, clergymen, merchants and manufacturers who made up the educated, rational membership; and the lower orders of men who were seen as likely to be misled by Jacobin fallacy and therefore needed to be won over to the loyalist cause. Due to this wider audience, the novel became a powerful tool for reaching those who, as Godwin had observed, would not be likely to read political treatise or philosophical debates. Several Jacobin novels were published, including Thomas Holcroft’s *Anna St. Ives* (1792), Godwin’s *Caleb Williams*, and Robert Bage’s *Hermsprong* (1796).[[353]](#footnote-353) In response, there were more than forty anti-Jacobin novels published between 1790 and 1805, many written by women who were determined to be involved in the revolutionary debate.[[354]](#footnote-354) Among these women was Hannah More, who directed her attention to the lower orders in a series of cheap repository tracts intended to encourage conservative values in those lower down the social scale.

The French Revolution had a profound effect on British popular politics and instigated a debate on British liberty that opened the way for the Acts of Union in 1800 and the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, as well as beginning the debate on women’s rights that instigated suffrage. The debate, which originally centred on class issues and political reform, was soon fuelled by the reactionary policies of the British government in their paranoid attempt to suppress Jacobinism. The sedition and treason trials of 1793 and 1794, the ‘Gagging Acts’ of 1795, the successive suspensions of *habeas corpus* after 1794 and the outlawing of the London Corresponding Society, the United Englishmen and United Britons in 1799, the spate of treason trials associated with the Irish revolt in 1798, the Seditious Meetings Act, the Combination Acts in 1799, the naval system of ‘impressment’, and the newly introduced Quota System, were all seen as breaches of British liberty.[[355]](#footnote-355) This liberty, which freeborn Englishmen had boasted as their birth right as far back as the Visigoths and which they had staunchly defended with the exile of the Stuart dynasty, was now under threat, and they stood, ‘indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding [it] with an irresistible voice’.[[356]](#footnote-356)

It is against this backdrop that Ireland penned *Gondez*. The fourteenth-century peasants that take Avinzo in, with their prejudices against the foreign ‘other’, are a reflection of the eighteenth-century public who received their opinions on the French Revolution from the loyalist tracts of conservative writers like More. They are not inherently inhospitable or willing to deny others the liberty they enjoy, but corrupted by misinformation and propaganda from above. Ireland is careful to reiterate repeatedly throughout the novel that the British are innately a hospitable and just people. When Avinzo is captured by the English army camped on the Scottish border, he fears imprisonment, but Edwin, the young commander, assures him that he is free to go, for, ‘never shall it be said, that a Briton can wage war against the unfortunate and defenceless wanderer’.[[357]](#footnote-357) Despite his criticism of the reactionary British policies towards America and France, Ireland still peppers his work with national pride. In much the same way, he represents the British landscape as being harsh and inhospitable - scarred by war and riddled with enemies - but inherently bountiful and benign.

Ireland’s hero Avinzo begins the narrative as one of a group of warriors accompanying King Robert the Bruce from the bloody battlefield at Methven to a sanctuary beyond the reach of the English army. They find a monastery on the fictional island of Oronza, which is quickly discovered to be a trap for Bruce, and Avinzo is separated from the others. The narrative then delves into a history of his arriving as an orphan from Italy to stay in the care of a Scottish family. An inset tale informs us of his adoptive father’s demise and Avinzo’s imprisonment in the Tower of London with his adoptive mother, who soon after also dies. His escape and his journey back to Scotland to seek protection from the persecution of the English, takes him through a dangerous landscape where he must ‘[keep] himself as much as possible from the eye of observation’.[[358]](#footnote-358) The Italian-born Avinzo is alienated from his surroundings throughout the novel as he navigates the monastery at Oronza, the inhospitable English countryside, the barren Scottish landscape, and finally Rome and the trials of the Inquisition.

Ireland’s descriptions of the British Isles depict them as a harsh and hostile space, owing mainly to the conflict which ravages the land, but occasionally he finds shelter in the ancient features of the landscape. In the midst of a dreadful storm, ‘torn by brambles and wearied by the wet lank grass, that continually twined about his ankles, impeding his progress’, while ‘no friendly hovel met his regard’, he finds shelter against the ‘huge trunk of a lofty and venerable oak, which seemed for a century to have defied the rude assaults of all the conflicting elements’.[[359]](#footnote-359) Here Ireland invokes an object from England’s ‘venerable’ past to defend his hero from the ravages of the present. Similarly, when Avinzo finally finds protection from the storm, it is not within a modern dwelling, but in ‘what appeared to have been once a fortified castle of vast extent’.[[360]](#footnote-360) The ruins provide him with much needed shelter, and promote the pride and security of the nation’s noble past, which remains as a palimpsest on the present-day landscape. Elsewhere in the novel it is the ‘friendly tree’ or ‘spreading beech’ which offer him protection from the interminable storms that ravage the island nation.[[361]](#footnote-361) In this Ireland shows the natural world as a sanctuary from the ills of humanity in much the same way that Ann Radcliffe or Charlotte Smith do in their fiction. Escaping from his enemies, Avinzo seeks asylum in nature and finds refuge in the remnants of antiquity scattered across the British landscape.

Beyond these rare moments of sanctuary though, Ireland represents the British Isles as bleak and unforgiving. England is covered in ‘gloomy woods’ and ‘dreary forests’.[[362]](#footnote-362) The thickly forested plains are shady and sinister, and the gloomy trees offer places for Avinzo’s enemies to hide as he races, as a fugitive, to the Scottish border. Meanwhile the Scottish islands he must navigate are a ‘flat waste, covered with heath’.[[363]](#footnote-363) Mainland Scotland, on the other hand, is a sublime place, where the ‘rugged majesty of nature displays itself’.[[364]](#footnote-364) The landscape is pierced by ‘projecting rocks’ and ‘beneath, the tremendous chasms in the frowning rock, roll[s] an impetuous torrent spangled with foam and roaring horribly to the winds’.[[365]](#footnote-365) Scotland’s sublime features, whilst admired by Avinzo, are ultimately just as hostile as England’s plains as he struggles to find shelter from the relentless British weather. And beyond the rugged Scottish landscape, as he approaches the coast where the Isle of Oronza lies, the country becomes ‘more barren and less populous’ as ‘mile succeeded mile, and scarcely any habitation appeared’.[[366]](#footnote-366)

The domestic landscape that Ireland represents, then, is clearly inhospitable, being at times both sparsely populated and riddled with enemies, dangerously sublime and relentlessly uniform. Like Smith’s, his landscapes reflect the general hostility of the people, both in the novel’s period of war with Scotland, and in his contemporary period of war with France. It is hostile to foreigners, wanderers, immigrants, strangers, outsiders: the ‘other’. Interestingly, however, while Ireland sympathised with the character of the outsider, as it reflected his own exclusion from British society, he himself was staunchly anti-Catholic and would have extended no empathy towards the fleeing Catholic émigrés as Smith did.[[367]](#footnote-367) During a time of national defence and staunch patriotic pride, Britons instinctively closed their ranks and borders. The unifying sense of Britishness that increasingly took hold after 1707 was based for the most part, as Linda Colley suggests, not on ‘consensus of homogeneity or centralisation at home’ but on ‘a strong sense of dissimilarity from those without’.[[368]](#footnote-368) In the Fourteenth Century, England defined itself against its northern neighbour, Scotland, in the same way that after 1707 the ‘united Kingdom, by the name of Great Britain’ would define itself against its European neighbours.[[369]](#footnote-369) Ireland represents his orphaned wanderer, Avinzo, struggling to find a place among the British people and among the British landscape in much the same way that he saw his own plight.

It is unsurprising that Ireland, an outsider himself, chose a displaced hero and championed the disenfranchised Scots. His own exclusion from British society came much earlier than his literary faux-pas. Aged fourteen, his school master dismissed him as ‘so stupid as to be a disgrace to his school’, and subsequently, after a tour of Holland, his father left Ireland at a French school where he lived for three years.[[370]](#footnote-370) There he became proficient in French, a skill that would come in handy later in life when he fled to France to join Napoleon’s regime. A consequence of this time in exile at a young age was that when Ireland reluctantly returned to his native soil, he could barely speak English. ‘My conversation was so loaded with Gallicisms’ he claimed, ‘as frequently to render my meaning incomprehensible’.[[371]](#footnote-371) He soon regained his own language through nightly rehearsals of Shakespeare’s plays, listening to discussions and readings over dinner, and in his new position as a lawyer’s apprentice. However, Ireland’s experience of being literally voiceless in his native country, even for a short while, and of having lost an essential part of his identity as an Englishman, no doubt influenced his depictions of outsiders and exiles in his work. Like Avinzo, Ireland was torn between two countries and belonged to neither, constantly cast as the ‘other’.

Already plagued with questions about his parentage and the risk of illegitimacy - something he also shares with Avinzo - the loss of his native tongue and sense of national belonging must have had a lasting effect. Rejection by his native people led to his sympathetic ventriloquisation of Scotland’s appeal for independence, to his compassionate support for the French Revolution, and to his desperate attempts to re-imagine his own identity through a series of imitations and *noms de plume*. Ireland’s interest in forging and re-forging English, British, and national identity is intrinsically related to his own struggle to create a legitimate identity of his own. In his biographical text, *The Great Shakespeare Forgery*, Bernard Grebanier theorises that Ireland’s entire life was shaped by the mystery surrounding his parentage and the question of his legitimacy. ‘It is indeed odd,’ Grebanier writes, ‘that no one has troubled to ponder how much these doubts had to do with his need to immolate himself in a blaze of glory. His inner anguish over the matter might well have been a cardinal motive for his conduct’.[[372]](#footnote-372) In his fiction, this ‘inner anguish’ drew him to narrate and question the mythmaking process of national identity formation, as well as highlight the struggles of outsiders attempting to assimilate that collective identity.

Equally, as a forger, and especially as a forger of Shakespeare documents, Ireland’s engagement with nationhood and national identity is particularly interesting. The new trend for historicism in the Eighteenth Century and the desire to connect with ancestry produced a new aesthetic appreciation of antiques. Like the sudden admiration for architectural ruins, antiques were prized for the evidence of the passage of time inscribed upon them. Their antiquity became a relished attribute through which to connect with the nation’s history, and this in turn led to a boom in fakes and forgeries. Rowley’s poems, Ossian’s epic and *The Castle of Otranto* were all written by eighteenth-century writers consciously creating the documents of an imagined past.[[373]](#footnote-373) They were, as Gary Taylor notes, ‘satisfying the appetite for antiques better than the antiques themselves’.[[374]](#footnote-374) Ireland’s Shakespeare forgeries are no exception to this; he sanitised The Bard and adapted his life to eighteenth-century tastes.[[375]](#footnote-375) His ‘Profession of Faith’ allayed suspicions of his Catholicism, the playhouse receipts ‘prove *Shakspear* correct in matters of the most trivial nature’,[[376]](#footnote-376) and a trite love poem to ‘Anna Hatherrewaye’ portrays ‘Willy Shakspeare’ as a devoted husband.[[377]](#footnote-377) To accompany this new intimate history, Ireland also discovered original manuscripts of *King Lear* and *Hamlet* with the ‘ribaldry’[[378]](#footnote-378) removed which proved ‘Shakespeare’s correctness as a writer’.[[379]](#footnote-379)

Ireland provided his audience with the ‘real’ Shakespeare through his series of insightful notes, receipts, letters and his annotated personal library. He re-imagined Shakespeare as a successful eighteenth-century poet playwright, and created a literary life for him by forging the documents that should have been written and preserved. As Michael Keevak suggests, ‘the papers are interesting wish-fulfilments’ to counteract the ‘rather uncomplimentary legends that had already grown up around him: poacher, holder of horses, Stratford yokel, and so forth’.[[380]](#footnote-380) What Chatterton, Macpherson, Walpole and Ireland did to literature by creating an imagined past inhabited by fictional writers and forged documents, was the literary counterpart to the myth-making process through which eighteenth-century antiquarians and historians were creating a new national identity in the wake of the 1707 Act of Union.[[381]](#footnote-381) Deborah Russell has identified how the Gothic genre became central to this, stating that: ‘the interest in the Gothic can thus be figured as a result of an estrangement from one’s own history, an attempt to reimagine or re-establish connections with the national past’.[[382]](#footnote-382)

Issues of national identity, heritage and the shared or imagined national past are key concepts in Ireland’s fiction. They emerge in his Shakespeare forgeries, his manipulations of national myths like *Vortigern*, his regional histories of Southern England, as well as in his Gothic fiction. This goes some way to account for the emphasis on weather, water and sea travel that takes such prominence in his domestic Gothic, *Gondez*. The marked sense of difference that the British felt was partly due to the geography of being an island nation. The surrounding sea was an effective defence against invasion from without, and a highly efficient frontier for the countries within. It was a telling symbol of national identity: one which united the kingdoms of Scotland, England and Wales; which kept them forever distant and apart from other nations; and which highlighted an almost pre-ordained separateness which Britons interpreted as a sign that they were God’s chosen people. This is highlighted in the first two lines of what nineteenth-century Britons would come to call the national anthem; ‘When Britain first at heaven’s command./ Arose from out the azure main’.[[383]](#footnote-383) Penned by James Thomson, a minister’s son from the Scottish Lowlands, the reference to Britain’s divine origins lends Britons a special right to liberty and supremacy.[[384]](#footnote-384)

Ireland draws attention to this island nation rhetoric through his emphasis on the British weather and the danger of sea travel. His characters must contend with endless water which strives to batter them from above in horrendous torrents, and reach up to drag them under the surface during interminable storms. Throughout the novel Ireland uses pathetic fallacy to reflect his hero’s struggle - both his physical struggle across a hostile country, and his emotional struggle as he searches for his own identity. The climactic episode where Avinzo struggles over several nights to gain access to the secret dungeon in which the wicked Gondez has imprisoned his lover, her brother, and his other victims, for example, is accompanied by the most dreadful storms: ‘the thunder continued without intermission, seeming to form one continued peal; - the blue lightening shot its forked glare down the dark avenue; - it seemed indeed as if the wrath of heaven was poured on this sublunary globe, and that the world’s annihilation was on the point of being effected’.[[385]](#footnote-385) He also personifies the elements to make the ‘sullen winds’, ‘angry floods’ and ‘pitiless waves’ another enemy that Avinzo must defeat on his journey.[[386]](#footnote-386) It is the ‘northern blast’ that drives them to seek shelter in the monastery and the ‘tempestuous wind’ of a ‘pitiless storm’ that forces him into the bowels of the ruin where he first meets the Scottish witches.[[387]](#footnote-387) Fate drives him by wind and rain along the path that he ultimately attributes, in the style of Reeve, to Providence.

Ireland also places great emphasis on the danger of sea journeys in the novel, and there are few that are not threatened by the ‘impetuous gust of the hurricane’.[[388]](#footnote-388) Avinzo’s journeys between the Scottish islands, and back and forth from the Isle of Oronza are met by tempest, as are those undertaken by the young ladies Maude and Isabel whose marriages unite the Scottish and the English at the end of the novel.[[389]](#footnote-389) Fate can often be seen at work here again as King Robert the Bruce’s escape from Oronza is fortuitously smooth.[[390]](#footnote-390) Similarly, Avinzo’s journey from Oronza with Gondez in custody and their journey to Italy for the trial are both unhindered.[[391]](#footnote-391) When Avinzo travels to the Isle of Jura to face the Tall White Man he is nearly shipwrecked, but his trip to the Isle of Ila - where he learns that Ronilda the Fair is Gondez’s captive - is uninterrupted. A clumsy pattern emerges where storms precede supernatural events and force certain plot events, but the action can race ahead with smooth weather when justice must be served. Ireland no doubt found his inspiration for his storms from Shakespeare’s plays, *The Tempest* (1611) and *Macbeth* (1606)which also feature poor weather foreshadowing supernatural events. *King Lear* (1605) and *Julius Caesar* (1599), *Pericles* (1608) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590) also contain storms which influence the action of the plays. Ireland uses this motif in his own work, creating an interesting depiction of Britain as an island nation where the ocean is intrinsic to national identity and a signifier of British strength and endurance, but also a harsh test of those braving the storms and tempests that ravage the island.

A significant aspect of Britain’s shared national identity is British Protestantism, which Ireland addresses extensively in his domestic Gothic novel. While the English, Welsh and Scots were so disparate in much of their cultural and secular history, they could all draw together – and stand in contrast with most of Europe – beneath the banner of Protestantism. It was a uniting force that formed the basis of a shared British national identity which could exist alongside any older allegiances to specific countries, regions, and towns. It formed the basis of the state, justified the authority of the monarchy, influenced religious, material and political lives. And particularly after the Act of Union as Britain was gripped in successive conflicts with Catholic France spanning the War of Spanish Succession, the War of Austrian Succession, the Seven Years’ War, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Britain’s Protestant identity became a key way to identify the Catholic French as an ‘other’. As Linda Colley summarises: ‘large numbers of Protestant Britons believed – believed precisely because they *were* Protestant, and because it was comforting to believe it – that they were richer in every sense than other peoples, particularly Catholic peoples, and particularly the French’.[[392]](#footnote-392)

Ireland’s fourteenth-century setting predates the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation and so, like most Gothic novelists, he has to carefully inflect his Catholic heroes with suitably Protestant ethics and opinions. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright describe this technique in the work of Ann Radcliffe, stating that her heroines are, ‘consistently coded for her British readers as proto-Protestants who gain their sympathies by eschewing Catholic superstitions and instead pray to God directly, without a priestly intermediary’.[[393]](#footnote-393) In the same way, Avinzo, when descending into the dungeons of the ruined castle to meet the Scottish witches, assures himself that, ‘into the hands of Omnipotence, therefore, I willingly resign my cause; God never forsakes the true dependent on his Justice and Mercy’,[[394]](#footnote-394) and frequently addresses God directly in prayer as a ‘God of justice!’ and ‘great God of Arms’.[[395]](#footnote-395) Ireland’s representation of proto-Protestantism extends further than his hero. Much like the two castle model used by Smith in *Ethelinde* (1789), by Radcliffe in *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and by their contemporary Regina Maria Roche in her novel *Clermont* (1798), Ireland employs two opposing representations of religious orders in his novel. Like the binary castles, his religious houses represent benevolent and malign forms of feudalism, the protection and imprisonment offered by closed spaces, the sacred and the superstitious in religion, and the two modes of Gothic: the ideal, chivalric and virtuous; and the dark, barbaric and savage.

On Scottish soil the hero finds a proto-Protestant form of Catholicism, and is welcomed by the brothers of the Order of Holy Cross at their monastery outside Durham. The monastery is represented as an organic part of the landscape: as he looks out across the Scottish plain, the ‘fret-work of some religious pile’ appears, glimpsed through ‘the dark foliage of the spiral pine’, and set against the ‘brown heath and fern’ which cover the ‘uniformity of the land’.[[396]](#footnote-396) Having gained admission, Avinzo is ‘cordially welcomed by the reverend community’, provided with a ‘wished-for rug’ to sleep upon, and in the morning ‘plenteous repast’.[[397]](#footnote-397) Before he leaves, the brothers insist on loading him with ‘provisions to keep him on his route’, and he receives the ‘benison of the superior of the monastery’ before setting off on his journey.[[398]](#footnote-398) Here we witness true Christian charity played out in the domestic setting. Significantly, this example of Protestant virtue is centred in Scotland, and the religious houses glimpsed by Avinzo on his travels are situated in the Scottish landscape. The North holds these relics of the past in various stages of use and decay, just as it is haunted by ghosts, witches and supernatural beings. Back from the Scottish border, Scotland represents a land of bygone glory; military valour, chivalric traditions and unwavering nobility. In contrast, for Ireland, England is a much more modern landscape, in the midst of warfare, change and advancement. Like Reeve and other Gothic novelists, Ireland resorts to the medieval period to critique contemporary British practices and promote a noble national past. In his case, however, he divides the nation in two to make an important comment on representational rule and the British monarchy.

Much like Clara Reeve’s *Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), which highlights the ‘vile indolence, effeminacy, and extravagance of modern life and manners’ through references to the weak and effeminate King Richard II, Ireland presents the reader with the vengeful Edward I’s weak successor, King Edward II.[[399]](#footnote-399) England, which Ireland depicts as rejecting its ancestral roots in order to strive for modernisation, is given into the hands of Edward II after his father is struck down on the eve of battle. Ireland rejoices: ‘the invisible arm of heaven seemed to display itself, as if to punish the bloodthirsty and revengeful leader of this army; for suddenly the hand of sickness struck him, when on the verge of that soil which, by his commands, was shortly to have been drenched with its children’s blood’.[[400]](#footnote-400) The crown passes to his son, of ‘unsteady and fickle mind’ who, ‘guided by his favourites’, yields himself ‘to those effeminate pleasures, which, in the end, proved the sources of his misfortunes and untimely death’.[[401]](#footnote-401) Like Reeve’s Richard II, Ireland’s Edward II is ‘youthful and weak’, ‘utterly incapable of war, being rather calculated to dispense his favours on fawning sycophants’ and ‘expend[s] the treasures of the realm on gawdy pageantry and enervating pleasures’.[[402]](#footnote-402) Thus modernisation produces a weak and fickle ruler while Scotland, a land which reveres its ancestry and inheritance, is rewarded with a strong military leader in King Robert the Bruce.[[403]](#footnote-403)

Another coded criticism here lies with Ireland’s republican sympathies and his support of Napoleon Bonaparte. While Bruce was a crowned King, Ireland depicts him as a chosen representative of the Scottish people who succeeding to the Scottish throne due to merit. In this way he more closely resembles Napoleon than either George III of Great Britain or the late Louis XVI of France who inherited via primogeniture. In actual fact, Napoleon was not a democratically elected leader but one who rose to prominence, positioned himself at the head of what appeared to be a republic but was in fact a dictatorship, and then had himself crowned emperor. Ireland, however, admired both Bruce and Napoleon for their military prowess and saw them as possessing the necessary qualities for a just rule. The British monarchy, on the other hand, is depicted as being weak and degenerate, with inheritors who have neither earned their titles nor been trained in the proper qualities to succeed to them. Unlike his predecessors then, Ireland draws a distinction between medieval Scotland with its bold and noble leader, and medieval England with its effeminate fop of a king. The familiar rhetoric of British liberty, military prowess and national pride which we recall from the work of Reeve and other anti-Jacobin novelists, is here focussed on Scotland as a conduit for that mythic glory.

Ireland’s warning about England’s weak leadership is made urgent by the risk of invasion from abroad. This speaks not only to the consistent threat of invasion from France, but specifically to the influx of Catholic French émigrés to Britain during the Revolution. The Isle of Oronza in *Gondez* is a pseudo-European island situated off the coast of Scotland and ruled over by an Italian monk who harasses the Scottish people. It is here that Ireland situates his second, sinister religious house. It lies beyond the borders of the British Isles, but close enough to threaten the mainland with the superstition, corruption and secrecy of the Catholic Church. As a staunch anti-Catholic himself, Ireland indulges his Protestant audiences’s prejudices, and engages with the contemporary debates surrounding the Catholic French émigrés and the appeals for Catholic emancipation.

The late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries were a complicated time for Britain’s engagement with Roman Catholicism. While select elites exhibited what Maria Purves identifies as ‘pro-Catholic sympathy in the form of the incremental Catholic Relief legislation […] and national support of the French clergy’, Diane Long Hoeveler observes that ‘the Gordon Riots of 1780, which left close to 300 dead in London, and the anxious reaction to the 1800 Irish Act of Union make it patently obvious that there was strong if not hysterical sentiment among the lower and middling classes against any attempt to loosen the restrictions on Catholic emancipation’.[[404]](#footnote-404)Ireland continues the eighteenth-century tradition of anti-Catholicism in his Gothic novel, aiming it at the mass of the reading public who continued to be fascinated by popery and in ‘othering’ their Catholic neighbours. The Monastery of Saint Columba on the Isle of Oronza, ruled over by the wicked Italian Gondez, contains Ireland’s specific criticism of European Catholicism and the threat of its growing presence on English shores. While the foreign Gondez cannot be redeemed within the novel’s narrative framework for example, John of Dunbar, a Scottish national, renounces his wicked ways and is ultimately reformed. Gondez’s monastery resembles the religious houses on the continent described by previous Gothic novels, and is, as Montague Summers notes, ‘as truly Gothic a cloister as any built by Mrs. Radcliffe herself, and closely imitated from her pages’.[[405]](#footnote-405)

The bell that guides them to the monastery is ‘solemn’ and ‘tolled in melancholy accents the dreary hour of midnight’.[[406]](#footnote-406) While the beleaguered travellers, desperate to escape pursuit from the English, are grateful to hear that sanctuary is close by, they must first pass through a ‘gloomy wood’ in the ‘almost impenetrable darkness of night’.[[407]](#footnote-407) These foreshadowings continue until they reach the building where the glowing casements and solemn chanting, ‘filled the pensive mind of every listener with an indescribably gloom’.[[408]](#footnote-408) The monk that admits them has both a ‘harsh voice’ and a ‘gloomy physiognomy’, something that marks him out in Ireland’s traditional Gothic world as one of Gondez’s minions.[[409]](#footnote-409) The sound of ‘massive bolts’ and the ‘clank of chains’ that echo as the door is unlocked for them, indicate their imprisonment in the monastery and foreshadow the discovery of the victims that Gondez has chained up in the subterraneous dungeons beneath.[[410]](#footnote-410) Left to wait in ‘a chamber still more dreary’, Bruce and his men reflect on their singular reception to a house of God, exclaiming:

Can this be a symbol of religious charity? Is this the balmy comfort which its votaries proffer to the abject children of misfortune? Instead of brotherly affection, a gloomy mistrust was graven on the front of our conductor; and his manners were as cold, repulsive, and comfortless as the internal appearance of this sanctified abode.[[411]](#footnote-411)

This is the first introduction of religion to the novel, predating Avinzo’s sanctuary with the brothers of the Order of Holy Cross, and resembles the gothic monasteries and nunneries that haunt the pages of eighteenth-century Gothic novels from the shores of the European continent. Indeed, John of Dunbar who comes to interrogate them resembles Ann Radcliffe’s monk Schedoni from the aptly named *The Italian* (1797). His ‘stature [is] far above the common level’, and his ‘features, though human, had in them something so inexpressibly terrific as to appal the gaze of observation; two eyes large and glaring, a thin aquiline nose, cheekbones remarkably high […] a petrifying countenance […] overspread with the livid complexion of death’.[[412]](#footnote-412) Equally, like Radcliffe’s amoral monk, Schedoni, and like all Gothic villains, John of Dunbar betrays excessive passions and a lack of emotional control. During Gondez’s trial he stands, his ‘eyes beaming with vengeance’, with ‘clenched teeth’, ‘pale and quivering lips’ and a ‘pale hue upon his countenance’.[[413]](#footnote-413) Once removed from the corruption of the pseudo-European setting and returned to his native Scotland, however, Dunbar is reformed.

Gondez, on the other hand, born in Naples to a depraved cardinal and a lascivious abbess, embodies the criticisms of decadence, cruelty and dissolution aimed at the Catholic Church by British Protestants. He is ‘arrayed in sumptuous embroidered trappings’, and his features betray ‘every line that portrays internal craft, malice, cruelty, and revenge’, ultimately presenting to the observer a ‘dreadful picture, replete with sin and horror’.[[414]](#footnote-414) Ireland’s microcosm of Europe, ruled over by this corrupt Abbot in league with a wicked king, provides a threatening picture of papal severity, cruelty and greed. Again Ireland’s republican sympathies are expressed in his depiction of the dangers of combined rule from church and state. The Abbot Gondez betrays Bruce and his men to King Edward, and attempts to keep them captive in the monastery until the English soldiers arrive. It is only by the warning of one of the monks that they escape the combined plot of ecclesiastical and state control.

An anti-Catholic trend runs throughout Ireland’s Gothic novels. His first two, *The Abbess* and *The Catholic*, were set in Europe and featured extremely anti-papal plotlines. Discussing *The Abbess*, Benjamin Franklin Fisher, IV, states that: ‘Ireland never missed a chance to play on the anti-Catholic emotions of his readers, and, no doubt taking his cue from [Matthew Lewis’s] *The Monk*, he attempted to pander to such prejudice’.[[415]](#footnote-415) More recently, Diane Long Hoeveler has argued that Ireland sought to repair his sullied reputation ‘by scapegoating the one population he knew his Protestant audience was most keen to see attacked and exposed: the Catholic’.[[416]](#footnote-416) To this end he makes it clear that his heroes are only nominally Catholic, ‘superior on every occasion to superstitious ideas’, and instead focuses his criticism on the residents of Oronza and Europe.[[417]](#footnote-417) He also ensures that he emphasises the proximity of the island, a hub of Catholic atrocities, to mainland Scotland, and dwells on the Gothic scenes and acts that take place there, raising his audience’s anxiety to fever pitch.

The monastery and its Catholic rituals emphasise secrecy, corruption and excess. Ireland pays particular attention to the ‘pomp and ceremony’ of the Catholic church which he claims is employed to ’enchain the mind as well as to rivet the eye of the admiring and awe-struck gazer’.[[418]](#footnote-418) The sad history of the hero’s family - his grandfather poisoned, his father murdered, his mother kidnapped and confined to a convent – is all orchestrated by Catholic clergy in Italy. The Gothic subplot of Ronilda the Fair and her brother - kidnapped and imprisoned in a dungeon beneath the Monastery of Saint Columba by Gondez in the hopes of seducing her – shows the immediate danger to British citizens from the proximate Catholic ‘other’. Similarly, the stirring scenes of supernatural horror that Avinzo experiences are in the main centred within the Monastery where Catholic superstitions can be played out to the full. While praying for the protection of the King, he feels ‘something damp, heavy, and icy cold’ drop upon his hand, and:

On raising his regard to the cross, the lamp before it appeared to burn steadily, but it cast a sickly, bluish gleam around, by which the enhorror’d Avinzo was able to discern a stream of blood that gushed from the indented wound in the side of the brass figure, of the crucified Redeemer; three large drops of which had fallen upon and stained his hand; the owl at that moment more dismally hooted, and the black raven rung a screeching peal that reverberated through every aisle of the spacious edifice.[[419]](#footnote-419)

This warning is accompanied by a visit from the witch who warns that ‘blood, blood, nought but blood!’ can come of their remaining on the Isle of Oronza.[[420]](#footnote-420)

Avinzo is also troubled with sightings of the spectre of the Little Red Woman who haunts the Monastery to punish the wicked Abbot Gondez. Having sold her soul to the devil, she seeks redemption at a nearby convent, but the Abbot who she entreats to pray for her soul is in fact the Devil in disguise, and at midnight he condemns her to hell.[[421]](#footnote-421) Reading her story on a dusty manuscript forewarns Avinzo that all is not right with the current Abbot of Oronza. Later in the novel she appears, first to supervise while Gondez is lashed by a ‘hideous figure, with hissing snakes’ and then again at his trial by the Inquisition.[[422]](#footnote-422)

All of these events take place on European or pseudo-European ground, but their proximity to the British mainland reflects the contemporary concerns surrounding French migrants of the Revolution. The Catholic monastery – a growing addition to the English landscape at the end of the Eighteenth Century - supposedly a place of sanctuary and peace, becomes a prison from which King Robert and his men must escape, and a setting for scenes of supernatural horror. Its secret chambers, dungeons and vaults where ‘the uncovered forms of the deceased monks, arrayed in their monastic habits, lay side by side’ is a place of terror.[[423]](#footnote-423) When Gondez is finally caught he is taken to London to stand trial before King Robert the Bruce, but claims that he ‘will answer to no unhallowed tongue’ and that he claims ‘trial before ecclesiastical, not lay judges’.[[424]](#footnote-424) The Roman Inquisition then appears in a powerful scene pregnant with drama and suspense, and removes Gondez to his native land to be judged. This scene bears a warning of the British law’s inability to control its newfound Catholic subjects and gestures towards the expulsion of Catholics from British shores. Britain’s progressively humanist approach will not suffice, and Gondez can only be suitably punished in juridically backwards Rome where he is ‘forcibly seized by several officials, who, heedless of his struggles, dragged him to the chamber of torture, where were displayed every insignia that was capable of appalling the human soul’.[[425]](#footnote-425)

The condemnation of Catholicism here is clear and Ireland does indeed indulge his Protestant audience with scenes of Gothic horror centred around papal crimes and the terrible secrets of the Inquisition. Interestingly, however, the scenes of imprisonment and persecution that are enacted in the dungeons of the Monastery are foreshadowed at the beginning of the novel in the Tower of London. Avinzo’s story begins when his Scottish guardian’s castle is ‘razed to the ground by the troops of Edward’, he and his adoptive mother are sent as prisoners to London and the rest are ‘inhumanly butchered by the soldiery with the most savage brutality’.[[426]](#footnote-426) In the Tower of London they are ‘immured in the narrow confines of a lonely dungeon’ where the ‘taunting soldiery brutally deride [their] grief’.[[427]](#footnote-427) These scenes speak to the contemporary situation in England where a reactionary government was suspending *habeas corpus* to preserve English liberty from the encroachment of the levelling power across the Channel.

The Prime Minister William Pitt and his supporters justified their politically repressive actions on the grounds of national security, defending the Seditious Meetings Bill of 1795 as ‘new bastions to defend the bulwarks of British liberty’ and a ‘temporary sacrifice, by which the blessings of liberty may be transmitted to our children unimpaired’.[[428]](#footnote-428) While the suspension of the Act in 1794, and on subsequent occasions throughout the 1790s, was not as dramatic as it sounded – the Act itself did not guarantee freedom from arrest without charge and without subsequent trial in the first place, but was merely a way to test dubious arrests in court, and of those arrested under the act very few were prosecuted – it represented the heredity love of liberty of which the English were so proud. As Clive Emsley observes, ‘whatever the limits of the legislation, belief in its potency was strong, and in the words of Sir William Blackstone, it was a ‘second *Magna Carta*, and stable bulwark of our liberties’.[[429]](#footnote-429) What Ireland draws attention to in the scenes of incarceration in the Tower of London at the beginning of his novel is both the cruelty and injustice of Edward II’s reign and its parallel in late eighteenth-century England. In both cases Britons are forced to question the limits of their national liberty and the dichotomy they draw between themselves and the Catholic ‘other’.

It is also interesting to note that the violence in the novel, whether conducted in a domestic or foreign setting, is greatly subdued compared to Ireland’s previous novels. Indeed, when Gondez is finally condemned to ‘be burned to death by a slow fire’, the event takes place behind closed doors where neither the public nor the audience can view it: ‘On account of his ecclesiastical dignity, and of his having been a member of the inquisition, that judgement was carried into effect within the walls of the prison, in the presence only of the judges, the officials of the tribunal, and of those concerned in the prosecution’.[[430]](#footnote-430) This adheres to Ireland’s criticism of the excessively lurid detail of previous Gothic novels. His earlier fiction, set in Catholic Europe, reflected the more violently explicit Gothic that emerged post-1790s. *Gondez* is by comparison exceedingly mild, and conforms more to the boundaries of Female Gothic and to Ireland’s attempts to sanitise Shakespeare’s work. In endeavouring to adapt Shakespeare’s life to eighteenth-century tastes, Ireland censored the vulgarity from his plays and produced a series of personal documents to clear his name from creeping allegations.

In a similar way, in his domestic Gothic fiction Ireland sought to reform the genre by removing the violence and licentiousness with which it had become associated. Ireland’s previous Gothic novels, *The Abbess: A Romance* (1799), *Rimualdo: Or, The Castle of Badajos* (1800) and *The Catholic* (1807), which he set abroad, feature scenes of torture, forced confession, imprisonment and punishment in both remarkable detail and repetition. His emblematic Gothic hero in *The Abbess*, Porto, undergoes horrific trials of physical abuse to prove his fidelity, as do the novel’s villains who are ultimately broken by torture. Ireland’s favourite torture device, the rack, features several times in the novel, while the word torture appears a staggering thirty-six times. The threats of and descriptions of torture are repeated frequently and in lurid detail. While the Conte is confined to a cell by the Inquisition, for example, he reads the diary of a seventeen year old girl scratched into the wall:

[…] my fingers were then drawn together so tightly, with thin cords, that the blood issued from beneath my nails. I was then placed against the wall, standing on a bench. Around my body, arms, and legs, ropes were affixed, which were then passed through iron pullies […] drew these ropes with violence and fixed me to the wall. Still they increased the tension, and I felt a pain as if my limbs were exposed to the action of fire. During these sufferings the bench was removed, when my own weight drawing the cords more closely into my flesh, the anguish become intolerable, and I fainted – A new torture then succeeded […][[431]](#footnote-431)

At this point the narrative breaks down into broken phrases interspersed with ellipses; ‘projecting points of steel’, ‘tortures’, ‘violence’, ‘deep wounds’, ‘excruciating’, ‘lifeless’. The lurid description here and elsewhere in the text goes far beyond the violence of Lewis’s *The Monk*, but poignantly, the perpetrators of these vicious acts are all Catholics, working for the Inquisition on foreign soil. For a Protestant English audience, Ireland provides a guilty pleasure in the guise of Catholic debauchery and wickedness. For his domestically-set *Gondez*, however, Ireland removes these vivid descriptions and, like the sexual exploits of the novel, torture and violence are reported but not witnessed. Moreover, the removal of Gondez to Italy by the Inquisition ensures that the violence is ultimately distanced from British soil.

Ireland’s fascination with religious trials, torture and forced confession are a reflection of his own Inquisitorial trial at the hands of the press.[[432]](#footnote-432) Following Malone’s exposé, ‘Shakespeare Ireland’ as he was dubbed, was well-known and widely reviled. As Jeffrey Kahan observes in his ‘Introduction’ to *Gondez*, ‘It’s often said that we have a soft spot in our hearts for losers, none for cheaters’, and this rings particularly true in Ireland’s case.[[433]](#footnote-433) The reading public, literary critics and journalists roundly condemned him for his forgeries as though they were tantamount to sacrilege. Indeed, many of them framed the crime in religious terminology, with theatre critic James Boaden proclaiming in answer to Ireland’s question of whether the literary world was ready to forgive him: ‘You must be aware, sir, of the enormous crime you committed against the divinity of Shakespeare. Why, the act, sir, was nothing short of sacrilege; it was precisely the same thing as taking the holy chalice from the altar, and \*\*\*\*\*\*\* therein!’[[434]](#footnote-434) As Kahan notes, ‘Ireland’s writings undermined the divinity of Shakespeare because they tacitly suggested that there was nothing uniquely Shakespearean in Shakespeare’.[[435]](#footnote-435)

As well as the repeated appearance of the Inquisition and the themes of interrogation and confession in Ireland’s fiction, his attempts to clear his name, *An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts* (1796) and *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland* (1805), adopt the traditional language of religious penance. He begs his readers to remember that his only sin was ‘vanity’ which had satanically ‘ensnare[d] him’.[[436]](#footnote-436) Elsewhere he pleads for forgiveness for ‘the act of a boy, without any evil or bad intention’ and appeals to the reader to ‘grant [him] the indulgence which is the certain inmate of every *Englishman’s* bosom’.[[437]](#footnote-437) Continuing the religious tone, Malone called for Ireland and all of his works to be burned in ‘a proper fire… of the most baleful and noxious weeds’[[438]](#footnote-438). This imagery of burning and martyrdom is repeated by Ireland himself in the last volume of his novel *A Woman of Feeling* (1804) where he states that the work is published under a false name to save it from the stain that lies on his own. Were his enemies to know the identity of the author, he claims that they would no doubt ‘pass judgement on me, and either commit my pages to the oblivion of the flames, or bring me to the public ordeal of the press’[[439]](#footnote-439). The reference to both the flames and the press recall medieval forms of torture allegedly employed by the Inquisition to extract confessions from their victims. The press was also of course the mode by which Ireland was condemned and by which he made his confessions of guilt.[[440]](#footnote-440)

Ireland’s fictional trials fall into two categories – those inflicted upon the innocent to prove their fidelity and honour, and those exacted upon the wicked to punish them. Porta from *The Abbess* endures his torture at the hands of the Inquisition but refuses to betray the secret he swore to keep. Similarly, Moor O’Mara in Ireland’s *The Catholic* is implicated in the Gunpowder plot and taken to a room where ‘new devices were to be resorted to in order that a full confession might be drawn from me’.[[441]](#footnote-441) His faith strengthens him throughout the ordeal, however, and he remains ‘in full belief of redemption’.[[442]](#footnote-442) In *Gondez*, while Avinzo is not physically tortured, he is forced to undergo a hero’s quest and several trials of combat, bravery, strength and faith before he can be rewarded for his fidelity. In these retributive fantasies, Ireland’s villains are always punished and never survive their torturous trials, frequently committing suicide to avoid further punishment.

Interestingly then, in the fiction of the staunchly anti-Catholic Ireland, the Inquisition functions as both the persecutor of the innocent and the punisher of the guilty. Ireland’s Catholic villains are brought to justice by the enforcers of their own Church. The lascivious Abbess - quite clearly a female version of Lewis’s Ambrosio in *The Monk* - is guilty of condoning imprisonment and torture, of sanctioning murder, and of acts of indecency, seduction and lewdness. She confesses early in her torture and is condemned to be flogged, starved and degraded for the rest of her life. In *Gondez*, Ireland again indulges his imagination in ever more irreligious Catholic atrocities. Sexual relations between members of the clergy, imprisonment and seduction, murder and poisoning, deals with the devil and the wicked secret rituals of the Inquisition abound. Ireland condemns the Inquisition, describing how ‘instead of aiding the cause of innocence and justice’ it can be ‘converted into the most diabolical engine of cruelty by any of its members, whose hidden motives might originate in hatred, malice, or even mere caprice’.[[443]](#footnote-443) Despite this, however, when a court of law cannot convict Gondez, the Inquisition takes it upon itself to punish their own, and after extensive torture he is burned alive. Ireland’s engagement with religion in his fiction is therefore divided between a fascination with the power of the Catholic Church and an abiding hatred of the corruption that power breeds. It also suggests a disillusionment with the efficacy, and mistrust of the morality, of the British government and its legal systems which is reminiscent of Smith.

Ireland was not only troubled by the Gothic’s penchant for violence, but also by its sexual licentiousness. While some modern critics have referred to the graphic sexual content in his work, the references are in fact surprisingly modest. One anonymous reviewer, for example, accused him of a ‘fondness for sexual atrocity […] which attains an ideal of the hideous found only in the followers of the Marquis de Sade’ and claimed the novel ‘revels in sexual cruelty’ and includes the ‘group rape’ of a heroine.[[444]](#footnote-444) This, however, is simply not true. Ireland disapproved of the Gothic’s tendency towards lurid sexual detail of the kind found in Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk*. While he acknowledged that *The Monk* was entertaining, he criticised the ‘immoral tendency of many of the incidents’ and especially the pornographic descriptions which ‘outstretch the modesty of nature’.[[445]](#footnote-445) In *The Abbess*, for example, the only sexual encounter is hurried over with a brief note that the Abbess Vittoria ‘was beautiful – and the Conte but a man’.[[446]](#footnote-446) Similarly when the hero of *Gondez* first sees his heroine and future wife, he is inspired to unblemished love both ‘glowing and chaste’, and when the virtuous Ronilda faints, her ‘heaving bosom’ remains carefully veiled by her golden tresses.[[447]](#footnote-447) Meanwhile, another virtuous paramour is so modest that she blushes to disrobe even in private, and despite the repeated threats of rape in the novel to several of the young female characters, they are never enacted.[[448]](#footnote-448)

The majority of the sexual content – usually involving debauched members of the Catholic clergy – is reported but never elaborated on. And while Ireland is gender-blind when it comes to torture, none of his female victims are ever sexually abused. When Ronilda recounts her treatment at the hands of Abbot Gondez after he imprisoned her in the secret dungeons beneath the monastery, she states that, ‘a thousand times force was put in practice to accomplish his iniquity; but still the power of innocence enshielded me with its puissant arm, and I repulsed the daring efforts of this fiend of infamy and vice’.[[449]](#footnote-449)

Another way that Ireland’s work wrestles with Britain’s past is through the supernatural agents that haunt his representation of the British Isles. They are an interesting commentary on both the anxieties surrounding Catholic émigrés at the end of the Eighteenth Century and the mythmaking process of nation forming. In this, Ireland was taking part in a contemporary trend among antiquarians and historians for rewriting the tales of Britain’s ancient origins to emphasis its military valour and the hereditary love of freedom.[[450]](#footnote-450) Ireland participates with his medieval tale of Kings, battles and politics, but he complicates the narrative by questioning the myth of a united Great Britain. Instead he focuses on a period when the national love of liberty was being denied to some Britons by others. Alongside this, Ireland’s depiction of the British Isles in *Gondez* highlights Britain as an ancient and mythical land haunted by the supernatural remnants of decades of tradition, superstition and Catholicism.[[451]](#footnote-451) Unlike Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*, Ireland’s use of the supernatural is less easily assimilated into a loyalist narrative of noble national origins. While some of it functions as an appropriate and acceptable tool of Providence, other events indicate the darker, less wholesome, and more sinister side of Britain’s past that Ireland was trying to draw out.

Avinzo’s first encounter with the supernatural, for example, is a prophetic dream in which he sees the ghosts of his adoptive parents, who urge him to submit ‘to the behest of fate’ which will guide him.[[452]](#footnote-452) His next meeting with supernatural agents is less comforting however. He is led out of the wilderness by a starving dog to the ruins of what was once ‘a fortified castle of vast extent’.[[453]](#footnote-453) This remnant of Britain’s heroic military past is now a forgotten relic, with ‘dismantled turrets’, a ‘dilapidated entrance’ and a ‘desolate building’.[[454]](#footnote-454) In the dungeons of this Gothic pile, Avinzo encounters two witches performing a rite around a cauldron who call him ‘the child of mystic fate’.[[455]](#footnote-455) They say he indicates ‘portentous things’ and that a ‘hidden destiny extends its arm, befriending [him] by its mighty power, from the unsearchable behests of adverse fortune’.[[456]](#footnote-456) The ‘hags’, ‘more loathsome and ugly than imagination ever pictured to the mind’, are depicted as the epitome of evil, with suitably ghastly physiognomies.[[457]](#footnote-457) The witches however, of which there are ultimately seven, are as much a tool of Providence as any of Reeve’s benevolent ghosts. They appear to Avinzo throughout the novel, and seem for the most part content to taunt him with cryptic messages concerning his fate, as their originals did in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1606). In the course of the novel, however, they do protect him from the evil spirit, the Tall White Man, and help him to free the Laird of Finlagan from his curse. When, in order to drive the Tall White Man away, Alonzo pulls a crucifix from his bosom and raises it to heaven, the hag ‘shrinks at the sight’ as the evil spirit does, but she also charges Alonzo to ‘be bold, and act the will of heaven’.[[458]](#footnote-458) Equally, at the end of the novel we are told that they are the workers of fate, which has been linked to God’s omnipotence and Providence throughout the novel.

Before Avinzo first encounters the witches he prays, ‘Fate marshals me into the lists, and I must follow its behest; into the hands of Omnipotence, therefore, I willingly resign my cause; God never forsakes the true dependent on his Justice and Mercy’.[[459]](#footnote-459) Later he notes that ‘every incident [in his life] had been strongly characterised by the wonder-working hand of fate’.[[460]](#footnote-460) Much like the ‘over-ruling hand of Providence’ that guides Reeve’s protagonists, Ireland’s ‘wonder-working hand of fate’ guides Avinzo to fulfil his God-given destiny.[[461]](#footnote-461) The witches are therefore servants of God - albeit reluctantly as they struggle to look upon religious relics – and thus speak to Britain’s reformed Catholic past. They are remnants of a dark, mystical period in the nation’s history where pagan and Catholic superstitions populated the landscape with spirits, demons and supernatural agents. Ireland’s proto-Protestant hero must navigate this ‘uncanny’ British setting – a Britain fundamentally familiar but at the same time irreconcilably altered by the introduction of such Popish paraphernalia. Ireland’s engagement with Britain’s Catholic history speaks directly to contemporary fears surrounding the increasing flow of Catholic émigrés into England during and after the French Revolution.

As Maria Purves states, by September 1792 there were 1,500 French émigré priests in England, which would increase to close to 5,000 within a year.[[462]](#footnote-462) Convents and monasteries were reintroduced into England to accommodate the clergy fleeing France, and while there was a recorded sympathy for their plight, newspapers like John Bell and Peter Stuart’s *The Oracle* still warned of ‘contamination’ from the French refugees.[[463]](#footnote-463) As Diane Long-Hoeveler observes, ‘the sudden appearance of so many French Catholic priests in a country that had virtually outlawed their presence 200 years earlier could not have been particularly easy to accept’ and tensions did run high.[[464]](#footnote-464) Ireland’s depiction of a Britain overrun with Catholic superstition and Papal idolatry speaks to a growing fear of the rise of Catholic church in England which culminated in a peak of anti-Catholic feeling in 1805 – the year Ireland published *Gondez*.[[465]](#footnote-465)

There are a variety of supernatural agents in *Gondez*, and while Ireland’s proto-Protestant hero is superior to superstitious fancies, they are not the explained supernatural of Radcliffe’s Female Gothic. The ghosts, demons, spirits and witches are real andhave several functions within the narrative. Some of them, like the bleeding statue, act as warnings to the hero and foreshadow events; others, like the Little Red Women, are reminders that the wicked will be punished and the rightful order restored. The ghosts in Ireland’s novel are Scottish and English ancestors who return to visit the living and provide them with guidance. As emblems of Britain’s proud heritage, they are all staunch Christians and direct their descendants to do God’s work before ascending to heaven. Early in the novel Avinzo sees the ghosts of his adoptive parents who inspire him to take heart to escape from the Tower of London where he is imprisoned, and continue on God’s path.[[466]](#footnote-466) Later he helps to save his lover’s father from the Tall White Man by presenting him with a crucifix. When the ghost kisses it, his ‘hideous appearance instantly vanishe[s] into air; and, with a cherub smile upon its brow, it present[s] to Avinzo a manly and becoming form, which seem[s] to ascend on high’.[[467]](#footnote-467) He also encounters the troubled and melancholy ghost of Geronimo, Abbot of Saint Columba, who ‘still vainly prays for the soul of the little red woman’ every year on the anniversary of her death.[[468]](#footnote-468) Finally, on his wedding day, the ghosts of Ronilda’s parents appear to bless their nuptials: ‘the angelic figures advancing, spread wide their arms over their recumbent persons, and then, bowing low their heads in token of approbation […] gradually ascending in a gleam of silvery light, vanished amid the regions of eternal bliss’.[[469]](#footnote-469)

These benevolent spirits haunt the pages of Ireland’s novel as palimpsests of the generations gone before. Their memories linger on the British plain just as the ruined castles and monasteries do; as reminders of the ancestral roots of the domestic landscape. Ireland uses them to create a layered effect of passing time over shared space, as his hero struggles to discover the secret mysteries of his own past and reconcile them to a present lived out in an alien country. As the novel progresses, Ireland presents the reader with the history of Avinzo’s parents and his journey to Britain, and the history of his adoptive parent’s demise and his journey to join Robert the Bruce. These separate interpolated stories gradually build up a full history of the hero as he moves towards a sense of belonging and citizenship in a foreign nation.

In his forgeries of The Bard, his Gothic novels and his Histories of South East England, we witness Ireland’s fascination with narrating the nation. His manipulation of the Vortigern legend in his youth shows him engaging at an early age with the Matter of Britain; that is, the body of medieval literature and legendary material associated with the formation of Great Britain as a nation.[[470]](#footnote-470) In this he follows Shakespeare who used *Historia Britonum* (828) and Raphael Holinshed’s *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577) as sources for *King Lear* and *Macbeth* respectively. Ireland’s 1795 play *Vortigern* provides a reassuring fable of Britain’s historic glory and military prowess in repelling invading forces from the continent; a particularly popular narrative during the French Revolution. [[471]](#footnote-471) Despite the victory over the Saxons however, Malone would later cite *Vortigern* as an example of Ireland’s republican sympathies. While his accusation was correct – the Ireland family were supporters of the Revolution – his reading of *Vortigern* is spurious. From this, however, stems the plot for Ireland’s later, and more controversial novel, *Gondez*.

*Vortigern* depicts the fifth-century conflict between the eponymous British warlord and the Scots. The main action concerns Vortigern murdering King Constantius of the Britons, publically blaming the Scots for his death, and appealing to the Saxons for help in the ensuing war. Few are deceived by Vortigern’s scapegoating, but it provides him with a desired excuse: ‘Know, Vortigern did always hate the Scots […] But the keen tooth of hatred and revenge, With double fury now will shew itself; For every noble Scot then found in London, Hath suff’d under this fell tiger’s fangs…’.[[472]](#footnote-472) The same themes carry through to *Gondez* which again depicts the beleaguered Scots suing for justice from the bloodthirsty English. Here the Scots represent not only themselves in their historical struggle to resist English rule, but also the American colonies suing for independence from the British during the American Revolution, and the French attempting to break free from beneath the yoke of church and state in the French Revolution. Unlike *Vortigern* however, *Gondez* shows the English being defeated and driven back – the reassuring patriotic fable is transformed into a warning against England’s military arrogance and oppressive political regime.

Beyond its historical setting, however, the novel plays very loose with the facts. Ireland was clearly as much influenced by the domestic Historical Gothics of Clara Reeve and Sophia Lee as he was by Matthew Lewis’s violent European Gothics, but his work is filled with anachronisms, and his descriptive language is awkward and jolting. His overly flamboyant attempts at medieval prose are, for a forger, particularly poor. For example, as the sun sets, Ireland writes: ‘The bright lamp of jocund day was now extinguished, and the pale-eyed goddess of silent night broke in melancholy majesty through the ebon dark, and shed around her partial light’.[[473]](#footnote-473) Much as Samuel Johnson said of Macpherson’s NeoGallic Ossianics, had the admixture of styles been ‘an ancient work, a true specimen how men thought at that time, it would have been a curiosity of the first rate. As a modern production, it is nothing’.[[474]](#footnote-474) Ireland’s novel, while entertaining, is full of this preposterously dramatic language, but the theatrical conventions of the genre ensure that the lack of historical detail in no way violates the reader’s sensibility, any more so than the frequent supernatural events in the novel.

It is clear from reading Ireland’s autobiographies and his modern biography, alongside his fiction, that his work deals with national and personal issues in tandem. Like Smith, he breaks down the barriers between micro and macrocosm, frequently drawing parallels between historical events and his own experiences, and producing an intricately tangled web of sources, references and intentions. On a wider scale, he used the British setting of his fiction to stage his criticism of domestic politics and foreign policy. His depiction of Scotland’s medieval fight for freedom highlights England’s contemporary refusal to support France in her struggle for independence from a corrupt state and church. On a smaller scale, however, his engagement with outsiders rejected by English society, and with those demonised and hounded across an inhospitable domestic landscape, clearly speak to his own disappointment and disgust with the British press and the reading public. Ultimately Ireland used the domestic landscape as a backdrop to play out his own personal struggles, but in doing so he highlights several important critiques of eighteenth-century British society that recur in the domestically-set Gothic novels of his contemporaries: the hypocrisy of a freedom-loving nation that denies revolution to its neighbours; the injustice of a society in need of reform; and the inhospitable landscape of a nation living in fear of invasion from without and insurrection from within.

Issues of displacement, alienation and exile run strongly throughout *Gondez*, and Ireland’s other fictional works. In *Vortigern*, we see the themes beginning to develop with the discrimination against the Scots and the young Princes exiled in Rome who ‘yearn’st to see thy native land’.[[475]](#footnote-475) In *Gondez,* the action centres on a hero who is not only a foreigner born in Italy, but spends most of the novel moving around the inhospitable landscapes of England and the pseudo-European Isle of Oronza. Even in Scotland where he is raised, he does not truly belong, and has to earn his citizenship there as the novel progresses through his service to King Robert. When he is knighted by Robert half way through the narrative, the King draws attention to his position as an outsider: ‘We know, dear youth, thy wayward history, and that thou art not one of Scotia’s sons […]’.[[476]](#footnote-476) Knighting him ‘Sir Hubert Avinzo, Lord of Scotland’s Isles’, Robert gives him a place to belong until his true heritage can be revealed. Interestingly, despite being named by the King as ‘my chosen Knight and Lord of these my islands’, Avinzo still refuses to marry Ronilda because he believes the ‘incertitude of his birth’ may ‘tarnish the lustre of that family’.[[477]](#footnote-477) His search for his own identity is the main preoccupation of the novel, an interesting fact considering the issues that Ireland faced in his own life. And without that identity he is, like Harclay in Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* and the eponymous Wanderer in Smith’s *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, a displaced figure crossing an alien landscape in search of home.

Ireland’s preoccupation with individual identity is then widened to an engagement with nationhood and national identity through his forgeries of the National Bard. All of this was connected with his own personal quest. His insecurity over his legitimacy, spurred him on to fabricate not only his own identity (among other details he claimed to be two years young than he was), but that of imaginary ancestors, lovers and benefactors. Several of these constructions blurred the lines between national and personal identity. Not only did he re-forge the identity of the The Bard, but he also wrote himself into England’s literary heritage by claiming that an ancestral William-Henry Ireland had been a close friend of Shakespeare and had saved him from downing. While this could be considered a conservative fairy-tale desire to discover a noble identity for himself, it carries reformist - if not revolutionary - overtones. By side-stepping his bastardy and legitimising himself through forged documents, Ireland was repudiating history and inheritance.

At this early age he is intent upon legitimising his own identity but later in life this would become a habit of creating a succession of completely new identities through his *noms de plume*; writing identities that could not be traced or held to account.[[478]](#footnote-478) Forging these identities made Ireland a creative and revolutionary force against the nation’s legal system which would seek to categorise and contain him. Understandably, the French Revolution and its goal to bring about a new state, devoid of ranks and titles, where a man could create his own opportunities and forge a new destiny, greatly appealed to Ireland. His life was always a series of doubling and repetitions; he was ‘the *second* Chatterton’, ‘*Shakespeare* Ireland’, called Sam after his dead twin, copied and recited the work of others, wrote his autobiography twice. His life was a search for legitimacy and authenticity through a series of fakes, forgeries and pseudonyms. Ironically, as Robert Miles observed, ‘writing anonymously he was unable to build a career or establish a name: he was always in the shadows, starting anew’ and yet ‘as an anonymous author, with no centred, public identity, he could shift styles and genres at will’.[[479]](#footnote-479) His lack of fixed identity provided Ireland with the freedom to publish Gothic fiction, pantomimes, poems, satirical and political pamphlets, historical texts, British tours, bildungsroman novels, biographies, kiss-and-tell memoirs, long narrative poems infused with political commentary, reviews and plays. Several of these genres including his local histories and his political tracts display an acute awareness of his nation state and a desire to engage with it, even via a necessary disguise.

In response to the public rejection that forced him adopt his pseudonyms, Ireland’s work is preoccupied with outcasts, prisoners and the wrongly accused. As a man both denied credit for his forgeries and condemned for them, the themes of persecution, trials and isolation reflect a personal preoccupation with guilt. It was a natural progression from this that led him to the Gothic genre when he first began writing in his own name. The Gothicism of a child haunted by his dead doppelganger was clearly not lost on Ireland, whose recollections of his youth are littered with the Gothic fantasies he created for himself. In his *Confessions* he recalls;

I have often sighed to be the inmate of some gloomy castle; or that having lost my way upon a dreary heath, I might, like Bertram, have been conducted to some enchanted mansion. Sometimes I have wished that by the distant chime of a bell I had found the hospitable porch of some old monastery, where, with the holy brotherhood, having shared at the board their homely fare, I might afterwards have enjoyed upon the pallet a sound repose, and, with the abbots, blessing the ensuing morn, have hied me in pursuit of fresh adventures.[[480]](#footnote-480)

Ireland was clearly already well-read in the genre, and his vivid imagination and natural flair for dramatics stood him in good stead as a Gothic author. The first part of this scene is most likely a misspelled reference to Anna Laetitia Aikin’s *Sir Bertrand: A Fragment* (1773) where a young knight finds himself in a mysterious ‘antique mansion’ where he discovers a ‘lady of incomparable beauty’ who hails him as her deliverer.[[481]](#footnote-481) The second part is startling similar to Avinzo’s adventures with the brothers of the Order of Holy Cross in *Gondez.* The impact of these Gothic stories, and of the damsel in distress plot line in particular, on Ireland’s young mind becomes apparent later in his *Confessions* when he recalls a series of letters that he forged to himself from a mysterious young lady in need of rescue.[[482]](#footnote-482)

The tale he told his father to explain the discovery of his forged Shakespearean documents is equally Gothic. According to young Ireland, the documents were found in an old chest belonging to an aristocratic stranger who wanted to remain anonymous. While searching through them, Ireland had uncovered a legal document relating to the gentleman’s family which cleared up a matter of contested inheritance and ownership, after which he promised that Ireland could help himself to whatever else he found in the chest. The story became embellished over time to include Ireland’s friend, Montague Talbot, to explain how Ireland met the aristocrat, and to explain why the gentleman refused to reveal himself to help validate the documents. The original tale, however, is strikingly similar to the plotlines of several Gothic novels that Ireland might have read, including Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House*, which was published the year before Ireland spun his lie. The scene at the end of the novel involves the hero searching through the ancient house for a casket hidden under lock and key behind a sliding board beneath a portrait, which contains the will that proves his claim for inheritance. The hero, Orlando, compares it to a Gothic scene from the ‘old romances and fairy tales, where the hero is, by some supernatural means, directed to a golden key, which opens an invisible drawer, where a hand or head is found swimming in blood…’.[[483]](#footnote-483)

These early Gothic influences no doubt impacted upon his own work, something *The Monthly Review* noted in its appraisal of *The Abbess* which it claims is so packed with Gothic conventions as to resemble the typical ‘laundry-list’ Gothic novel:

Unnatural parents, - persecuted lovers, - murders, - haunted Apartments, - winding sheets, and winding stair-cases, - Sub-terraneous passages, - lamps that are dim and perverse, and that always go out when they should not, - monasteries, - caves, - monks, tall, thin, and withered, with lank abstemious cheeks, - dreams, - groans, and spectres.[[484]](#footnote-484)

Like his own experiences of doubling then, even Ireland’s original fiction could not avoid accusations of mimicry and repetition. Despite this criticism, his lack of authorial identity allowed him to attune his literary output to the demands of the ever-changing marketplace and partake in the collective identity formation of the reading public.

Ultimately, Ireland’s work engages with British identity from the individual through to the national. Like his predecessors, he used an individual’s struggle and story to critique the nation, its foreign and domestic policy, and its sovereign and governing body. For the last of these, he resurrected Robert the Bruce and Edward I and II of England in order to join the contemporary debates concerning the value of the monarchy, the role of government, and the necessary qualities of leadership. The deposition and public execution of Louis XVI, the rise of Napoleon and his appointment as Emperor, and the increasing episodes of madness that King George III experienced, made these poignant and timely topics for discussion. The next author in this thesis, T. I. Horsley Curties, enters this same debate as a staunch royalist, a member of George III’s court, and in political opposition to William Henry Ireland. His Gothic fiction pays significant attention to the history of the British monarchy and evokes past Kings in order to interrogate the qualities of a good ruler and promote a secure social hierarchy. Like his predecessors Leland and Reeve, Curties’s novels are ostensibly conservative, but his subtle critiques of British politics – past and present – create much more nuanced narratives than this label immediately suggests.

Chapter Four

T. I. Horsley Curties: The Royalist Nation

Serjeants *Ireland* and *Curtis*, your stations now take,

Nor e’er permit sense falsehood’s barrier to break,

Be it thine, junior Shakespeare that vagrant to stick,

Who wou’d ravish *The Abbess*, or free *Catholick*.

While, *Curtis*, ‘tis yours the *Watch Tow’r* to defend,

Lest *Sons of Ulthona* steal *Scottish Legend*.

* William Henry Ireland, ‘Romance Writer’ (1815)[[485]](#footnote-485)

In a footnote to the first line of William Henry Ireland’s poem ‘Romance Writer’ from his work *Scribbleomania: or the Printer's Devil's Polichronicon: a Sublime Poem*, published 1815, Ireland referred to himself and T. I. Horsley Curties as ‘brothers in fiction’.[[486]](#footnote-486) He went on:

[…] the performances of both partake sufficiently of the marvellous to rank them brothers in fiction. Mr Ireland’s ebullitions of this class contain much imagery […] Mr Curtis, pursuing a similar track, is not only more copious in his descriptive parts, after the manner of *Anne Radcliffe*, but his incidents partake in a greater degree of the marvellous than those of his compeer.[[487]](#footnote-487)

Ireland identified several similarities between his and Curties’s Romantic works such as an exploitation of the marvellous and an indulgence in Gothic imagery, highlighting Curties’s descriptive work as particularly inspired by ‘the manner of Anne Radcliffe’ [sic]. Curties himself expressed his indebtedness to Radcliffe in the ‘Preface’ to his 1801 novel *Ancient Records: Or, The Abbey of Saint Oswythe. A Romance.* In it, he attributed his novel’s ‘mysteries – its terrific illusions – its very errors’ to ‘a love of Romance, caught from an enthusiastic admiration of *Udolpho’s* unrivalled Foundress’.[[488]](#footnote-488) As a Gothic author, he claims that he enthusiastically ‘follows her through all the venerable gloom of horrors, not as a kindred spirit, but contented, as a shadow, in attending her footsteps’.[[489]](#footnote-489) His admiration for the ‘Foundress’ of the Gothic genre is clear, but his acknowledgement of the ‘errors’ of his work is not merely a show of humility, it also demonstrates a wider awareness of the precariousness of his position.

As Dale Townshend has noted, for many modern literary critics Curties would seemingly be involved in two ‘mutually exclusive undertakings: a professional commitment to the Hanoverian monarchy, on the one hand, and a semi-professional dabbling in the subversive, even sometimes Revolutionary ways of Gothic romance, on the other’.[[490]](#footnote-490) Curties was clearly aware of this too, and is determined in his ‘Preface’ to associate himself with the right kind of Gothic – not the controversial fiction of writers like Matthew Lewis, but the conservative brand of Gothic that Reeve had promoted and which Radcliffe, at the least, did not challenge. By claiming that his ‘errors’ follow hers, he accepts the accusations that were levelled at her – the use of the Romance genre, the recourse to the (explained) supernatural, the combination of history and fiction, the repetition of plotlines and motifs – but rebuffs the darker associations of the Gothic genre. Indeed, the rest of his ‘Preface’ launches into an impassioned defence of this ‘species of writing [which] has of late been feebly attacked’ by Novelists.[[491]](#footnote-491) Claiming that the two genres were ‘twin-sisters, and should be equally allied in affection’, he defends the lack of reality in Romances as making it a fitting genre for female writers and readers.[[492]](#footnote-492) ‘Ought the female Novelist,’ he asks, ‘in order to display a *complete* knowledge of human nature, to degrade that delicate timidity, that shrinking innocence which is the loveliest boast of womanhood, in drawing characters which would ruin her reputation to be acquainted with?’[[493]](#footnote-493) Rather, the Romance genre, with its recourse to fantasy and imagination, need not reference the brutal realities of human nature that a Novel would require, and thus avoids the taint of ‘LITERARY PROSTITUTION’.[[494]](#footnote-494)

Curties is keen to not only defend the Gothic genre against its critics, but also to align himself with a moral, conservative brand of Gothic literature, divorced of its subversive, revolutionary principles. Thus, while Ireland may have considered himself and Curties ‘brothers in fiction’, the latter certainly would not. While united under the title of Gothic, their objectives in penning such novels were dissonant, and the heterogeneous nature of the Gothic allows their fictions to reflect this diversity of political ideology and intent. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ireland’s engagement with England as a nation was always fraught, and his literary works are plagued by his sense of isolation and exclusion from society. Not only could Ireland not be considered a patriot, but he was most certainly no royalist, and showed great support for the French Revolution in its initial stages and later for Napoleon’s rule.[[495]](#footnote-495) Meanwhile, Curties was a staunch royalist both privately and professionally. Dale Townshend has described his fiction as ‘conserving the patriarchal institutions of fatherhood and sovereign power’ beyond the bounds of James Watt’s Loyalist Gothic and rather as ‘an instance of Royalist Gothic […] in its splendid display of the binding power of the father/king’.[[496]](#footnote-496) Curties united the Gothic genre and his political affiliations by coining a decidedly conservative and counter-revolutionary strain of Gothic in the wake of the French Revolution. It not only expressed fidelity to the ‘values, institutions and class structures of the British Establishment’ as Loyalist Gothic fiction does, but adapted the genre for a specifically Royalist political use.[[497]](#footnote-497)

This chapter analyses Curties’s Gothic fiction in order to tease out the subtle nuances of his work which demonstrate the complex history of terms like royalist, loyalist and patriot. While it is true that Curties undoubtedly held a royalist perspective, which reflects his professional commitment to the Hanoverian Monarchy as an Exon in the Yeoman of the Guard, his presentation of the monarchy in his fiction is not unquestioning. His early novels do indeed function as a royalist Gothic historiography which celebrates the chivalric reign of Edward III, omitting the less pleasing parts of his rule, and even defends the universally denounced Edward II against the disloyalty of those closest to him. By 1804, however, Curties, no doubt in response to the aftermath of the French Revolution and the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars, began to trouble this steadfast loyalty to the English monarchy by interrogating the meaning of a good ruler and the qualities required by a respectable king. In doing so, he found Edward I & II to be lacking and instead chose to favour Robert the Bruce in his rebellion against the English monarchy in his novel *The Watch Tower; Or, The Sons of Ulthona* (1804), albeit with the caveat that he carefully presented Bruce as King of the Scots and not as a rebel leader. Following his courtly appointment to George III in 1805, Curties returned to his staunch defence of the English monarchy through his depiction of Charles I and the divine right of kings in *St Botolph’s Priory; or, The Sable Mask. An Historic Romance* (1806), a tale of the English Civil War. Curties’s royalist leanings are not in question throughout his fiction, but his shift from blind loyalty to an active interrogation of the qualities of kingship and back again, in response to contemporary politics, merits closer analysis than it has previously undergone, and reveals a perceptive and analytical author.

Curties’s royalist fiction – and particularly his emphasis on characters sacrificing themselves in service to their masters – undoubtedly stemmed from his personal values and was later reinforced by his role at court.[[498]](#footnote-498) In his first novel, *Ethelwina; Or The House of Fitz-Auburne* (1799), the hero Augustine instinctively offers up his life to save Queen Phillipa on the battlefield: ‘Augustine saw the course of the arrow as it winged its way to the breast of the unsuspecting Queen; - he flew with the speed of the rushing winds, and covering the queen with his buckler, preserved her from the threatened, inevitable death’.[[499]](#footnote-499) Similarly, in *The Scottish Legend, Or the Isle of Saint Clothair* (1802), the heroine Constance is defended from the attacking army of the villain Ridolpho by a group of servants who offer up their lives as sacrifice to their mistress. Again, the opening of his fourth novel *The Watch Tower*, features the ‘faithful long tried vassal’ Uberto, who is cut down trying to warn his master of intruders: ‘the faithful Uberto in vain striving to save from certain mischief the fate of his superior, had fallen a sacrifice to his fidelity’.[[500]](#footnote-500) Unsurprisingly, the most prominent example of these sacrificial master/servant relationships figures in Curties’s fifth novel, *St Botolph’s Priory*, which he published a year after joining the Yeomen of the Guard. At the outset, Philippe declares his determination to protect his master, even on pain of death, stating that: ‘A soldier thinks not of his own safety, when the life of his commander demands prompt assistance… nor can he be better employed than in doing his duty; mine is to watch your Honor’s safety, as well in the chamber of sickness as in the field of battle’.[[501]](#footnote-501) Like Reeve in her conservative Gothic novels, *The Old English Baron* and *The Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, Curties pays particular reverence to the self-sacrificial master/servant relationship upon which a secure social hierarchy is built.

Set during the English Civil War, *St Botolph’s Priory* follows the struggle between Charles I, God’s ‘own anointed vice-regent on earth’, and the ‘ensanguined Republicans’ and ‘lawless regicides’.[[502]](#footnote-502) Curties’s narrative must accept the eventual failure of the King’s bodyguards and the execution of the monarch. However, until that point, which is discretely handled in the final volume, Curties romanticises the role of servants and soldiers who are willing to die for their political superiors. Even after Charles’s demise, his French queen, Henrietta Maria, can find refuge from the regicides at the eponymous Priory on the Isle of White and rely on her faithful bodyguards who ‘still followed with steadfast loyalty and unshaken allegiance the ruined destiny of their royal mistress’.[[503]](#footnote-503) The plight of the French-born Queen of England evokes Edmund Burke’s mournful account of the French queen Marie Antoinette who stood defenceless against the Revolutionary mob. ‘I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult’, he declared passionately, ‘But the age of chivalry is gone […] and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever’.[[504]](#footnote-504) Curties draws from the English past an equivalent to the beleaguered Marie Antoinette in the hunted Henrietta Maria, but asserts through depiction of the loyal bravery of her bodyguards that the flame of chivalry, while dimmed by the English Civil War as by the French Revolution, is not yet extinguished. As Townshend observes, these fictional episodes are directly linked to the fantasy which Curties enacted in his symbolic role as an Exon of the Guard: claiming ‘the right and the privilege […] to offer his death in place of that of his sovereign’.[[505]](#footnote-505)

All of Curties’s novels glorify a strict social hierarchy which hinges on the relationship between benevolent leaders and loyal servants, and this became only more pronounced following his appointment to the Guard in 1805. Between 1805 and 1839 he served in the Hanoverian courts of Kings George III, George IV, William IV, and Queen Victoria. The Yeoman of the Guard was a prestigious office of Body Guards of the British Sovereign formed by Henry VII in 1485, but by 1805 it was no longer reserved for those with military credentials and posts could be purchased by wealthy civilians. While devoid of its original utility and reduced to a highly symbolic and performative enactment of political affiliation, Curties’s royal office demonstrates his personal investment in the British monarchy. This sustained engagement in the royalist and nationalist cause is evident throughout his fiction and, much like the ‘loyalist’ Gothicists before him, Curties emphasises the value of national pride, military glory and obedience to patriarchal will – whether that manifests itself in the form of a father, king or state. Indeed, these forms of patriarchy are often intertwined throughout his fiction and speak to one another across the narratives. Curties invests in lengthy descriptions of devoted master/servant relationships and emphasises filial piety and duty, strategies which glorify the patriarchal father/king figure. These all function as metaphors for the benevolent state and promote the social hierarchy above France’s levelling principle.

In all this he appears to closely resemble his predecessor in the Historical Gothic genre, Clara Reeve. Reeve was prominently listed among James Watt’s ‘loyalist’ gothic writers who denoted ‘a proud heritage of military victory’, ‘an unambiguous moral and patriotic agenda’ and ‘appealed […] to an exemplary medieval era, and to real historical figures and events’.[[506]](#footnote-506) On the other hand, Townshend insists that Curties’s specific focus on the political – conservative, counterrevolutionary and Royalist – implications for the Gothic genre, having retrieved it from its ‘popular associations with radical *Jacobin* politics of the 1790s’, takes him a step beyond ‘loyalist’ into a new breed of ‘royalist’ gothic authors.[[507]](#footnote-507) These labels are useful for critics when it becomes necessary to group authors and texts together under unifying themes or by authorial intent, but for this study they are too limiting. They imply that Curties’s six novels witnessed no variation or development of his political opinion and expression, while in fact the opposite is true. Whilst broadly loyalist in his attitudes, one is loath to dismiss his works as generically royalist in the sense of unfailing allegiance to the English monarchy, as doing so would overlook what is clearly an anomaly in his treatment of the monarchy in *The Watch Tower*.

Similarly, the labels of loyalist and reformist or revolutionary hold the same problematic binary which masks the nuances of authorial intent and generic variation. All of the authors in this study can be broadly labelled as falling on one or the other side of that political divide, but ultimately what brings them into discourse with one another is their mutual interest in the British nation, in interrogating the desired qualities of its leadership and in the consequences when those leaders are found to be lacking. The pursuit of these issues inspired Reeve to portray the model chivalric gentleman in Sir Philip Harclay, motivated Smith to draw her metaphors of the political system in the decay and renovation of ancestral castles, and stirred Ireland to add his pen to those already resurrecting the name of Robert the Bruce as an archetype of kingly qualities. Whilst their political motives remain disparate, Curties joins these authors in interrogating the ideas surrounding nationhood, monarchy and British identity in a way which transcends the limitations of simple binary labels such as loyalist or royalist, reformist or revolutionary.

Curties’s first novel, *Ethelwina*, was published in 1799, as the French Revolution drew to a close. The Reign of Terror was over, but the far-reaching effects of such massive social and political upheaval were still being played out all over Europe. Napoleon’s dictatorship and his later expansion of the French Empire would seek to bring the liberal and radical ideals of the Revolution to the rest of Western Europe and beyond. It had triggered the global decline of absolute monarchies, and the promotion of republics and liberal democracies, in the face of which Britain stood as a royalist bulwark. Gothic literature was prolific during the Revolution, and many of the novels engaged with the liberal values of the French, re-enacted the violence and brutalism of the Reign of Terror, and called – as The Marquis de Sade suggested – ‘upon the aid of hell itself’.[[508]](#footnote-508) The genre had developed a bad reputation for itself, exemplified in the reaction to Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) which drew accusations of impiety, unqualified blasphemy and lewdness.[[509]](#footnote-509) In this politically-charged atmosphere, the genre seemed to have strayed very far from its patriotic, conservative origins with Leland and Reeve. Indeed, one might be tempted to view this potentially subversive Gothic Romance genre as now incompatible with conservative political affiliations, patriotism, and a promotion of patriarchal British institutions, values and class structures. The versatile genre, however, as it had always done, continued to lend itself to both sides of the political divide. Alongside its strain of rebellious and even outright revolutionary novels, the Gothic provided fertile soil for conservative writers to explore national and cultural origins, particularly by resorting to English medieval history.

As Watt explains, the majority of what we now term ‘Gothic’ works originally labelled themselves under the category of ‘Romance’, a genre which Samuel Johnson defined as ‘a military fable of the middle ages’.[[510]](#footnote-510) The polysemy of the Gothic thus included both connotations of sensationalism and the supernatural associated with canonical works such as Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk*, and ‘an idealised pseudo-historical period or locus of exemplary virtue and valour’ found in Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* or Curties’s Historical Gothic novels.[[511]](#footnote-511)The latter texts appealed not only to a British setting, but to ‘an exemplary medieval era, and to real historical figures and events’ in order to promote British ancestry, and make culturally relevant comments about contemporary England.[[512]](#footnote-512) As Markman Ellis notes, the Gothic is ‘a mode for the apprehension and consumption of history’ and therefore despite any apparent incompatibility between Curties’s Gothic authorship and his passion for promoting British history, it is possible to argue that the two are ultimately accordant.[[513]](#footnote-513) Thus Curties, like many of his contemporaries, chose to combine features of the Gothic and the Historical Romance to endorse a patriotic agenda in a time of troubling revolutionary spirit. His fiction undoubtedly seeks to uphold the patriarchal institutions at the core of his career and to endorse the traditional British values which were challenged in the countless, radical Gothic Romances of the 1790s.

These values stemmed from yet another application of the term ‘Gothic’: from the barbarian Visigoths who settled in the British Isles and bequeathed their ‘Gothick Constitution’ to modern day Britons. Such a form of government embodied natural rights of freedom, ‘characterised not only by parliamentary representation, but by feudal land management’.[[514]](#footnote-514) It was naturally inimical to tyranny and absolutism, thus appealing strongly to a people who viewed themselves as ‘a nation of liberty’.[[515]](#footnote-515) What were widely discussed in the Eighteenth Century as ‘traditional British values’ consisted of a respect for the shared national Teutonic heritage and its principles of liberty, enterprise, and legal and military feudalism. This popular appellation was clearly part of the myth-making process of fashioning a shared national identity after the 1707 Act of Union, as Britain had not existed as a nation before that time and therefore had to create its own traditions. Nevertheless, Curties’s conservative agenda did not make his Gothic novels less challenging for the reader. On the contrary, conservative Gothic fiction promoted the bygone glory of medieval England as a direct challenge to modern society. Curties’s work encouraged his reader to compare, evaluate and question the social and political realities of their day. Rather than simply revelling in England’s political, martial and cultural achievements, Curties invoked them as a reminder of the nation’s proud heritage and as a contest to the contemporary state of the realm.

It is this wider patriotic agenda which caused him to break from the royalist affiliations of his previous novels to admire Robert the Bruce in place of Edward I and II in *The Watch Tower*. Bruce is a more suitable representative of true kingly qualities than either the ‘fierce and haughty’ Edward I [[516]](#footnote-516) or the ‘weak’ Edward II.[[517]](#footnote-517) He also embodies a true Briton’s resistance to political tyranny, which was particularly relevant in Curties’s contemporary Britain as it witnessed the rise of the French dictator, Emperor Napoleon I, across the Channel. Curties’s 1804 fiction was therefore responding to contemporary politics, just as two years later, in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars, he provided a fable of staunch support for the English monarchy to promote unwavering loyalism and a counterrevolutionary spirit in *St Botolph’s Priory*. In particular, he engaged in a poignant condemnation of the execution of Charles I in the wake of the French Revolution, and roundly denounced the English Civil War which he believed had brought about the end of England’s celebrated age of chivalry. As Dale Townshend notes, ‘By 1807, such pressing realities as the Napoleonic Wars had rendered the political ambivalences and undecided allegiances of Gothic writing of the previous decade a veritable impossibility’.[[518]](#footnote-518) Writers were forced to take sides between political radicalism or loyalism, and Curties returns to his fierce fidelity towards cherished British institutions in the face of France’s aggression and in memory of America’s disloyalty. In this he joined the general mood of defensive introspection as the nation reimagined its national image in the wake of those Revolutions.[[519]](#footnote-519)

This reactionary introspection involved the rejuvenated popularity of George III. As Linda Colley discusses, before the upheaval of the 1780s – bookended as they were by the defeat in America at one end and the start of the French Revolution at the other - George was often portrayed in the popular imagination as a costly drain on society, as a blind and ductile child, or as an oriental tyrant.[[520]](#footnote-520) From 1786, however, there was a shift in the royal image, and while certain artists remained hostile, most began to represent the King as John Bull, St George, a homespun farmer, a Lear-like patriarch or as Britain itself.[[521]](#footnote-521) William Hazlitt, the critic, essayist and journalist, noted that ‘Our pens and swords have been alike drawn’ in defence of King George and the British government, and that ‘the manufacture of newspapers and parliamentary speeches, have exceeded all former example’.[[522]](#footnote-522) Once Britain was engaged in the war with France from 1803, the wartime context allowed George to be celebrated not just for his royal birth but for his unusually long reign. This was seen to represent the stability of the Island Nation, and became a symbol for Britain’s national identity and resistance to political instability and revolution.

Like a large majority of conservative Gothic novels, Curties’s are framed within a medieval – and more specifically - a fourteenth-century British context. Loyalist writers often employed the romanticised medieval era to promote exemplary chivalric culture, and a proud feudal, martial and political heritage.[[523]](#footnote-523) This dates back to the earliest example of Historical Gothic, Thomas Leland’s *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury: An Historical Romance* (1762), which utilised a medieval setting and no doubt influenced the subsequent course of the genre. Moreover, the Fourteenth Century and the illustrious reign of Edward III, spanning 1327-1377, came to embody an ideal in the popular national imagination. As a direct consequence of the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the almost global conflict which followed, Britain became, as David Cannadine describes it, ‘the most successful counter-revolutionary nation in Europe’.[[524]](#footnote-524) Staunch patriotism was a key aspect of this, with ancestral heroes being invoked in all strata of society to promote a proud national and military heritage: from George III’s commission of seven huge tableaux depicting episodes from Edward III’s life to decorate Windsor Castle; to popular broadsides characterising the British in terms of ‘our Edwards and Henries’; to the range of Historical Gothic and Romantic novels which chose a British medieval backdrop for their action in order to celebrate the chivalric customs, brave figures and bold events of that period.[[525]](#footnote-525)

It is worth noting, that it was not only to Loyalists that the medieval period offered an inspiring setting, nor was it they alone who considered themselves British patriots. During the Eighteenth Century, the term patriot was an ambiguous one, and often carried reformist and radical associations. It was appropriated during Robert Walpole’s period of office as a means of legitimising political opposition from the Tory and old Whig parties. Linda Colley notes that patriotism was a term adopted by many different groups and used in a way that would benefit them personally. ‘Being a patriot’ she states, ‘was a way of claiming the right to participate in British political life, and ultimately a means of demanding a much broader access to citizenship’.[[526]](#footnote-526) Thus, when London radical John Wilkes set himself against the supposed corruption of the Crown and its government, he did so under the claim of a plain and honest citizen, a patriot fighting for his country. The same sense of patriotism informed William Godwin’s novel *Imogen: A Pastoral Romance, From the Ancient British* (1784). It was a reformist rewrite of Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), and used the medieval British setting to stage his complaints against the policies of the contemporary period. As James Watt explains, *Imogen*’s primitive Welsh setting places it in the context of the nationalist literary historiography which ‘constructed an image of pure, uncorrupted society in the mythical past, as a bulwark against the hegemonic forces of English imperialism’.[[527]](#footnote-527) Godwin’s use of the idyllic medieval past to show the corruption of modern society was taken up by several reformists throughout the years, not least by the socialist William Morris in his 1888 novel, *A Dream of John Ball*. Morris once again utilised the mythic idyll of the medieval past to condemn the near-slave labour of the Victorian factories and workhouses.

Equally, while Godwin’s 1794 novel, *Caleb Williams*, condemned the feudal institutions which promoted ‘the poison of chivalry’, in an 1804 work entitled the *Life of Chaucer*, he revised his earlier opinion.[[528]](#footnote-528) ‘It is principally to the feudal system’, he claimed, ‘that we owe the distinguishing features of modern, as contrasted with ancient Europe, that we belong more to our families and less to the state, that we are more of men and less of machines’.[[529]](#footnote-529) He goes on to say that ‘The feudal system was the nurse of chivalry, and the parent of romance; and out of these have sprung the principle of modern honour in the best sense of that term, the generosity of disinterested adventure, and the more persevering and successful cultivation of the private affections’.[[530]](#footnote-530) Having previously condemned chivalry in both his novels and his political tracts in response to Edmund Burke’s lament that ‘the age of chivalry is gone’, Godwin here praises it.[[531]](#footnote-531) According to him, the British medieval feudal system is to thank for individual liberty and the shape of modern Europe. The ‘great chain of subordination in the feudal law’ taught men to respect one another in community, ‘man to man, and neighbour to neighbour’.[[532]](#footnote-532) It ‘nursed’ chivalry, and ‘parented’ romance, which in turn produced the principles of modern honour: ‘disinterested adventure’ and ‘private affections’.[[533]](#footnote-533) Once again, Godwin uses his patriotism to support his reformist ideals; praising these qualities because they stand in opposition to ‘the unsympathising and insensible government of institutions and edicts’.[[534]](#footnote-534) While it suited him to heap scorn upon the medieval past and its chivalric code in the immediate aftermath of Burke’s conservative publication *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), by 1804 he wished to reclaim the rhetoric of patriotism, Gothic chivalry and medievalism to promote brotherhood, equality and reform.

While reformist writers did adopt the medieval setting from time to time, the majority of eighteenth-century novels which resorted to the Middle Ages were predominantly conservative. Among this number are of course those by Reeve, Ireland, Curties, and Scott – indeed, the first four of Curties’s six novels are set in the Fourteenth Century.[[535]](#footnote-535) At the back of his first novel, *Ethelwina*,we find an advert for other ‘books printed at the Minerva Press’, which include *Days of Chivalry* in two volumes by an anonymous ‘female pen’, and *The Mystery of the Black Tower*, by John Palmer, in two volumes, which is set in ‘the reign of Edward the Third – an aera [sic] of chivalry and warlike enterprise’.[[536]](#footnote-536) Like his fellows, Curties used this historical setting to reflect on and promote an idealised, hierarchical, conservative society, and thereby challenge any reformist sentiment in his post-Revolution England. He confronted the topics of monarchy, social hierarchy and benevolent patriarchy to an audience in the aftermath of significant social disruption, in which the utility of these principles had been challenged and questioned. Much like his predecessor, Reeve, who published twenty years before, Curties sought to re-establish in the minds of his readers the value of these traditional institutions. He was involved, as Watt suggests, in the ‘urgent project to re-imagine national identity’ and to ‘exploit the affective power and exemplary potential of prose fiction’ for didactic purposes.[[537]](#footnote-537)

In response to the ‘levelling’ principle adopted by the French, Curties’s fictions establish a clear hierarchy, with a benevolent monarch at its head, which provides beneficial stability and generous support for the various social classes.[[538]](#footnote-538) In this he is following the model of Reeve who, in *Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), states that while ‘all human systems are imperfect, all forms of government are defective […] that is the best government and most likely to be permanent, that makes different ranks and degrees of men necessary to each other, and leads them to cooperate together’.[[539]](#footnote-539) Curties’s first novel, *Ethelwina*, begins with a description of the ‘devoted’ friendship between Edward III and Godfred, Earl of Fitz-Auburne, which was cemented when Godfred ‘gallantly preserved his master’s life, at the imminent hazard of his own’.[[540]](#footnote-540) Curties praises the ‘illustrious’ monarch extensively, celebrates the loyalty of his subject, and reinforces the value of a social hierarchy which calls upon servants to sacrifice for their masters and be subsequently rewarded.[[541]](#footnote-541) Godfred’s fealty to Edward III is immediately contrasted to the betrayal of his deposed father Edward II at the hands of Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March, and his wife Queen Isabella. While Curties does not defend Edward II’s reign as an unpopular and oppressive king, he insists upon defending him from betrayal and disloyalty, and ensures that his persecutors are roundly punished throughout the narrative.

Early in the first volume, Curties includes a description of the fictional Baron de Mountserville who, having been deceived by Queen Isabella and Mortimer into betraying Edward II and ultimately exposed by the vengeful Edward III, chooses to take his own life rather than live in infamy. In a harrowing scene, the hero Godfred visits his old friend’s Gothic seat and winds his way through gloomy apartments to a tower room where the Baron lies on a decaying couch, run through with his own poniard. Beside him lies a letter where he declares that he will ‘not live dishonoured’ to be the scorn of the nation and his children, but commends them to Godfred’s care and chooses death over banishment: ‘rescue my name from the opprobrious epithets of shame and dishonour – be the guardian of my fame, and preserve it, by this great act, untarnished and unsullied to future ages’.[[542]](#footnote-542) The ‘great act’ that he calls Godfred to is to care for his young children, who will carry his name down the line of descendants and therefore beyond the stain of his infamy. In a reverse of Horace Walpole’s Old Testament moral ‘that the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation’, Mountserville’s crimes die with him and his children are free to pursue a more noble fate.[[543]](#footnote-543) To Curties, the betrayal of a king – even one as weak and capricious as Edward II – must be punished by death, but his treatment of Mountserville, mourned and remembered by the novel’s hero, reveals that he sympathised with the problem of poor rulers, even at this early stage in his career. Even so, he condemns the ‘horrible sacrilegious murder’ of Edward III’s ‘injured father, the deposed and unfortunate Edward II’ - albeit with only brief, passing sympathy - as a condemnation of the French and their Reign of Terror. [[544]](#footnote-544) Six years previous, King Louis XVI had been executed by guillotine by an angry mob of Revolutionaries, facing the empty pedestal where the statue of his grandfather, Louis XV, had stood. Curties honours Edward II as a king, even if he cannot praise him as a ruler, and proceeds throughout *Ethelwina* to evaluate and praise Edward III for his kingly qualities.

For loyalist writers, the Fourteenth Century offered a model for the feudal society, chivalric manners and military success that they wanted to promote. As Clara Reeve notes in her ‘Introduction’ to *Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), ‘The age of King Edward IIId [sic] was one of those most fruitful of eminent men, not only in England, but in all the countries of Europe’.[[545]](#footnote-545) It presented an ideal royal house via which to discuss desirable and undesirable kingly qualities. The House of Plantagenet held the English throne from 1154 with the accession of Henry II, until 1485 when Richard III died at the Battle of Bosworth Field. Their entire reign was a period of transformation and advancement for England, which saw the implementation of a sophisticated justice system, the establishment of English as the primary language, and the shaping of a distinct national identity following conflict with France, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. During the Fourteenth Century, four Plantagenet kings sat upon the throne and between them they displayed a range of personalities and qualities which make them ideal subjects for the debate on good kings. Curties engaged with this historical period in detail, and particularly with the Plantagenet kings, in his design to discuss kingly qualities, the utility of the monarchy and right of the people to choose their own leader. What follows here is a brief history of the four kings Curties drew on in his fiction.

Edward I (1272-1307) was a well-regarded statesman and soldier, but encountered heavy censure by eighteenth-century authors who condemned his brutal treatment of the Scots, and particularly of their champions – William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. In his fourth novel, *The Watch Tower*, Curties sets the scene of political conflict between Scotland and England as follows:

For Edward the First of England had long kept a watchful eye upon a country he had marked for scenes of future tyranny, and now beheld with jealous scrutiny the flames of discord that shortly burst forth. – It was the wished for period of his hopes, and when arrived, he seized the power it gave him fortunate to his secret designs, and assuming the outward mask of a friendly arbitrator, with a smiling benevolent aspect, but a wolfish purpose, succeeded to subjugate a noble though unhappy race, beneath his own fierce and haughty usurpation.[[546]](#footnote-546)

Curties’s allegiances here are clear and he does not hesitate to condemn King Edward I for his tyrannous intentions towards the freedom-loving Scots. Rather than lacking Royalist zeal, however, his narrative redirects its loyalty to Robert the Bruce, king of the Scots, and celebrates his kingly qualities in the absence of a suitable English monarch.

Edward’s son, Edward II (1307-1327), was most often utilised by authors as a cautionary tale. While his father was a successful military commander, Edward II’s rule was dominated by defeat, most decisively at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 against Robert the Bruce. He was characterised by eighteenth-century authors as a weak and incompetent king, too preoccupied with frivolities, and was often associated with the dangers of Francophilia. For example, he appeared in Ireland’s *Gondez* (1805) as a ‘misguided prince’, ‘utterly incapable of war, being rather calculated to dispense his favours on fawning sycophants’ and ‘expend the treasures of the realm on gawdy pageantry and enervating pleasures’.[[547]](#footnote-547) As Angela Wright discusses in *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820*, Francophilia took on a major social, political and cultural significance in the mid to late Eighteenth Century. She observes that, ‘many patriotic Britons considered borrowings from France to be acts of cultural treason’.[[548]](#footnote-548) Linda Colley confirms that, ‘Allowing Frenchisms to infiltrate the English language, importing French manufactured goods, polishing themselves “into a refined insincerity” merely because it was fashionable were nothing less than cultural treason, a vicious squandering of true identity’.[[549]](#footnote-549) This anti-French sentiment was closely tied to Britain’s burgeoning patriotism in this period, and to its attempts to refashion the shared national identity in opposition to their seemingly natural enemies - the French, Catholic ‘other’. Highlighting the class implications of this Francophobia, Wright notes that the aristocracy became ‘irrevocably connected with effeminacy, foreignness, degeneracy and corruption’.[[550]](#footnote-550)

Following a similar line of inquiry, Gerald Newman had noted that the interpolated tale from Henry Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews* (1742), in which a naïve young woman is stolen from her honest British lover by a dissipated Francophile aristocrat, spoke to the same concerns. He observed that:

[The] inner logic was inherently anti-cosmopolitan, anti-aristocratic, and nativist. It exploited the energies attached to crude anti-French myth and joined these to ancient notions of aristocratic moral degeneracy […] combining rude notions of national character, cultural invasion, moral pollution, social transmission, and collective spiritual disintegration.[[551]](#footnote-551)

Newman traced this antagonistic rhetoric to the decades between the 1740s and 1780s which were central to the ‘launching of English nationalism’.[[552]](#footnote-552) Kathleen Wilson further explains how this anti-French sentiment fed into and legitimised Britain’s imperial struggles at this time:

Imperial struggles were viewed at home as battles over the national character, and support and defence of the empire were privileged as national duties. […] Empire was the means to becoming more independent and self-contained as a nation, rejecting foreign influences and introducing English virtue wherever the English dared to tread.[[553]](#footnote-553)

This proud national rhetoric condemned anything seemingly aristocratic, effeminate or foreign and equated them with weakness and corruption. Thus, Edward II, a king with a close and controversial relationship with another man, his advisor Piers Gaveston, a weakness for foppery and a passion for expensive parties, became a symbol of the danger of a weak and incompetent ruler.

Edward III (1327-1377) was noted for his military success and for restoring the glory of the English monarchy after his father’s disastrous rule. His reign transformed England into one of the most formidable military powers in Europe and spanned the first forty years of the Hundred Years’ War. As May McKisack notes, he was:

[…] reckoned by many generations of Englishmen to be among the greatest, if not the greatest, of their kings. He was ‘the famous and fortunate warrior’, whose epitaph in Westminster Abbey declares that he was ‘the glory of the English, the flower of kings past, a pattern for kings to come, a clement king, the bringer of peace to his people’.[[554]](#footnote-554)

He was universally praised throughout the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries with consistency and fervour, and even David Hume, who wrote more sensibly about Edward than many other historians, regarded him as ‘a prince of great capacity, not governed by favourites, not led astray by any unruly passion; sensible that nothing could be more essential to his interests than to keep on good terms with his people’.[[555]](#footnote-555) Hume goes on to say that due to the ‘prudence and vigour’ of Edward’s reign, England enjoyed ‘a longer interval of domestic peace and tranquillity than she had been blest [sic] with in any former period, or than she experienced for many ages after’[[556]](#footnote-556) but balances the account by continuing:

The English are apt to consider with peculiar fondness the history of Edward III, and to esteem his reign, as it was one of the longest, the most glorious also that occurs in the annals of their nation. The ascendant which they then began to acquire over France, their rival and supposed national enemy, makes them cast their eyes on this period with great complacency […][[557]](#footnote-557)

From an unmistakably Scottish perspective, Hume associates Edward III’s popularity with his victories over France and, while acknowledging his outstanding abilities, goes on to question whether his wars were founded in justice or tyranny. Nevertheless, Edward was culturally appropriated during the Eighteenth Century by the monarchy and the people as a symbol of England’s military prowess against France and the supremacy of the nation.

Finally, the last of the fourteenth-century monarchs was Richard II of England (1377-1399). The grandson of Edward III, Richard was the son of Edward, the Black Prince, an exceptional military leader in his own right. Richard unfortunately did not follow in the footsteps of his illustrious kinsman and, like Edward II, is generally remembered, as he is by Clara Reeve in her novel *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), as, ‘light and vain-glorious, fickle and inconstant, fond of shews, and pageants, and vanities of every kind… he drew about him a set of venal and profligate favorites [sic], and squandered away upon them the revenues of his kingdom’.[[558]](#footnote-558) He features extensively in several eighteenth-century Gothic novels, including Reeve’s *Memoirs*,where she employs Richard as a foil for the ‘great men’ she uses to inspire her readers and warns that his deposition is ‘an awful lesson to princes, how they abuse the confidence of their people’.[[559]](#footnote-559) This stands in stark contrast to Hume’s assessment of Richard’s father, Edward III, who ‘gained the affections of the great, yet curbed their licentiousness… his affable and obliging behaviour… made them submit with pleasure to his dominion’.[[560]](#footnote-560) These four Plantagenet kings feature regularly in loyalist eighteenth-century Gothic novels as authors resort to the Fourteenth Century to display England’s past glory or debate the true qualities of kingship.

Curties’s first novel, *Ethelwina*, focuses on Edward III as an epitome of kingly quality and a staunch defender of English liberty. His reign is introduced on the first line as ‘illustrious’, and his frequent military conquests in France throughout the novel earn him the title ‘victorious Edward’, a man of ‘immortal glory’, raised to ‘ages of succeeding martial honour’.[[561]](#footnote-561) He is hailed as ‘great in justice as in war’, bestowing ‘unmerited generosity’, and throughout the novel acts as a defender of the eponymous heroine’s virtue.[[562]](#footnote-562) This dual role as fierce warrior and champion of the innocent is significant because it is the foundation of the chivalric code. As J C L Simonde de Sismondi states, while the feudal system is a historic reality, ‘Chivalry, on the contrary, is the ideal world, such as it existed in the imaginations of the Romance writers. Its essential character is devotion to woman and to honor’.[[563]](#footnote-563) Edward III displays these qualities in defending Ethelwina from the advances of her cousin, the Lord Leopold de St. Iver, and in his military conquests, respectively. As such, he promotes the same principles as Reeve’s Sir Philip Harclay – embodying the noble head of a successful social hierarchy, where his inferiors may look to him for defence and support.

This hierarchy is demonstrated through the benevolent master/servant relationships he conducts with Ethelwina’s father and brother, and his other male subjects. The novel begins with Godfred as the ‘bosom friend and favourite of his august master’, and ends with Augustine returning to England from battle in France ‘high in the favour of his mighty Master’ who has ‘restored all the splendour of his titles and ancient possessions’ and ‘loaded [him] with honours and bright renown’.[[564]](#footnote-564) Enacting the other part of the chivalric code, in the absence of her male relatives, Ethelwina looks to the King as a father-figure to protect her from unwanted romantic advances. Throughout her captivity with Iver in volume II, she uses Edward’s name as a threat, stating, ‘Remember, I am a free-born British dame, and subject to no controul [sic] but that of my Royal Protector! Remember also, that gracious Edward honours me with guardianship and favour, and when he shall hear the wrongs I have endured, think you he will not avenge them?’[[565]](#footnote-565) Elsewhere, she tries to reason with Iver’s soldiers by overstating her influence on the King and appealing to the chivalric code: ‘My intercessions with the Royal Edward shall procure you pardon; you shall be the soldiers and defenders of virtue’.[[566]](#footnote-566) That neither Iver nor his household can be moved by fear of their liege lord or the demands of chivalry is the worst criticism that Curties can make of them.

Curties’s narratives often feature unswaying filial obedience as a treatise on sovereignty. *Ethelwina* begins with Edward III seeking to avenge his literal father/king, Edward II, as a model for the conceptual conflation that we see throughout the rest of the novel of fathers and kings. The absence of Ethelwina’s father allows her cousin, Leopold, to act upon an illicit, semi-incestuous desire for her through a repetitive series of abductions, deceptions, druggings and imprisonments. Only her role as ward of the crown offers her any wordly protection, but when Leopold’s assault on her reaches its frenzied height, the ghost of her murdered father, Baron Godfred Fitz-Auburne, King Edward III’s faithful companion, appears and apprehends him, saying ‘The guardian of virtue still prevails, and thou and all thy power shall be as nothing! – Begone!’[[567]](#footnote-567) It is not made clear if the ‘guardian of virtue’ still prevailing is the King or the ghost of her murdered father, but through the efforts of them both, Ethelwina is saved. In exchange, she is called upon to avenge her father’s murder in a scene reminiscent of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*; crying out ‘For what – for what, Oh mysterious Power! Am I brought to this scene of horror?’, a loud, hollow voice replies, ‘To revenge the murder of thy father, whose spirit now calls upon thee!’[[568]](#footnote-568) Unable to refuse the command, and despite ‘the weakness and delicacy of [her] sex’, she resolves to avenge her father.[[569]](#footnote-569) Mercifully, she is spared the task by her brother Arthur, who returns to see the paternal mandate through to its conclusion, having sworn to, ‘never know what ease and happiness are, till I have avenged the murder of my sire, and removed his ashes from its den of pollution and slaughter!’[[570]](#footnote-570)

In a similar narrative of extreme filial piety and obedience to the will of a dead father, Curties’s last novel, *The Monk of Udolpho* (1807), features a desperate heroine, Hersilia, who is both stained by the apparent suicide of her father and bound by the restrictions of her surrogate paternal authority – her lover’s father – who has prohibited their union. Throughout the novel, she puts her obedience to these father-figures before her own will, and is eventually rewarded when her father’s death is discovered to be a murder and her family shame is lifted. As Dale Townshend summarises, ‘Firm in the belief that her commitment to filial piety far outweighs the pain of her suffering, Hersilia’s pose is one of stolid endurance throughout’.[[571]](#footnote-571) The political implications of these narratives are especially clear when read in the context of late eighteenth-century Europe where, as Lynn Hunt has observed, political discourse was marked by a curious overlapping of fatherhood and kingship.[[572]](#footnote-572) In her book, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992), she traces the image of the father-king throughout the Revolution until he is ultimately replaced by the law as the emblem of authority, justice and provision. Similarly, John Barrell describes how the language used during the French Revolution, particularly in relation to George III and his illness, ‘could construct, for loyalists at least, the image of the nation as a single family, united in concern for its royal father’.[[573]](#footnote-573) To preach fidelity to the father-figure as head of the household, was therefore a barely coded reference to the importance of loyalty and obedience to the sovereign as head of the state. Thus, Curties’s father-kings perform their chivalrous role by protecting vulnerable young heroines as their own daughters, and in turn receive filial obedience and love.

In stark contrast to Curties’s glowing representation of Edward III as a noble master and loving father-king who inspired loyalty in all who followed him, in 1804 he published *The Watch Tower*, detailing the reign of Edward I and his conflict against Robert the Bruce of Scotland. Edward I, or Edward Longshanks, reigned from 1272 to 1307. He spent much of his reign reforming royal administration and common law through statutes, establishing Parliament as a permanent institution and restoring royal authority after Henry III’s unpopular reign. He was also remembered for his military ability throughout the Ninth Crusade, the rebellion of the English barons, and his campaigns to subjugate Wales and Scotland. His subjects respected the way he embodied the medieval ideal of kingship – as a soldier, an administrator and a man of faith – and as Scott Waugh writes, ‘[he] was revered as a powerful commander, first on Crusade, then against the Welsh and the Scots’[[574]](#footnote-574). Among eighteenth-century Gothic authors debating the qualities of kingship, however, Edward I came under heavy criticism. His temperamental personality and brutal treatment of the Scots is sufficient to incur even Curties’s censure who introduces him in *The Watch Tower* as ‘the haughty conqueror, Edward the first, of England’.[[575]](#footnote-575) Elsewhere in the novel he is described as ‘jealous’, ‘fierce’ and ‘treacherous’, his military prowess undermined by his dishonourable dealings with the Scottish nobles and his tyrannical rule over England.[[576]](#footnote-576) Similarly, in *Gondez the Monk* (1805) Ireland characterised Edward I as having a ‘despotic will’ and a ‘thirst to wreak his vengeance’.[[577]](#footnote-577) For them, Edward’s flaws stand out in particular relief against Robert the Bruce’s kingly qualities and manly rule. Bruce is also warlike, but heralded as one of ‘aspiring heroic spirit’, ‘undaunted courage’ and ‘little less than… superhuman powers’.[[578]](#footnote-578) Significantly for Curties, he is carefully represented as King Robert the First, ‘solemnly inaugurated at Scone’, and his ‘right to the crown of his progenitors [is] confirmed and settled’ so that he stands as a champion of kingly authority and not as a rebel against King Edward I.[[579]](#footnote-579)

Curties’s criticism of Edward I is not, therefore, anti-royalist or unpatriotic. Indeed, his desire to discuss the qualities of a rightful king and the services he should render his country, displays his loyalty to England and its people. In a similar way, Britons could call themselves patriotic monarchists and still praise the Glorious Revolution of 1688 which saw James II deposed for William of Orange. That Bloodless Revolution had been necessary for the preservation of constitutional liberty and political balance. As Edmund Burke explained, it was not the rejection of historical and hereditary identity, like the American Revolution, or the ‘fabrication of a new government’ like the French Revolution, but a way of setting things right with a ‘firm but cautious and deliberate spirit’.[[580]](#footnote-580) Curties’s patriotism, then, is not demonstrated through an allegiance to specific monarchs, but to the ideals of monarchy. His Gothic work confronts a variety of historical British monarchs and assesses their suitability to promote Britain’s interests and defend her liberty. Central to this is his comparison of Edward I and Robert the Bruce in his 1804 discussion of the Scottish wars.

He first addresses the conflict between England and Scotland in *Ethelwina* in 1799 where he runs it as a parallel narrative to Edward III’s victories in France. Curties traces its development from volume I, where we are told that ‘a war at this time threatened the kingdoms of England and Scotland’ and where Ethelwina is warned that ‘the long threatened war was expected soon to commence’;[[581]](#footnote-581) through to volume III where Queen Phillipa leads the English in the ‘long threatened decisive war’ and where she returns to England, ‘having victoriously conquered her daring enemies, and subdued and taken prisoner the Scottish King’.[[582]](#footnote-582) Meanwhile, Edward III has ‘at last conquered the proud, crest-fallen heart of Gallia, and taken her Sovereign captive’.[[583]](#footnote-583) In this novel Curties celebrates England’s victory over Scotland in the conflict between Edward III and David II. There is no question of the motives or political causes behind the war; instead it is used as an illustration of England’s bravery and military glory.

Five years later, however, when penning *The Watch Tower*, Curties’s representation of the fourteenth-century Anglo-Scottish conflicts was very different. Instead of glorifying an honourable English warrior-king, he would condemn the bloodthirsty Edward I for his treatment of the noble, freedom-loving Scots and their heroic leader, Robert the Bruce. Curties was writing during a politically fraught period when all eyes and opinions were on leaders – Napoleon and his increasingly tyrannous dictatorship over the French ‘Republic’ (his official coronation took place the same year as Curties published *The Watch Tower*), and George III of Britain who was experiencing increasing bouts of debilitating illness. Curties’s encompassing focus on leadership in general, and his interrogation of the requirements of a suitable ruler, was in direct response to the contemporary political climate. Contrary to his representation of Edward III’s victory over David II, then, Curties supports Robert the Bruce’s rebellion against Edward I. He praises Bruce as an inborn, natural leader, and emphasises Edward’s ‘treachery’ and Baliol’s ‘dastard spirit’ against Bruce’s ‘nobler soul’.[[584]](#footnote-584)

In volume II he dedicates a full chapter to the history of the Scottish Wars of Independence, and praises Bruce’s loyalty to his own ancestors in place of a usurping English monarch. Rather than his previous Royalism, this conforms more closely to Reeve’s brand of Loyalism, with Curties focusing on Britain as a nation state rather than upon the monarchy itself. He narrates Bruce’s refusal of Edward in terms of a British loyalist opposing an invader:

‘The throne of my illustrious ancestors,’ he with patriotic disinterestedness emphatically pronounced, addressing England’s penetrating King, ‘was left free and unamenable to earthly jurisdiction. – I will reign royally, but I will not purchase my crown by the base submissions you demand, nor dishonour my people and my country by making *either slaves* to a foreign yoke. – Bruce shall sway an independent sceptre, but disdains to receive a feudal one.’[[585]](#footnote-585)

Here, Curties promotes Scotland as an independent nation and depicts Edward as an invading force, praising Bruce for his loyalty in defending his country from usurpers. In this way, he defends a blatant challenge to his Royalist position by paralleling Scotland and England to England and France, during the Napoleonic Wars. Following the French Revolution and during the Wars, the English populace were primed for invasion from the continent. Here Curties uses the Island Nation rhetoric that England employed to describe Scotland’s struggle – naming it ‘free’ and ‘unamenable to earthly jurisdiction’ in the same vein as loyalists called England a ‘chosen land’.[[586]](#footnote-586) By proclaiming that his people would never be ‘slaves to a foreign yoke’, Bruce articulated the pride Britons had for their sovereign isle and their resistance to outside influence from the French.

Throughout *The Watch Tower*, Curties set his main narrative against the backdrop of the bloody civil war between Scotland and England, followed by Edward’s tyrannous and foreign rule, calling on the native British love of liberty to incite sympathy. He stated how Scotland sank under ‘a foreign yoke’, ‘lost her dearest independence’, and how ‘the throne became degraded’ and ‘the nation lost its freedom’ to Edward I.[[587]](#footnote-587) This criticism of King Edward is not a break from Curties’s Royalism, nor an endorsement for political devolution. He quickly followed with a description of the ‘great chieftains, residing in their mountain castles, unamenable to the laws of their country, and their actions subject to no judicial control’.[[588]](#footnote-588) He grieved that in this lawless state, ‘every enormity of vice displayed itself, unchecked and undisturbed in its ruinous career’, and that individuals could rule with ‘despotic sway over the inhabitants that dwelt on their territory’.[[589]](#footnote-589) The description of this chaotic era, when ‘even murder itself was [rarely] punished as its crime deserved’, would have called to mind the French Revolution - and specifically the Reign of Terror - in the British imagination, and the unchecked atrocities committed in the name of new-found republican freedom.[[590]](#footnote-590) Curties condemned the political upheaval of the period – the ‘horrors of civil war’ and the ‘treacherous foreign yoke’ of Edward, who ruled from too great a distance to hold sway – and instead calls for the consistent peace and power of a hereditary ruler.[[591]](#footnote-591)

Without a strong ruler, Scotland is depicted as devolving into an anarchical state where ‘the law of arms overbore the claims of justice’, and where ‘to appeal to the monarch or the government of the state for redress […] was unavailing’.[[592]](#footnote-592) Curties called for ‘the most able intellect to steer with honour the helm of majesty, and maintain its prerogative unshackled’; which he presented in Robert the Bruce.[[593]](#footnote-593) Men must have a strong ruler at their head, or they descend into the chaos witnessed in the French republic, but that King must be native, present and able. In setting the scene for his narrative, Curties made it clear that he was condemning both the ‘levelling principle on the continent’ and weak monarchs, and championing a ruler of kingly qualities and renown.[[594]](#footnote-594) To this end, Curties dedicated a large section of his second volume to a lengthy comparison between Edward I and Baliol, and Wallace and Bruce. Edward I is described as ‘wolfish’, ‘fierce’ and ‘haughty’, ‘meditating secret treachery’ but contriving with ‘consummate policy and art’.[[595]](#footnote-595) In his cunning, he manipulated Scotland into receiving Baliol as king, a man ‘of a spiritless imbecile mind, totally unfitted by nature for the arduous office of governing a fierce impatient spirited warlike nation’.[[596]](#footnote-596) Both the powerful tyrant and the weak puppet make poor kings because they fail to excite loyalty and respect in their people. As such, Curties described how the Scottish chieftains ‘openly derided [Baliol’s] shadow of kingly power’ and ‘betaking themselves to their remote castles and mountain fastnesses, assumed an undisputed sway over their own vassalage’.[[597]](#footnote-597) In this divided state, they easily fall prey to Edward’s schemes. Having related Baliol’s betrayal at Edward’s hands – how he was ‘carried ingloriously in chains to England, and died, forgotten and unknown’ – Curties introduced Wallace, to display the contrasting characteristics of a noble leader.[[598]](#footnote-598) Wallace is described as ‘dauntless intrepid Wallace’, and, ‘brave, victorious Wallace’, heralded as a strong leader with the power to unite and lead the Scots.[[599]](#footnote-599)

Unfortunately, however, while he can rouse and unite the soldiers, he lacks the hereditary authority to unite the chieftains. When Edward attacks, they, ‘instead of beholding in the heroic Wallace a generous leader, and a brave defender of their country and her rights’, choose to ‘degrade him from his rank of chief commander, and took upon themselves supreme authority’.[[600]](#footnote-600) Once again, in this divided state they fall prey to Edward and his singular force, leading to Wallace’s martyred death. Curties’s message here is clear: that a good king needs both the hereditary authority and God-given right to rule, but also the qualities of a strong and just leader to inspire his people to love and obedience. When Wallace and Bruce meet, the former addresses the latter as ‘my Prince’, ‘Scotland’s imperial heir’, ‘a champion’ and ‘Oh! Royal Bruce!’, while he refers to himself only as ‘lowly Wallace’: drawing attention to Bruce’s right and responsibility to lead Scotland.[[601]](#footnote-601) He charges him with ‘the right to save from lasting captivity thine and thy bleeding kingdom’s freedom’, and inspires Bruce to reject Edward’s yoke and reclaim his position as Scotland’s king.[[602]](#footnote-602) Through this powerful imagery, Curties inspired his readers with Royalist loyalty and patriotic pride in a nation which can withstand both civil war and invasion from abroad. Just as in the figure of Robert the Bruce he presented an ideal leader, the summation of Britain’s native love of liberty, chivalrous manners and military zeal.

Curties’s interrogation of leaders in *The Watch Tower* was in direct response to the political turmoil of the day. Equally, two years later in 1806 when he penned *St Botolph’s Priory* about the English Civil War, he was once again engaging with contemporary political thought. Britain’s anxiety about the French Revolution was directly linked to its anxieties about its own political history, specifically the seventeenth-century English Civil War (1642-51) and the Glorious Revolution (1688). The political turmoil of the 1790s and consequent near-Global conflict of the Napoleonic Wars sustained Gothic literature as an appropriate genre for engaging with relevant political questions. In support of this, Maggie Kilgour notes that:

While the nature of the past, and its relation to the present, was debated throughout the eighteenth century, it gained new life with the French Revolution, as the Terror proved fertile for a literature of terror. In an England obsessed with the question of parliamentary reform and agitation for social changes, the abrupt and total change that occurred in France seemed both exhilarating and terrifying, and to require a complete rethinking of the basis of all systems of order. This was partially because this spectacle, as well as raising the danger of contamination from abroad, raised again and more pressingly the spectre of its own past: the Civil War and Glorious Revolution. The gothic displaced anxieties at home onto places geographically and temporally remote, at the very time that, inversely, the British were reading the Revolution of 1789 through the Revolution of 1688, understanding the foreign present in terms of the domestic past.[[603]](#footnote-603)

While Curties’s fiction, and that of other national Gothic authors, did not geographically displace anxieties onto the European continent, it certainly engaged with temporal displacement. Understanding the political present through historical events is a technique evident in these Gothic texts which set themselves in the mythic medieval British past. During the aftershock of the French Revolution and in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars, Curties resurrected a tale of the English Civil War to praise the monarchy, and condemn disloyalty and the unpatriotic, patricidal deposition of the father/king.

The heroine of *St Botolph’s Priory*, Roselina St Aubespine, remains an unwavering Royalist throughout the novel and must contend with a hierarchy of villains, including the historical figures of George Joyce and Oliver Cromwell who are in league with the devil against the Divinely-appointed king. Curties’s narrative represents a confrontation between those characters who respect and regard the absolute rule of the monarch, and those who are accused of destroying the very fabric of the English Gothic constitution. Their disloyalty to their monarch, their merciless and unchivalrous pursuit of Charles’s queen, Henrietta Maria, and their disregard for and destruction of ancient national institutions, is directly parallel to Burke’s accusations against the French during the Revolution. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* Burke lamented that the Revolution signalled that ‘the age of chivalry [was] gone… the glory of Europe [was] extinguished for ever’.[[604]](#footnote-604) For Curties, the English Civil War signified a similar thing; England’s chivalric code, its Gothic constitution, had been transgressed by the murder of Charles I. The flame of chivalry, if not entirely extinguished, had at least been dulled. His tale of conspiracy, disloyalty, regicide and persecution sought to engage with and narrate contemporary French politics through the lens of English history. It gave voice to the shared anxieties of the nation and provided them with a bold, royalist, counter-revolutionary message at a time when the English needed to rally around their monarch to challenge Napoleon and his republican ideals.

As with his previous novels, Curties’s *St Botolph’s Priory* was an astute response to contemporary politics and a valuable piece of political, royalist propaganda. Throughout his career, Curties used the popular Historical Gothic genre to promote a decidedly conservative, counterrevolutionary and royalist rhetoric in the face of the French Revolution’s levelling principle and Napoleon’s aggression. This Historical Gothic fiction engages with the English past as a way of understanding and narrating contemporary political events. Thus, it is not merely royalist bombast or blunt propaganda, rather it engages with the tensions and subtleties of popular political sentiment at the time of composition. Curties’s fiction demonstrates an acute awareness of this by not blindly promoting the monarchy, but rather by actively interrogating the qualities of a good leader, the right of a people to choose their own ruler, and the consequences that face a king who betrays his role as a father of the people.

In this he was not alone, as other Gothic authors sought to address the political turmoil of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries by resurrecting tales of the English past. In order to present a united front against their European enemies, the British invested in refashioning a strong, shared, national identity that drew directly on their Gothic ancestry, chivalric code and freedom-loving constitution. The boom in antiquarianism, the rise of militant patriotism and the popularity of national Gothic novels during this period are a testament to this collective myth-making process of national identity formation. The final chapter of this thesis will explore these ideas further in relation to Sir Walter Scott’s fiction, which combines narrative and stylistic techniques from Gothic literature, the national tale and the Historical novel. With a specific focus on exploring the Union of Scotland and England to form a united nation, and the consequent loss and refashioning of national identity, Scott demonstrates the scope and relevance of the national Gothic genre.

Chapter Five

Walter Scott: A United Nation?

Had I, for example, announced in my frontispiece, “Waverley, a Tale of other Days,” must not every novel-reader have anticipated a castle scarce less than that of Udolpho, of which the eastern wing had long been uninhabited, and the keys either lost, or consigned to the care of some aged butler or housekeeper, whose trembling steps, about the middle of the second volume, were doomed to guide the hero, or heroine, to the ruinous precincts?

* Walter Scott, *Waverley; or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814)[[605]](#footnote-605)

In his introductory chapter to *Waverley*, published anonymously in 1814, Scott self-consciously distances his novel from the Gothic genre. His light-hearted comments about Ann Radcliffe’s hugely successful and lucrative four volume novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) draw attention to the clichéd and ubiquitous tropes that were being recycled by authors of the popular genre throughout the latter decades of the Eighteenth Century. He explains that the tell-tale subtitles of what scholars now identify as Gothic fiction – ‘a Tale of other Days’, ‘a Romance from the German’ or ‘a Sentimental Tale’ – were all avoided because they evoke stereotypes in the minds of readers who will expect ‘a profligate abbot, an oppressive duke, a secret and mysterious association of Illuminati’, ‘black cowls, caverns, daggers, electrical machines, trap-doors, and dark-lanterns’, or indeed a ‘heroine with a profusion of auburn hair, and a harp, the soft solace of her solitary hours’.[[606]](#footnote-606) Despite being a prolific reader of Gothic fiction himself, Scott wanted to distance his novel from the profusion of Gothic Romances that were being produced, and to mark his authorial intent by defining *Waverley* against what it was not. He makes it clear to his audience that ‘they will meet in the following pages neither a romance of chivalry, nor a tale of modern manners’ and that his hero will bear neither the name nor dress of an antique knight or a sentimental man.[[607]](#footnote-607) Instead, Scott resolved to set his novel during the reign of George II and to make it ‘more a description of men than manners’, focusing on the ‘passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corslet of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of the present day’.[[608]](#footnote-608) His desire to address these ‘common passions’ and to make the past relevant, familiar and continuous to the present can be seen throughout his literary career.

Despite this initial mockery of the Gothic genre, however, Scott’s historical fiction frequently employed Gothic tropes, often combining the intrigue and drama of the Gothic genre with novelistic realism and antiquarianism. This combination of a popular fictional mode with historical depth and accuracy, of romance and realism, has sparked fierce debates among the reviewers and scholars who have attempted to identify Scott’s generic intention, but it lent itself well to the topics he wanted to explore. In particular, Scott’s pragmatic evaluation of the nation’s past, of the myth-making process of unifying Britain, and of its historical leaders and their qualities, were fertile ground for the Historical Gothic mode. Scott’s use of British history to explore domestic politics via the Gothic genre unites him with the previous authors of this thesis, but his position as a Scottish author makes his contribution to this national Gothic trend unique among these peers. Scotland lent itself particularly well to the Gothic aesthetic, being a liminal space in the English literary imagination, a place of national division, incoherent identity, and fragmentation.

The two major crises of the Eighteenth Century which induced these issues were the Union between the parliaments of England and Scotland in 1707, and the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745/6. These political events forever fractured the collective Scottish national identity, and indeed even destroyed some families whose individual members saw themselves as part of the Union or sided with the Jacobite cause or even remained undecided. Tropes of doubling, dual identities and schizophrenia in Scottish Gothic are often references to the nation’s identity crisis, and many authors focused specifically on brothers to draw out the divisive feuds evoked by the Union. Scott’s own novel *The Monastery* (1820) features a pair of rival brothers caught up in and ultimately alienated by the Anglo-Scottish hostilities. Similarly, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) is a tale of brotherly rivalry and madness, in which the older brother goes out to fight for the Jacobite cause in the 1745 Rebellion while the younger stays at home and displays fidelity to the British monarch. Scotland’s contested position as an independent nation or as ‘North Britain’ ensured that narratives of liminal space and lost identity would always haunt it. Many Gothic authors before Scott, including Ireland and Horsley-Curties, had utilised Scotland for their Gothic narratives to explore and exploit the impact of these significant national events on Scottish identity, national unity and historical coherence. In Scott’s work, however, the landscape of Scotland, the culture of its people and their history is not ventriloquised by English authors for a national narrative, but given a native voice. His narratives examine these crises through the Gothic tropes of disenfranchised heirs, ineffectual heroes and ‘uncanny’ national landscapes, rich in ancestral material culture in need of exhumation.

Literary critics have long argued over where to place Scott in the canon with regards to genre, style and skill, and his inclusion in a study of nationalist Gothic fiction needs to be justified. While his advocates have sought to promote him as a respected author of Historical novels who displays a serious engagement with national and individual identity, his detractors have characterised his work as romantic and fanciful. In 1832 Thomas Carlyle, for example, condemned the Waverley Novels as lacking moral seriousness or intellectual weight, and being fit only for ‘harmlessly amusing indolent, languid men’. [[609]](#footnote-609) Similarly, F R Leavis’s footnote dismissing Scott as making ‘no serious attempt to work out his own form and break away from the bad tradition of the eighteenth-century romance’, set the tone for the majority of twentieth-century criticism on the subject.[[610]](#footnote-610) These reviews marginalise Scott by associating his work with the popular Gothic Romances of the Eighteenth Century, calculated only for entertainment and therefore unworthy of serious critical appraisal. Indeed, the revival of critical study on Scott, due principally to the work of Georg Lukács and David Daiches, hinged on first divorcing him from previous associations with romance and redefining him as a Historical novelist and a realist. According to Lukács, ‘Scott’s greatness lies in his capacity to give living human embodiment to historical-social types […] consciously set at the centre of the representation of reality’.[[611]](#footnote-611) Daiches also rebels against the received idea of a romantic Scott, claiming that ‘his tendency to look at history through character and at character through the history that had worked on it […] provided the foundation of his art’.[[612]](#footnote-612)

What these critical perspectives overlook is that Scott’s novels are not traditional Romances nor Historical narratives, nor do they trace the progression of one genre to the next, as Reeve argued the evolution of epic to Romance to novel. Rather, his work combines the classical Romance’s story of fictitious private lives with the public record of national historical events. Taking this into account, and thereby acknowledging that Scott’s work falls within the scope of the Historical Romance genre, one can hardly credit Lukács’s claim that Scott founded ‘the classical form of the Historical novel’ without literary precursor. [[613]](#footnote-613) According to Lukács, the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars allowed for this new form of combined representation because of the mass experience and popular consciousness it instigated. However, Gothic novelists had long been exploring the relations between public and private life, linking the individual to the national experience, and displaying the associations between different strata of society throughout British history. Scott was undoubtedly indebted to Sophia Lee’s novel *The Recess* (1785) and to Jane Porter’s historical romances, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810) for developing the symbiotic genres of Gothic and Historical novel. Indeed, Porter herself acknowledged the debt in her 1831 ‘Preface’ to *Thaddeus of Warsaw* where she claims that Scott ‘did me the honour to accept the style or class of novel of which ‘Thaddeus of Warsaw’ was the first:- a class which, uniting the personages and facts of real history or biography, with a combining and illustrative machinery of the imagination, formed a new species of writing in that day’.[[614]](#footnote-614)

Scott himself was an avid reader and supporter of the Gothic genre, and his work continued to be influenced with the mode long after its popularity waned. He referred to himself as ‘an initiated Ghost-Seer’ in a letter dated 1801, and in 1830 considered the impact of Radcliffe’s supernaturalism on his career as ‘long both a reader and writer of such goodly matters’.[[615]](#footnote-615) As a writer of historical romances, Scott seemed impatient with the criticism aimed at his supernatural episodes. In the ‘Introduction’ to *The Monastery* (1820), he leapt to the defence of his ‘machinery’ – ‘the introduction of the supernatural and marvellous’- crediting it with a long literary lineage stretching back to Horace and including Shakespeare, the privilege of which has been ‘disputed in the present age, and well-nigh exploded’.[[616]](#footnote-616) Similarly, he rebuffed James Ballantyne’s concerns that the supernatural elements in *Woodstock* (1826) would be regarded as a cheap imitation of Radcliffe, retorting that ‘I can never agree that Mrs Radcliffe any more than Shakespeare is to be a potatoe [sic] bogle to scare every poor bird from the field she is stuck up in’.[[617]](#footnote-617) For Scott, Radcliffe was a pioneer of the Gothic genre and was to be used, like Shakespeare, as an example and inspiration to other authors, not as a source of intimidation and a deterrent. It is a testament to his respect for her as an author and to the Gothic genre in general that he compares her with Shakespeare, the national bard.

In spite of this defence of his supernatural agents, however, he saw fit to include an ‘Introduction’ to the text, along with two appendixes, which first extensively quoted the supposed supernatural incidents and then explained them away using science and circumstances. His impatience at the limits placed on the Gothic genre, because of its perceived lack of respectability, was increased by his own literary and antiquarian curiosity regarding the ways in which the Gothic might be integrated into the more scholarly pursuits of local history, folk legends, myths and the marvellous. As well as including both unexplained (the White Lady of Avenel in *The Monastery*) and explained (Wandering Willie’s Tale in *Redgauntlet* [1824]) supernatural events, Scott also wrote Gothic fragments in the style of John Aikin’s ‘Sir Bertrand’ (1773) and Nathan Drake’s ‘Henry Fitzowen’ (1798). He published these as appendices to the Magnum Opus edition of *Waverley* in 1829; ‘Thomas the Rhymer’, in ‘the style of the *Castle of Otranto*’, and ‘The Lord of Ennerdale’, in which the characters read popular Gothic novels such as *The Monk* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

As a reader and reviewer of Gothic literature, Scott helped to legitimise the genre where he found work original and where authors represented characters who were ‘true to life’.[[618]](#footnote-618) He placed authors such as Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe within the developing novelistic tradition and provided critical analysis of their work by contrasting their treatment of topics such as the supernatural, history and realism. He was also influential in critiquing, supporting and challenging second-generation Gothic authors like Charles Robert Maturin and Mary Shelley via his public reviews and private correspondence. His review of *Fatal Revenge* noted that the novel was frantic and ill-judged, but predicted that Maturin’s talents would one day ‘astonish the public’, which no-doubt was a boost to the young author’s confidence and reputation.[[619]](#footnote-619) Equally, his review of *Frankenstein* was one of the first to identify it as a work of unusual quality, albeit mistakenly crediting its authorship to Percy Shelley.[[620]](#footnote-620) While Scott was generous in his reviewing practices then, he was not neutral. Both Maturin and Mary Shelley wrote to Scott to ask him for advice and help with later work, and Maturin became a long-time friend who sought intermittent financial assistance and literary guidance from him as a patron. As Fiona Robertson details, Maturin sent work to Scott for correction and made alterations based on his suggestions. Robertson notes, ‘Scott tried to encourage [Maturin] to ‘prune’, urged him away from virulent anti-Catholicism (with limited success), and tempted him away from excesses of gloom and violence’.[[621]](#footnote-621) The links with Mary Shelley were briefer but still significant; in 1823 she published *Valperga* in response to the interest in Historical fiction, and in May 1829 she wrote to Scott to ask for help with material for *Perkin Warbeck*.[[622]](#footnote-622) Scott, then, not only contributed to the Gothic through his own Historical Romance literature, but also to its reception as a recognised genre, worthy of critical attention, via his patronage and encouragement of other Gothic authors.

Scott was open about the inspiration he took from his Gothic predecessors, not just in atmosphere and supernatural incident, but also in his engagement with national history. Contrary to the widely acknowledged opinion that he invented a new genre without precursor, his formula of inserting fictional characters into iconic periods of British history had been adopted by several Gothic predecessors. In his work *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott & Dickens*, published 1992, Ian Duncan focuses on Radcliffe as the major forerunner to Scott. He highlights that Gothic Romances were the first to call themselves ‘romances’ with generic intention, and that hers were the first to imbue the genre with feminine principles – defining it by ‘private subjectivity in antithetical relation to history, which appears as a synchronic public domain of patriarchal coercion’.[[623]](#footnote-623) Duncan claims that in response to this, Scott’s ‘recovery of romance for the representation of a public, national life involves at once its thoroughgoing historicisation and its redefinition as masculine’.[[624]](#footnote-624)

While Duncan’s observations on Radcliffe’s ‘feminine’ fiction are astute, his account overlooks the other Gothic authors like William Henry Ireland and T. I. Horsley Curties, among many others, who were already engaging with national history, public life, and politics in their Gothic novels, in the wake of Radcliffe’s success. Scott’s contribution to the canon of British literature, and his innovation within the Historical Romance genre, should not be understated, but the ‘historicisation’ and ‘masculinisation’ of the genre were not achieved single-handedly from 1814 onwards. Rather, Scott was adding his novels to a growing list of Gothic fictions which had reclaimed the genre from Radcliffe’s ‘feminine’ subjectivity in order to address wider, national concerns. In this, the authors involved in the ‘re-historicisation’ and ‘re-masculinisation’ of the genre were appealing back to the genre’s origins in the national tale.

Beginning with Thomas Leland’s *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury: An Historical Romance* in 1762 and Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* in 1764, authors had been combining the most entertaining and enlightening parts of the Romance and the Novel, and imbuing them with varying degrees of antiquarianism and national commentary. In the ‘Preface’ to her 1778 novel *The Old English Baron*, for example, Reeve noted that her design was ‘to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel […] being a picture of Gothic times and manners’.[[625]](#footnote-625) Significantly, her use of ‘Gothic’ here refers not to Walpole’s supernatural incidents or to the genre’s definition as the ‘terrorist system of novel writing’, but to the Gothic period of British national history in which she sets her scenes.[[626]](#footnote-626) Gothic fictions, or Romances as they were more commonly referred to, were engaged from the beginning in the combination of retelling and myth-making that fed into the eighteenth-century trend for historicism and antiquarianism. Between 1750 and 1830, the Romance revival played a key part in the establishment of a national literature as antiquarian scholars and poets collected together folk-lyrics, ballads, regional tales, histories, anthologies of English poetry, biographies of poets, and scholarly editions of ‘cultural heritage’ icons like Shakespeare and Spenser. After 1800, prose was also added to the newly-formed canon, with popular editions of ‘The British Novelists’ published from 1810, and Scott’s own ‘Lives of the Novelists’ from 1821 to 1824, accompanying *Ballantyne’s Novelist’s Library* which he was editing. The Long Eighteenth Century was a period of unifying national cultural and literary heritage following the 1707 Act of Union, and of inventing and cementing national identity in the wake of losing colonial wars with France and America.

In the midst of this, Scott’s Historical Gothic novels combine insightful tales of national history and regional culture, with an interrogation of this collective identity formation and an analysis of the fractured Scottish identity. Himself an antiquarian scholar and national minstrel before he became the accredited author of a new genre, he was seen to ‘raise the romance from the lowest level to the very highest in literature’.[[627]](#footnote-627) His popularity as an author, and indeed one of the reasons that his fiction qualifies as Gothic, stemmed not simply from his examination of national history, but from the process of telling that history via the personal narratives of a wide range of characters from different strata of society.

In the ‘Preface’ to *Waverley*, Scott relates how his own love of ancient Romances was nurtured from a young age through the telling of tales: ‘we told, each in turn, interminable tales of knight-errantry and battle and enchantments’.[[628]](#footnote-628) These oral narratives ultimately inspired him to pen his own Romance: ‘I had nourished the ambitious desire of composing a tale of chivalry, which was to be in the style of *The* *Castle of Otranto*, with plenty of Border characters and supernatural incident’.[[629]](#footnote-629) In *Waverley*, then, Scott describes the prototype of his Historical Gothic style; combining a historical tale of chivalry, with the supernatural elements of his Gothic predecessors and, most importantly, a strong focus on Scotland, its regional history and its people. This last point he highlights, stating that he was inspired by Maria Edgeworth’s Irish characters who did more ‘towards completing the Union than perhaps all the legislative enactments’, and that he hoped to provide the same positive propaganda to his English readers for his own countrymen.[[630]](#footnote-630) Scott was fully aware that literature was having a significant influence on the formation of national identity and that the Historical Romance genre in particular was key to how the public perceived their shared national origins. To address this fully, his work focused on fictitious private lives which he integrated into public records of historical events to demonstrate the impact of political, economic and social change on individual identities.

Despite his claim for ‘positive propaganda’ however, his portrayal of Scotland was never especially positive, rather it was a realistic depiction of a country torn between its identity as an independent Scotland or as ‘North Britain’ – as it was often referred to in the periodicals and press of the late Eighteenth Century. In fiction, and partially in fact, Scotland remained an uncharted and hostile landscape even to its own people, and Scott acknowledges this in his work. He treats it as an inhospitable place, having his eponymous English hero of *Waverley* entangled in the 1745 Jacobite uprising and variously imprisoned, attacked and robbed of his identity while in Scotland. Similarly, the hero of *Guy Mannering, or the Astrologer* (1815), is beset by banditti upon entering the bleak Scottish landscape from the pastoral serenity of the English Lake District. This depiction of Scotland as inhospitable and hostile, however, is only a superficial feature of Scott’s fiction, and prompts the reader to enquire as to the cause. It casts a shadow over the 1707 Union and troubles the narrative of a United Kingdom by recalling the fractious history of England and Scotland, and the way in which that history of independence, union, rebellion, and divided allegiances has fractured the Scottish identity. Through his storytelling, Scott explores the process of narrating the nation, of forming a shared national identity through history and material culture, and how that interacts with identity on an individual level.

Throughout his work, Scott is preoccupied with how people – collectively and as individuals – engage with history and use it in the formation of shared or personal identity. In *Waverley; or, ‘Tis Sixty Years Since*, the eponymous protagonist remains passively distant from the drama of the Civil War, observing the events of the Jacobite rising in detail but ultimately escaping relatively unscathed, while his companions are condemned to death. At the end of the novel, he is represented in a ‘large and spirited painting’ depicting a fictitious scene of him in highland dress beside the executed Jacobite chieftain and the clan. This conclusion highlights the role of the reader of historical romances - observing the past at a crucial distance, sympathetically reanimating it, sentimentally purifying it, before settling on a representation of the fact which complements the received fiction. It is a somewhat pessimistic view of the individual’s use of history in the myth-making process of national and private identity formation. Similarly, in Scott’s 1816 novel, *The Antiquary*,for the kind-hearted eponymous antiquary, Jonathan Oldbuck and his friend Sir Arthur, the past is a place of theory, fiction and myth-making, not truth and fact. In their debate over the origins of the Picts, which they conduct via discussion of the last remaining Pictish word, they enthusiastically marshal theories and spurious half-evidence to support their arguments. It is not a historical debate based in material evidence and deduction, and the novel’s young hero Lovel quickly realises that the less evidence available, the more the old antiquarians enjoy the topic, because of the scope for argumentative fabrication. Indeed, when Lovel points out how specious the arguments are, Oldbuck assures him that ‘men fight best in a narrow ring: an inch is as good as a mile for a home-thrust’.[[631]](#footnote-631)

Their ‘narrow’ view of history, which reduces the past to a series of objects disconnected from reality or human experience is challenged by the lower characters of the novel, Edie Ochiltree the mendicant and old Elspeth, who embody the past in the present. When Edie confronts Oldbuck with his first-hand experience of the true origin of his ‘praetorium’, for example, he is furious, preferring to remain in blissful ignorance:

‘About this bit bourock, your honour,’ answered the undaunted Edie; ‘I mind the bigging o’t.’

‘The devil you do! Why, you old fool, it was here before you were born, and will be after you are hanged, man!’[[632]](#footnote-632)

Oldbuck would rather have been left to dwell in his fantasy of the past, than be confronted with the less glamorous reality that first-hand human experience recalls. Similarly, Oldbuck is fascinated by old Elspeth’s distracted recital of a historical ballad – a ‘genuine and undoubted fragment of minstrelsy’ – to the point that he forgets the important work that he has been sent to do in discovering the truth of a great historical scandal at the centre of the narrative.[[633]](#footnote-633) His use of relics and manuscripts to fabricate history is paralleled to the myth-making process of forging a shared national identity following the 1707 Act of Union, after the loss of the American colonies and following the Napoleonic Wars. In Scott’s fiction we witness characters using history for their own ends, to sanitise or glorify or rewrite episodes, in order to suit a larger national narrative. In the same way that Smith’s Mrs Rayland narrates the history of her ancestors ‘uninterrupted by any of those little blemishes’ that would degrade her personal identity, Scott’s characters manipulate cultural history to suit the national identity they are promoting.[[634]](#footnote-634) In Oldbuck’s case that is a narrative of ancient but diverse heritage which reflects his own complex origins as the descendant of a Flemish printer. In his neighbour, Sir Arthur Wardour’s case, it is a romanticised narrative of uncontaminated ancestral bloodlines, demarcated national heritage and Scottish sovereignty, which he himself consistently undermines through his ‘insincere Jacobinism’.[[635]](#footnote-635)

His observations here about the habits of eighteenth-century antiquarians, authors of historical romances, and their audiences are astute in that their representation of the past often perpetuated a mythic idea of national glory. As Rosemary Sweet notes, ‘Antiquaries were fired by a love of the past. […] They used their knowledge… to inform their sense of identity at both a local and a national level; and it gave them a sense of purpose, a sense of patriotism and a sense of pride’.[[636]](#footnote-636) Their contribution to the eighteenth-century understanding of the past, its interpretation and its relevance for contemporary life cannot be overstated. While Scott gently mocks Oldbuck’s eccentricities as an amateur curator of all things ancient, the fact that he chose to publish a novel on the subject demonstrates how central antiquarians were to the eighteenth-century boom in print and intellectual culture, and the thirst for knowledge and understanding which marked the British Enlightenment. As enthusiastic researchers, antiquaries travelled widely, excavating sites, mapping ruins, transcribing manuscripts, recording, reading, collecting, cataloguing, and constantly exchanging information with one another in an intricate network of individuals and societies. It was due in large part to antiquaries that ‘an informed knowledge of the past [became] a key element of the literary culture of the time’ which provided an ideal opportunity for Scott’s promotion of Historical Gothic Romances and an eager audience to receive them.[[637]](#footnote-637) In fact, Sweet observes that figures such as Charles Lyttelton and Richard Gough were pivotal to establishing the study of architectural history, and particularly to re-evaluating the Gothic style, which was then introduced to a wide readership through periodical articles in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*. Thus, ‘the Gothic Revival of the nineteenth century’ she claims, ‘owed more to these antiquaries than to Horace Walpole’.[[638]](#footnote-638)

Sweet rightly credits the nineteenth-century emphasis on empiricism and documentation to the antiquaries who had so studiously and assiduously conducted their rigorous research. The episodes in which Scott’s antiquaries interact with documents, relics, buildings and ancient features of the landscape, draw attention to what Angela Wright calls the ‘national curation [which] becomes the collective enterprise of Scottish Gothic’ in particular.[[639]](#footnote-639) Material culture is very important in Scott’s work and the Gothicism of his Scottish landscapes is not only located in ethereal supernatural agents or psychological suffering, but in physical sites – graves, ruins, dungeons, great ancestral houses – and in corporeal objects – artefacts, inscriptions, manuscripts, ballads, coats of arms. His novels are rich with antiquarian detail and this materiality allows Scott to excavate Scottish history and attempt to convey a more coherent narrative of Scottish identity. He does this via the analysis of these locations and artefacts, which are themselves always sites of contested authenticity and authority in the novels.

This association between materiality and identity is central to the antiquarian pursuit. While Scott often focuses on individual characters and their search for personal identity, he is constantly referencing Scotland, and the United Kingdom, in their wider national search for a coherent and communal identity. As Sweet suggests, antiquarianism was ‘firmly grounded in a patriotic agenda because antiquities cast light upon history, and a nation’s history was its identity’.[[640]](#footnote-640) In the same way, Scott often draws links between materiality and individual identity, associating people with certain places or objects, which recall memories when reencountered. In *Guy Mannering*, for example, it is the contemplation by the hero of his ruined ancestral home, ‘The Old Place’, and its heraldry that helps him to discover the secret of his birthright. As he admires the coat of arms he is prompted to think of the ‘powerful barons who owned this blazonry’ and where their descendants are, and this in turn leads to his own memories of ‘early and shadowy recollection’ which leads him to uncover his heritage: all recalled by ‘the appearance of such real objects’.[[641]](#footnote-641)

In *The Antiquary* most of all, objects take on a great significance in their ability to represent people and recall memories. Lord Glenallan remembers Old Elspeth by a ring she sends him in her stead and, while he cannot recall her name, he remembers the object: ‘I never heard the name; but this dreadful token reminds me--’[[642]](#footnote-642) In his isolated grandeur, he in turn is represented by Glenallan House, with its own coat of arms – ‘the emblems of human pride and of human nothingness’ – and its stifling ancient halls, reminiscent of Smith’s Rayland Hall, which his late mother ‘had not permitted to be altered or modernised’.[[643]](#footnote-643) Equally, the allegedly haunted Green Room where Lovel spends the night at Oldbuck’s house is replete with memory for the antiquary:

It is at such moments as these, Mr Lovel, that we feel the changes of time. The same objects are before us – those inanimate things which we have gazed on in wayward infancy and impetuous youth, in anxious and scheming manhood – they are permanent and the same; but when we look upon them in cold unfeeling old age, can we, changed in our temper, our pursuits, our feelings – changed in our form, our limbs, and our strength – can we be ourselves called the same? Or do we not rather look back with a sort of wonder upon our former selves, as beings separate and distinct from what we now are?[[644]](#footnote-644)

In this case, the material objects around him represent to Oldbuck the identity of his childhood sweetheart and recall the events of their shared past , as well as prompting him to reflect more generally upon the possibility of history, the nature of antiquarianism and the impossibility of ever truly accessing the past. As David Brown writes, ‘Oldbuck seems on the threshold of understanding that his antiquarianism represents only the historical understanding of old men, and that the “temper, pursuits and feelings” of the real inhabitants of the past must remain a closed book to such inquiry’.[[645]](#footnote-645)

Places and objects play a central role in Scott’s fiction as markers, prompts and proofs of history, memory and identity on an individual level and on a national scale. His Gothic Scotland is populated by the ruins, graves and battlefields of its violent history, and by the relics and artefacts which speak to its fractured identity. While David Punter has persuasively argued that *The Antiquary* ultimately proves the impossibility of constructing ‘a single, unified history of Scotland from the fragmentary and in some cases contradictory evidence still remaining’, the attempt is yet relentlessly pursued by Scott’s characters in an act of ‘national curation’.[[646]](#footnote-646) And significantly, this curation is not just the act of the self-appointed curators of the nation, like Oldbuck, but also the profusion of washerwomen, gypsies, banditti and mendicants that populate Scott’s work. It is worth noting here that Scott was, again, not the first to narrate Scotland in this way. As Fiona Price observes, Jane Porter’s work – particularly her novel *The Scottish Chiefs –* ‘places great emphasis on the whole of the Scottish landscape as a site of struggle and emphasises the mass activity of the Scottish people’.[[647]](#footnote-647) Her Historical novels engaged with the key national issues raised by the Napoleonic period such as class, economics and politics, which Lukács suggested originated in Scott’s ‘new genre’, at least four years before Scott published his first novel.Nevertheless, Scott’s work depicts the effort of the community at large attempting to form a coherent identity and history for Scotland.

In this search for individual and national identity, Scott saw fit to narrate an accurate representation of an entire society, across national space, and historical time. The inclusivity of his novels ensured that the whole spectrum of human life – its manners, customs, institutions, cultures – was shown to be intertwined and evolving, via a range of characters from all social classes who provide their own outlooks in their own language. Novels such as *The Antiquary* and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) ambitiously characterise the gentry through to the labourer and the beggar. While other historical romances had attempted this kind of representation before, for example the master/servant relationship so carefully delineated in Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*, none had done so with such scope, accuracy and value. In the opening chapter of *Ivanhoe*, it is Gurth the swineherd and Wamba the jester who introduce the overarching issues of the novel through their casual banter. Via a clever dialogue on language politics, they delineate the slavish reality of the feudal hierarchy, and the tensions that stand between the native Saxons and their Norman conquerors. Wamba explains:

[…] so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name [swine]; but becomes a Norman and is called pork, when she is carried to the Castle-hall to feast among the nobles […] Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner; he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment.[[648]](#footnote-648)

And Gurth expands:

The finest and the fattest is for their board; the loveliest is for their couch; the best and bravest supply their foreign masters with soldiers, and whiten distant lands with their bones, leaving few here who have either will or the power to protect the unfortunate Saxon.[[649]](#footnote-649)

This dialogue between two ‘thralls’ sets the political tensions for the scenes of drama which will follow. Significantly, Scott’s servants, unlike Reeve’s, are not merely brave, loyal, acquiescent companions to the noble protagonists, who pay homage to the glory of the feudal hierarchy. Rather, they are bold, outspoken, and disobedient, and mimic neither the narrator nor their masters, but speak out in their own voices. When Wamba offers to sacrifice himself in order to save his master from the Normans, Cedric insists that he rescue Athelstane, the descendant of the Saxon kings of England, instead. But Wamba refuses and stands his ground against his master, stating ‘I came to save my master, and if he will not consent, I can but go away home again […] I’ll hang for no man but my own born master’.[[650]](#footnote-650) Even as an indentured thrall, Scott ensures that Wamba has a clearly-defined identity within the narrative and can declare his own will and world view. While Scott places the same value on master/servant relationships that Reeve, Ireland and Curties did, his appeal to realism ensures that they have increased autonomy.

Edie Ochiltree, the old mendicant of *The Antiquary*, occupies a similar role, often asserting himself and his opinions over those of his social superiors. He is significant in Scott’s novel of heritage, antiquarianism and national identity as a remaining representative of a traditional Scottish society which has all but passed away. Much like the ancient ruins which strew the landscape and the ancestral coats of arms which garner so much reverence, Edie possesses a heritage value to the 1790s society. He understands the implications of historical change better than the antiquarians in his company, because he embodies the tensions of it. He has witnessed the passing of one way of life in favour of a new, modern age and is determined to remain true to his original principles. Thus, he refuses the gold offered to him at various times throughout the novel by the grateful Oldbuck, Isabella and Lovel – choosing to remain traditionally dependent on the general wealth of the local people, rather than becoming indebted to a single patron, or becoming financially independent and partaking in the commercial ethics of the modern society. As he explains to Isabella when she offers him a pension, ‘Troth, my leddy, I canna lay down my vocation: it would be a public loss’, and as he assures her that he is no burden to anyone – ‘I canna be said to depend on ony body in particular, but just on the country at large’ – he would rather stay independent of debt to another man or to the threat of robbery.[[651]](#footnote-651)

Edie prides himself on being a descendant of the old Scottish way of village life in the same way that Olduck, Sir Arthur, Lord Glenallan, and Hector M’Intyre pride themselves on being descendants of middle-class Protestantism, local landed gentry, Catholic nobility, and Highland Scots, respectively. He is not, as Fiona Price notes, an enforced wanderer or the symptom of the war-torn communities that recur in Gothic fiction during the Napoleonic Wars, in texts like Charlotte Smith’s *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1800-2), for example. Rather his voluntary wandering ‘binds these small parts of the community together in an affective pattern’ and being ‘free but fixed within a particular circuit, performing work without labour, he generates the fantasy of social coherence which Oldbuck’s fragments of history fail to provide’.[[652]](#footnote-652) Edie is therefore an essential part of the ‘national curation’; bringing people together in community, and dispelling the unhelpful myths of the past while simultaneously preserving what is valuable of Scottish heritage. Throughout the novel, Scott shows him wielding his influence and authority for the good of the collective community like a benevolent, wandering patriarch.

It is Edie who speaks up to try and prevent Lovel and Captain M’Intyre from duelling, described as looking ‘from height, manner, and emphasis of voice and gesture, rather like […] the ghostly counsellor of the young men who were around him, than the object of their charity’.[[653]](#footnote-653) He addressed them directly – ‘What are ye come here for, young men?’ – and the narrator notes that ‘his speech, indeed, was as homely as his habit, but as bold and unceremonious as his erect and dignified demeanour’.[[654]](#footnote-654) The reference here and elsewhere to Edie’s homely habit is a reminder of Scott’s authorial intention. In chapter one of *Waverley*, he explains that his works are to be ‘more a description of men than manners’, as ‘a tale of manners, to be interesting, must either refer to antiquity so great as to have become venerable, or it must bear a vivid reflection of those scenes which are passing daily before our eyes’.[[655]](#footnote-655) In setting *Waverley* ‘sixty years since’ and *The Antiquary* in the last ten years of the Eighteenth Century, Scott instead chose to ‘throw the force of [his] narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors’.[[656]](#footnote-656)

Throughout his novels then, the narratives are centred upon his well-drawn characters, both psychologically - their personalities, opinions, identities – and physically – their dress, accents, mannerisms. Scott created vividly realistic fictional worlds for his readers to enjoy, infused with detailed descriptions and a wide range of dialectical narrative voices. Departing from Reeve’s idea of the progress from Romance to realism, Scott combined the two by placing realistic characters into the adventures of Gothic Romance. As Edie stands between the duelling pair, his address to the young men begins like a sermon – ‘are ye come amongst the most lovely works of God to break His laws?’ – delivered with the authority of a priest, and written in the same English vernacular as Scott’s more educated characters.[[657]](#footnote-657) As it continues however, and Edie appeals to them to consider the impact of their duel on their families and friends, he reverts to his usual Scots speech: ‘Gang hame, gang hame, like gude lads; the French will be ower to harry us ane o’ thae days, and ye’ll hae feighting enough’.[[658]](#footnote-658) When discussing Scotland, particularly in relation to the French, Edie emphasises his native dialect to evoke a strong sense of patriotism and familial loyalty. Edie’s vernacular and the way he manipulates language to suit his purpose is just one example of the rich and vivid heteroglossia of language and discourse styles that Scott employed to add authenticity to his Historical narratives.

Similarly, later in the novel when Edie intercedes with Lord Glenallan, larger issues surrounding national heritage and appropriate ways of engaging with the past are condensed down into the representation of these two men. Once again, Scott lays his emphasis on characters, through whom we read political or cultural critique, rather than on the situations themselves. Lord Glenallan, when Edie comes upon him, is a ‘wreck of manhood’, and they form a very striking contrast:

The hale cheek, firm step, erect stature, and undaunted presence and bearing of the old mendicant, indicated patience and content in the extremity of age, and in the lowest condition to which humanity can sink; while the sunken eye, pallid cheek, and tottering form of the nobleman with whom he was confronted, showed how little wealth, power, and even the advantages of youth, have to do with that which gives repose to the mind and firmness to the frame.[[659]](#footnote-659)

Standing face to face in Glenallan’s rooms which are hung in black for mourning, Edie and the Earl represent two forms of ancestry and heritage. Like Smith’s two Gothic castles, the one in need of renovation and the other in need of demolition, Scott presents the boons and dangers of preserving the ancient traditions of national history. Edie is a respected asset to the modern society in which he participates, reminding them of the traditional honour of rural Scottish life, and the value of generosity and community; Glenallan is preserved in irrelevant Gothic splendour, all but cut off from society, a relic of haughty, outdated, inward-looking aristocracy.

Ultimately, they embody constructive and destructive ways of living with the past. Glenallan is associated with tales of incest, illegitimacy, feudalism and death; his ritualised, secretive Catholicism is hidden in darkness; his closed aristocratic system has left him isolated and lonely. He represents a failed relationship with the past reminiscent of Mary Wollstonecraft’s fears concerning ‘gothic notions of beauty’, when reverence for history damages the present: ‘the ivy is beautiful, but, when it insidiously destroys the trunk from which it receives support, who would not grub it up?’[[660]](#footnote-660) Glenallan is burdened by the weight of his family legacy which, like the ivy, destroys its last remaining source of support. As heir to an ancient Scottish family, he represents the effects of repressive aspects of the nation’s past, particularly its Catholicism and the closed aristocratic system. The novel argues that the power of these influences needs to be limited in modern society, to be regarded respectfully as relics of the nation’s ancestry but not allowed to negatively influence the present. Glenallan House is such a relic: an ‘ancient building of great extent’, furnished in the ‘taste of a former and distant period’ to show ‘the ancient importance and splendour of the family’; ‘magnificent’ but ‘gloomy’ and ‘tarnished by time’.[[661]](#footnote-661) Like Mrs Rayland in Smith’s *The Old Manor House*, the late Countess Glenallan ‘partly from a haughty contempt of the times in which she lived, partly from her sense of family pride, had not permitted the furniture to be altered or modernised during her residence’.[[662]](#footnote-662) Lady Glenallan’s failed relationship with the past is made explicit here: she is contemptuous of the present and seeks to live solely in the past. Ultimately, her son – and the family line – must be salvaged by Lovel, the disenfranchised heir who rises at the end of the novel as a military saviour, a rightful inheritor, and a Protestant redeemer of the Glenallan line. At the end of the novel, the Earl regains friends, national pride and his son, entering into the community, to complete a mythic tale of national regeneration and reunion. The false routes back to the past represented by his late mother’s aristocratic tyranny are laid to rest, and only the healthy aspects of national heritage remain, well and truly integrated into the modern society. Interestingly, it is ultimately characters like Edie and Lovel who hold marginal positions in the society who have the freedom to enact the restoration, reconciliation and assimilation at the heart of Scott’s tale.

Scott’s novels demonstrate a keen interest in historical accuracy when it comes to representing national politics, society at large and the individual in focus. As Francis Jeffrey noted, *Waverley* is ‘true to nature’, and the ‘way in which [manners and customs] are here represented must satisfy every reader, we think, by an inward *tact* and conviction, that the delineation has been made from actual experience and observation’ [original emphasis].[[663]](#footnote-663) Jeffrey also credits Scott with having moved beyond everyday realism, to demonstrate not only scenes from Scottish life but also the forces at work to produce historical progress. Interestingly, however, for all that Scott was a keen antiquarian himself, his literary engagement with history was far from simple. While his novels aspired to be true to nature, they nonetheless also reflected the historical nature of the time in which they were set. Thus, in the ‘Introduction’ to *The Monastery*, Scott justifies his choice of the area around Melrose in the Scottish Borders for his supernatural tale, because the locals had long been superstitious of fairies there. Equally, he defends his inclusion of the White Lady of Avendel by appealing to Shakespeare’s recourse to the unexplained supernatural in his plays. Like most Gothic authors before him, Scott’s introductions often include attempts to justify his work, defend himself from critical accusations and shelter himself behind the precedent of the National Bard – a prestigious forebear for a genre which was so self-consciously a new style. Just as Walpole claimed to ‘shelter [his] own daring under the cannon of the brightest genius this country […] has produced’, so did Scott defend his ghostly creation by stating that ‘Shakespeare was the first of authorities in such a case’.[[664]](#footnote-664) As Fiona Robertson suggests, ‘Gothic fiction was to develop a complicated relationship to historical knowledge’, undergoing criticism that it detracted from actual history and made the latter appear dull.[[665]](#footnote-665) It was a common complaint against authors like Radcliffe that they had failed to make their work historically accurate and that this could be damaging to readers who would mistake fiction for fact.

Scott himself drew attention to this in the Dedicatory Epistle to *Ivanhoe*, conducted between two fictional antiquarians who astutely reflect on the problems of combining history and fiction, and on the responsibility of novelists to their material and their audience. As his fictional editor Laurence Templeton states; ‘by thus intermingling fiction with truth, I am polluting the well of history with modern inventions, and impressing upon the rising generation false ideas of the age which I describe’.[[666]](#footnote-666) Scott’s argument here is reminiscent of Reeve’s own in *The Progress of Romance* where she warns that Romances risk blending truth and fiction together so as to be indistinguishable, thus allowing young readers to ‘imbibe absurd ideas of historical facts and persons’.[[667]](#footnote-667) Historical Fiction could therefore hinder education by not only relying on the reader’s historical ignorance but perpetuating it, through the denial of accurate history and the fabrication of an alternative, escapist past. Jonathan Dent rightly observes, however, that in the Eighteenth Century history was considered much more a branch of rhetoric than a distinct discipline, and David Hume’s *The History of England* relied more on the manner of telling than on the precise scholarship of the past.[[668]](#footnote-668) In a similar way, Gothic novels like *The Castle of Otranto* were not focused on historical accuracy but on the ways in which the past is structured and narrated for a contemporary audience.[[669]](#footnote-669) ‘From its very inception’, Dent claims, ‘the Gothic draws attention to history not *as* the past, but as a *substitute* for the past’ – filtered through the translation, interpretation, and representation of historians like Hume, who have their own perspectives and agendas.[[670]](#footnote-670) Scott’s novels represent Scottish – and occasionally English - history as a series of stories, and proceed to explore the significance of these stories and how they influence our understanding of the national past. He recognised that there was no essentialist model of the past, but only a set of discourses mediated through the eyes of subjective narrators. Thus, in *Ivanhoe*, Scott oscillates between immersing his readers in authentic feudal England, and reminding them that this representation of the past is manufactured and subjective.

In the Dedicatory Epistle to *Ivanhoe*, Templeton discusses the challenge of ‘intermingling fiction with [historical] truth’ and insists that it must be confined ‘within legitimate bounds’.[[671]](#footnote-671) To this end, the novelist must ‘introduce nothing inconsistent with the manners of the age’, and the language must ensure that ‘no word or turn of phraseology betraying an origin directly modern’ is used.[[672]](#footnote-672) Scott spent a great deal of time building up the details of his medieval world, describing the clothes, habits, lifestyles and customs in the minute detail of a true antiquarian. At times, however, his narrative voice intrudes upon the feudal scenes with modern observations. In describing Rowena’s rooms, for example, the narrator observes that; ‘Magnificence there was, with some rude attempt at taste; but of comfort there was little, and, being unknown, it was unmissed’ and appeals to his female readership to, ‘let not modern beauty envy the magnificence of a Saxon princess’.[[673]](#footnote-673) Equally, during the jousting tournament later in the novel, the narrator, having gone into great detail setting the scene and explaining the rules of the contest, breaks in upon the fiction at the pivotal moment that the knights appear:

[…] my Saxon authority (in the Wardour Manuscript) records at great length their devices, their colours, and the embroidery of their horse-trappings. It is unnecessary to be particular on these subjects […] Their escutcheons have long mouldered from the walls of their castles. Their castles themselves are but green mounds and shattered ruins […] What, then, would it avail the reader to know their names, or the evanescent symbols of their martial rank! Now, however, no whit anticipating the oblivion which awaited their names and feats, the champions advanced through the lists […][[674]](#footnote-674)

Scott interrupts the verisimilitude of his carefully crafted scene to remind the audience of the craft itself. He draws attention to his antiquarian source – the Wardour Manuscript, itself another fiction from his novel *The Antiquary* – and therefore to the act of writing a fictional historical scene. He goes on to pessimistically assure his reader that as these individual knights have been all but forgotten by history at large, they do not need to be dwelt on here. This negligence towards the individual knights stands in stark contrast to Scott’s aforementioned focus on characters. Here instead, he is an artist painting a battle scene where the emphasis lies in the action, not the individual. His narrative tone is dismissive of the past, his disdain of ‘green mounds and shattered ruins’ reminiscent of Wollstonecraft’s Gothic ruins: ‘…an ancient castle, built in barbarous ages, of Gothic materials? […] to rake amongst heterogeneous ruins; to rebuild old walls, whose foundations could scarcely be explored…’[[675]](#footnote-675) It creates a moment of *memento mori* in the text, before Scott slips back into the action of the scene.

Later in the tournament, having described the splendid martial scene of snapping pennons and shining armour, he narrates the battle’s descent into furious violence: ‘all that was beautiful and graceful in the martial array had disappeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to awake terror or compassion’.[[676]](#footnote-676) He explains that ‘force of habit’ ensures that even the ladies of the audience were not appalled by what they saw, but cheered and clapped the combatants on.[[677]](#footnote-677) The narrator here speaks with a modern interest and judgement, reflecting the views of his audience and not those of his characters. He speaks with barely concealed disgust of the senseless brutality acted out as a feudal sport. Here, his description of Gothic times is more akin to Wollstonecraft’s resentment of the ‘gothic pile, and the dronish bell that summoned the fat priest to prayer… the empty pageant of a name’.[[678]](#footnote-678) Though he quickly returns to the main narrative and continues the tale, these moments of authorial interjection show Scott engaging critically with his historical material. He finishes the account of the tournament with a sarcastic note that as ‘only four knights… died, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded… several more were disabled for life; and those who escaped best carried the marks of the conflict to the grave’, the day was commemorated as ‘the Gentle and Joyous Passage of Arms of Ashby’.[[679]](#footnote-679) Published in 1820, following fifty years of near-continual conflict and violence over the course of the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Scott’s opinion of battle – whether for sport or war – is a bitter, mournful one.

It is not only the narrative voice which verbalises these modern inclinations. Certain characters also push against the boundaries of historical possibility and probability with their modern opinions. While Scott is constrained by the historical possibilities with regards to factual events and the strict boundaries of chivalric codes of value, it is clear that he strains against the twelfth-century parameters by articulating certain perspectives and attitudes. Once again, these episodes most frequently take place regarding violence, war and the supposed bravery of chivalric feats of arms. *Ivanhoe*’s Rebecca, for example, provides a counterpoint to the discourse of chivalry that is espoused by the other characters. When Wilfred of Ivanhoe lies wounded at Torquilstone, he has Rebecca narrate the action of the battle raging outside. Conforming to the sensibilities of the time, Ivanhoe is ‘glowing with impatience at his inactivity, and with … ardent desire to mingle in the affray of which these sounds were the introduction’.[[680]](#footnote-680) Rebecca, who is tending to his wounds, steps to the window and describes the action, echoing the narrator’s previous critique of the violent jousting tournament by critiquing the chivalric values of the times. Ivanhoe assures her that war is ‘no maiden’s pastime’[[681]](#footnote-681) and praises the ‘actions of chivalry’ as inspiring ‘deeds of honour’.[[682]](#footnote-682) Rebecca speaks out however, accusing him of ‘vain-glory’ and undermines this narrative by asking what reward he gains for spilling the blood of his fellow men.[[683]](#footnote-683) When he replies ‘Glory’, she retaliates:

‘Glory?’ continued Rebecca; ‘alas, is the rusted mail which hangs as a hatchment over the champion’s dim and mouldering tomb – is the defaced sculpture of the inscription which the ignorant monk can hardly read to the inquiring pilgrim – are these sufficient rewards for the sacrifice of every kindly affection, for a life spent miserably that ye make others miserable?’[[684]](#footnote-684)

Ivanhoe angrily defends chivalry, telling Rebecca that she ‘speakest… of thou knowest not what’. [[685]](#footnote-685) Her speech provides a keen counterpoint to the chivalric discourse that runs throughout the rest of the narrative and once again evokes Wollstonecraft’s proto-revolutionary stance against heritage that stands in the way of progress and improvement. Just as Wollstonecraft deplored the ‘gothic pile’, the ‘dronish bell’, and the ‘empty pageant of a name’ for which Edmund Burke mourned while ‘Man preys on man… and slavery flaps her wing’, so Rebecca denounces the Gothic trappings for which Ivanhoe kills his fellow men: the ‘rusted mail’, ‘mouldering tomb’ and ‘defaced sculpture’.[[686]](#footnote-686)

Her character also figures at the centre of an important political event in the text – the ultimate union of the Norman and Saxon factions via the marriage of the Norman favourite, Ivanhoe, to the Saxon princess, Rowena. The Jewess Rebecca is in turn expelled from this newly reunited England and haunts the end of the story in Ivanhoe’s recollections. Thus, Scott troubles the apparently harmonious reconciliation with this alternative narrative of exclusion and loss. In the wider political context of the Union, where the Normans and Saxons represent the alliance of Scotland and England, Rebecca’s banishment represents the loss of an independent Scotland. Throughout the novel, Rebecca and Rowena are paralleled, one fair, the other dark, equally praised for their beauty, generosity, and strength. They appear together at key moments in the novel where they treat each other with kindness and compassion, able to overcome their prejudices in a way that the male characters consistently fail to do. Both in love with Ivanhoe, Rebecca and Rowena meet for the last time after the marriage and before Rebecca’s departure from England. They exchange a mournful goodbye as Rebecca explains that ‘the people of England are a fierce race, quarrelling ever with their neighbours or among themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people’.[[687]](#footnote-687) She rejects England and its tenuous peace, bought by violence and force. Together, the two women of Scott’s novel represent Scotland which, after the Act of Union, was fractured and divided, some taking up the new identity as North Britain and others banished from the national tale of reconciliation. Significantly, while the novel ends with a union, the narrative is ultimately haunted by division and loss.

Like Rebecca’s spectral haunting of *Ivanhoe*, the Gothic elements of Scott’s work often problematise relationships with the past, complicating his narratives of reconciliation, ancestry and historical descent. While Gothic literature provides access to and an insight into the nation’s past, it could also be argued that it stands in opposition to historiography, as an ‘other’. It highlights aspects of the past, like the violence, transgressions and belief in the supernatural, that history often chooses to omit, and concentrates on narratives of illegitimacy, usurpation and dislocation which make the past alien and unstable. As Dent says of Hume’s *History*, it ‘passes over violent, discontinuous events to focus primarily on the developing language, manners, and customs of our ancestors’.[[688]](#footnote-688) Eighteenth-century historians were preoccupied with focusing almost exclusively on the civilising aspects of the past, while Gothic fiction probed the darker side of things – the volatility of human nature, the irrational and uncivilised acts, the randomness of events. The Gothic seeks to defamiliarise the past, and in doing so resists the historiographical framework that seeks to make it rational, causal and known.

It is interesting, then, to see how Scott integrates Gothic tropes and events within his Historical narratives. In defending Austen’s Gothic parody *Northanger Abbey* (1817), Scott suggested that unrealistic Romances could be less disruptive to social and moral life because they do not pretend to represent reality. Thus, the ‘supernatural fable’ would be ‘less mischievous in its moral effects’.[[689]](#footnote-689) And, in the same way that Historical fiction brought people together via a shared past, Gothic fiction had the ability to unite readers through the power of fear, a universal passion. As Scott phrased it: ‘curiosity and a lurking love of mystery, together with a germ of superstition, are more general ingredients in the human mind, and more widely diffused through the mass of humanity, than either genuine taste for the comic, or true feeling of the pathetic’.[[690]](#footnote-690) It could also be argued that the historical and Gothic novel developed conterminously, and complement each other as literary forms. Margaret Anne Doody did not hesitate to locate Sophia Lee’s novel *The Recess* as the ‘first fully developed English Gothic novel’ and as one of the first ‘recognisable Historical novels’.[[691]](#footnote-691) Whether Historical and Gothic literary traditions are recognised in opposition or symbiosis with one another, it is clear that Scott’s exploration of national history and the fragmentation of Scottish identity could not be achieved without his indebtedness to Gothic tropes.

*The Antiquary*, for example, presents the reader with a sensational plotline full of Gothic events – incest, murder, infanticide, suicide, the discovery of buried treasure, invasion, usurpation, Catholic mysticism and magic – few of which actually transpire to have taken place. Despite this however, Scott’s novel is still a very Gothic tale in the way it deals with fractured identity and the way that the past interferes with identity formation. While the Glenallan family might not have partaken in the dramatic acts of incest, infanticide and suicide, they are oppressed by the physical and psychological imprisonment that plagues Gothic characters. Glenallan House, characterised by the ‘huge scutcheon’ that represents the crushing weight of its heritage and ancestry, provides a prison for Glenallan’s body and mind.[[692]](#footnote-692) Within it, he lives a life of ‘strictest retirement’, unable to break out of the ‘stern gloom and melancholy’ that depresses him, and when he emerges into society at the end of the novel, it is like one ‘whose brain was not fully recovered from the effects of an intoxicating potion’.[[693]](#footnote-693) He must then begin the process of building a new identity for himself divorced from his heritage of closed Aristocratic families, extreme Catholic piety and the taint of psychological pain. Similarly, Elspeth Mucklebackit, the Glenallans’ former maid, is trapped inside her own mind, decayed by old age and the pressure of life-long guilt and secrecy. Edie describes her to Glenallan as a Gothic ruin in herself:

[…] auld Elspeth’s like some of the ancient ruined strengths and castles that ane sees amang the hills. There are mony parts of her mind that appear, as I may say, laid waste and decayed, but then there’s parts that look the steever, and the stronger, and the grander, because they are rising just like to fragments amang the ruins o’ the rest – She’s an awful woman.[[694]](#footnote-694)

Elspeth is trapped in the past, like Glenallan, and can only speak of memories and imagination, not the present. In a ‘hollow and sepulchral voice’, she haunts her family with rhymes, hallucinations and recollections, like ‘the dead speaking to the living’.[[695]](#footnote-695) Her mania, like Glenallan’s, is due to her association with Joscelind, Countess of Glenallan, who dies during the novel and is buried in a secret Catholic ceremony at night, by candlelight, in the nearby Gothic ruins. The bond between Elspeth and her mistress is so great as to survive the one’s dismissal and the other’s death, and Elspeth claims she would rather be ’torn by wild horses’ than betray her secrets.[[696]](#footnote-696) Unlike the feudal fidelity that Scott praises in *Ivanhoe*, Elspeth’s vassalage is condemned as an extreme form of voluntary enslavement. Proudly stating that ‘an ancestor of [Glenallan] never went to the field of battle but an ancestor of [Elspeth] carried his shield before him’, she has willingly sacrificed her peace while living and - she believes - her soul after death, to serve her mistress.[[697]](#footnote-697)

Lovel, Glenallan’s son, is also a victim of this mental and physical isolation. Believing himself to be the illegitimate child of his father’s younger brother, Lovel makes himself an outcast from society, refusing to integrate or socialise, and is only redeemed and reintegrated by marriage at the end after his rightful inheritance is realised. His name recalls the hero of Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*, Edmund Lovel, who is also disinherited and raised in obscurity under a different name, unaware of his true identity. At the end of *The Antiquary*, it is revealed that Lovel is the assumed name of Major Neville, who is discovered to be Glenallan’s son and therefore the next Lord Glenallan. Names are inherently tied to identity in Gothic fiction and the loss of a family name or the assumption of an alias or the discovery of a hereditary title are all important signifiers of the search for self on both an individual and national level. As Robertson observes, Scott’s preoccupation with ‘states of unnaturally arrested and obsessive psychology’, lends itself well to the Gothic’s themes of isolation and madness, which often stem from a lack of identity.[[698]](#footnote-698) Glenallan is so oppressed by his identity as the heir of an absolutist, aristocratic family that he lacks any individual identity of his own. Equally, Elspeth has been trapped in her old identity as Lady Glenallan’s maid, unwilling to connect with anything since her dismissal from her mistress’s service. Lovel performs a series of identities throughout the novel, first as the son of the younger Glenallan brother, then as an officer in the army, then as a hero, a potential murderer, an illegitimate orphan, and finally as a legitimate heir to the Glenallan line. Scott’s characters often display an unhealthy relationship with the past which disrupts their ability to form their own identities in the present. Scotland’s national identity crisis as ‘North Britain’ or an independent ‘Scotland’ lurks as a subtext to all of Scott’s broken and discordant identities.

Like his Gothic predecessors, Scott displays a preoccupation with broken historical descent, usurped inheritances, wandering heroes and ineffectual leaders. Just like Reeve, Smith, Ireland and Curties before him, he uses these tropes to explore the fragmentation and refashioning of national identity following the revolutions, wars and political crises of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, with a particularly focus on the crisis of Scottish identity. Disinherited from their past, their heritage usurped, his heroes wander the national landscape in search of an identity which will reconnect them to their ancestral origins. Lovel himself is such a hero – cut off from his inheritance, confused about his ancestry, driven North in search of himself and unable to connect with the society he finds there. The meaning of the word ‘Gothic’ embodied both the native, ancestral culture of Britain, and the barbaric, uncivilised past for eighteenth-century minds. In the same way, the genre represents the myth of national culture and ‘British’ historical identity whilst simultaneously making this past a broken, disconnected, unknowable space. The anxiety of dislocated origins runs throughout the Gothic, as Duncan summarises, we see it manifest in:

The obsession with fragmented and contaminated genealogies, in plots that turn upon usurped patrimony, incest, lost relations; in characterisations of psychological repression; in settings of decayed ancestral power, the famous castles and monasteries, that still hold their aura of physical and ideological bondage, sublimated from function to ‘atmosphere’; in aesthetic effects of the ‘uncanny’ and the sublime.[[699]](#footnote-699)

Scott weaves these narratives into his Historical fiction, troubling his own tales of restoration and union with broken genealogies, displaced heroes and unsuitable leaders.

*Ivanhoe* deals with these themes extensively. The eponymous protagonist, Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe, has been disowned by his Saxon father, Cedric, for his allegiance to the Norman king, Richard the Lionheart. At first the reader is led to postulate that he has died either by accident, duelling or punishment when Cedric mournfully exclaims, ‘Ah, Wilfred, Wilfred! Could’st thou have ruled thine unreasonable passion, thy father had not been left in his age like a solitary oak’.[[700]](#footnote-700) He soon makes the situation clear, however, stating that ‘the son who has disobeyed me is no longer mine’.[[701]](#footnote-701) Ivanhoe returns to his country and his home in disguise as a palmer from the Holy Land and takes a humble seat in his father’s hall. When questioned by Rowena about the Knight of Ivanhoe, he assures her that he has ‘surmounted the persecution of his enemies’ and is ‘returning to England, where you, lady, must know better than I, what is his chance of happiness’.[[702]](#footnote-702) Rowena sadly explains that ‘He will, I fear, find little in his native land to clear those clouds from his countenance’.[[703]](#footnote-703) Like the returning Gothic heroes of Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* or Smith’s *The Old Manor House*, Ivanhoe returns from his quest in a distant land to find his own country unrecognisable and unaccountably changed. It has become an ‘other’ place – uncannily familiar but at the same time irrevocably different. And he returns to it as an ‘other’; found ‘either asleep, or lying dead at the foot of the cross’, he rises from a death-like absence and takes his place in the narrative.[[704]](#footnote-704) Unknown and displaced, he earns himself friends through his chivalrous compassion to strangers and through the loyalty of his servant, Gurth. When he fights, it is under the device of a ‘young oak-tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *Desdichado*, signifying Disinherited’.[[705]](#footnote-705) Moreover, after winning the jousting tournament, he spends the rest of the novel struggling to heal from his wounds which incapacitate him and bring him back to the brink of death. He is, then, another returned hero of Gothic fiction, a stranger in a newly-strange and hostile landscape, struggling to reinstate the status quo.

Histories of restored legitimacy recur throughout Scott’s fiction. In *The Antiquary* Lovel removes the taint of incest and illegitimacy from the Glenallan line before being reinstated as the true heir. *The Abbot* (1820) ends with Roland Graeme obtaining proof that his parents were married, against all odds, in order to become the heir of Avenel and marry Catherine. In *Ivanhoe*, both Wilfred of Ivanhoe and King Richard must contend to reclaim their rightful inheritance and position in society. The ‘restoration of something which is regarded as socially and legally just’, as Robertson puts it, has an obvious political resonance in the years following 1814.[[706]](#footnote-706) Published between the Treaty of Paris in May 1814, which began to restore monarchies to several European states, and the first Reform Act in Britain in 1832, which extended the parliamentary franchise, the Waverley novels are preoccupied with the restoration of legitimate individuals and institutions. They pose the same questions, albeit in fictional guises, that European leaders were debating in the two treaties of Paris in 1814 and 1815: about the value of monarchy, the nature of leadership, the role of ideology in politics, the balance of power within and between nations. These issues were also current in political and constitutional debates in Britain at the time. Mark Twain claimed in *Life on the Mississippi* in 1883, that while the French Revolution ‘broke the chains of the *ancien régime* and of the Church,’ they were then re-forged by Scott and his ‘enchantments’.[[707]](#footnote-707) Twain saw Scott as a popular reactionary force who returned an air of romance to ‘decayed and degraded systems of government’.[[708]](#footnote-708) While Scott does present his work as loyalist fictions – made explicit by the Magnum Opus edition, with its dedication to George IV – they are not straightforwardly so. Like those of T. I. Horsley Curties, his novels pose a great many questions about the suitability of leaders, their required qualities, the extent of monarchical power, and the right of the people to choose their own rulers. Once again, his narratives of national unity, reconciliation and shared identity are troubled by the conflicts surrounding kingship, loyalty, deposition, and rebellion.

Of the Norman kings, John, standing in for his brother Richard in his absence, is clearly depicted as an unsuitable leader. ‘Light, profligate and perfidious’, with a ‘fickle temper’ beyond his control, he is, as his own men say: ‘too weak to be a determined monarch, too tyrannical to be an easy monarch, too insolent and presumptuous to be a popular monarch, and too fickle and timid to be long a monarch of any kind’.[[709]](#footnote-709) Meanwhile, Richard the Lionheart is another wandering Gothic hero or knight-errant who appears to save the day and then disappears just as quickly. After the jousting tournament, he is awarded the Chaplet of Honour for winning the battle, but is ‘nowhere to be found’, having been observed to ‘move down one of the forest glades with the same slow pace and listless and indifferent manner which had procured him the epithet of the Black Sluggard’.[[710]](#footnote-710) While capable of great feats of bravery and heroism, then, Richard is also guilty of being impulsive and foolhardy. He embodies Scott’s very honest evaluation of chivalry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

Founded on principles so pure, the order of chivalry could not, in the abstract at least, but occasion a pleasing, though a romantic development of the energies of human nature. But as, in actual practice, every institution becomes deteriorated and degraded, we have too much occasion to remark, that the devotion of the knights often degenerated into superstition,—their love into licentiousness,—their spirit of loyalty or of freedom into tyranny and turmoil,—their generosity and gallantry into hair-brained madness and absurdity.[[711]](#footnote-711)

Richard’s love of liberty, his passion for justice, his gallantry and mercy are excellent qualities, but often become a disadvantage in their extremity and when not tempered by wise counsel. When John’s advisor, Fitzurse, is informed of Richard’s involvement in the storming of Torquilstone, he notes that ‘such is indeed the fashion of Richard – a true knight-errant he, and will wander in wild adventure, trusting the prowess of his single arm, like any Sir Guy or Sir Bevis, while the weighty affairs of his kingdom slumber, and his own safety is endangered’.[[712]](#footnote-712)

Richard excels as a chivalrous knight of legend, but as a king he lacks the wisdom, temperance and restraint to be a good ruler. His daring feats often put his own life in danger, thereby leaving the fate of an entire nation hanging in the balance, for the sake of saving a life or righting a wrong. When Richard arrives at the Templar Preceptory, accompanied by the forces of the Earl of Essex, Ivanhoe praises his ‘wise precaution’ in bringing support against the Grand Master’s army of Templars. The Earl soon corrects him, explaining that ‘I met King Richard, like a true knight-errant, galloping hither to achieve in his own person this adventure of the Templar and the Jewess, with his own single arm. I accompanied him with my band, almost maugre his consent’.[[713]](#footnote-713) Once again, Richard has shown no care for his personal safety and therefore no consideration of his responsibilities as a monarch. Thus, Scott ends the novel with Richard’s ‘premature death… before the Castle of Chaluz, near Limoges’, noting that he was a ‘generous, but rash and romantic monarch’.[[714]](#footnote-714) After his death, Ivanhoe’s career cannot rise higher, and England falls into the hands of King John, who Richard failed to punish for his usurpation, plotting and cruelty.

Neither John nor Richard the Lionheart are represented as suitable monarchs by Scott. He is determined to draw them realistically, with all of their character flaws intact. Thus, John is too petulant and cowardly, and Richard is too brave and foolhardy. The descendant of the Saxon kings, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, the hope of Ivanhoe’s father Cedric, is equally unqualified to lead England. Despite being ‘comely in countenance, bulky and strong in person, and in the flower of his age’, he has inherited the infirmities of an ancient royal race, making him, ‘inanimate in expression, dull-eyed, heavy-browed, inactive and sluggish in all his motions, and so slow in resolution’ that he is commonly called ‘Athelstane the Unready’.[[715]](#footnote-715) Despite these flaws, Cedric is unfailingly loyal to him as the rightful ruler of England’s Saxon people, and his profound respect for him prevents him from admitting Athelstane’s unsuitability to lead. At the tournament, Cedric looks to him to recover the victory for England against the Norman Templars and knights, but Athelstane is ‘too inert and unambitious’ to join the contest.[[716]](#footnote-716) His ‘indifference to the honour of the country’ troubles Cedric, and it is his own son, Ivanhoe, albeit in disguise, who presents himself as England’s champion against the French invaders.[[717]](#footnote-717) Ultimately, Cedric is forced to admit that while Athelstane has a king’s bloodline and birthright, he lacks the qualities of a good leader: ‘Alas! That so dull a spirit should be lodged in so goodly a form! Alas! That such an enterprise as the regeneration of England should turn on a hinge so imperfect!’[[718]](#footnote-718) Ironically, it is Ivanhoe, the son he banished and disinherited, who possesses many of the qualities that Cedric finds lacking in Athelstane. In his only act of wisdom, Athelstane shows humility and grace by tendering his ‘allegiance, heart and hand’ to Richard, stating that ‘I will be king in my own domains, and nowhere else’, and sacrificing Rowena’s hand in marriage to Ivanhoe for their mutual joy.[[719]](#footnote-719) He recognises his own unsuitability and unwillingness to rule a nation, and chooses what is best for the people as well as himself. Thus, while *Ivanhoe* appears to be a loyalist narrative, concerned with the reconciliation and unity of the nation under Richard’s rule, it calls into question the qualities required of a good monarch, and the right of the English people to choose that ruler.

Speaking of Richard’s return to England, Fitzurse notes that ‘these are not the days of King Arthur, when a champion could encounter an army. If Richard indeed comes back, it must be alone, - unfollowed – unfriended’.[[720]](#footnote-720) Having sacrificed his army in the crusades in Palestine, Richard would return alone and incapable of wrestling his throne back from his younger brother John and his followers. He goes on to assure his fellow nobles that they have the right to choose their own king:

And what talk ye of Richard’s right of birth? Is Richard’s title of primogeniture more decidedly certain that of Duke Robert of Normandy, the Conqueror’s eldest son? And yet William the Red, and Henry, his second and third brothers, were successively preferred to him by the voice of the nation. Robert had every merit which can be pleaded for Richard; he was a bold knight, a good leader, generous to his friends and to the Church, and, to crown the whole, a crusader and a conqueror of the Holy Sepulchre; and yet he died a blind and miserable prisoner in the castle of Cardiff, because he opposed himself to the will of the people, who chose that he should not rule over them.[[721]](#footnote-721)

As he proceeds, it becomes clear that by the ‘people’, Fitzurse means only the gentry and calls for the support of his fellows in backing ‘him whose election will best promote the interests of the nobility’.[[722]](#footnote-722) His speech draws attention to the historical precedent of a people choosing their own ruler against the rights of primogeniture and the divine right of kings. Scott’s audience would be well aware of the numerous examples of English and Scottish rulers who were deposed and executed including, Edward II, Richard II, Henry VI, Mary, Queen of Scots, Charles I and James II. It would also bring to mind the recent events in France and the execution of Louis XVI in favour of Maximilien Robespierre, the Jacobins, and the tyrannous Republic.

Scott’s critical emphasis on the potentially fickle nature of the ‘people’ in refusing a monarch who possesses every merit and kingly quality, because he opposed himself to their will, makes his opinion on the Revolution clear. He demonstrates how the public can be easily manipulated by politicians or the gentry into supporting the deposition of a good leader in favour of a wicked one. While Scott clearly opposed the French Revolution and perceived the danger of the mob choosing their own ruler, however, his rigorous interrogation of kingly qualities complicates the narrative. Richard, John and Athelstane are all unsuitable monarchs for a variety of reasons. Royal blood is not enough to guarantee a good ruler and indeed, in Athelstane’s case, his ancient royal lineage causes him psychological disadvantages. Scott’s realistic portrayal of the monarchy suggests that, like Horsley Curties, he was a royalist who promoted a strong King who was receptive to wise counsel from his advisors. Neither the extremity of a republican revolution nor the absolutism of a tyrant king were preferable. Alongside the recent experience of the bloody French Revolution, Scott’s audience would also be influenced by the reign of their own monarchs, George III and IV. *Ivanhoe*’s publication in 1820 coincided with the death of the popular but mad King George and the succession of his extravagant son, George IV. George III’s reign, which was longer than any other British monarch before him, was punctuated by a series of military conflicts, the Seven Years’ War, the American and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic Wars. While his health – both physical and mental – was always a cause for concern, he was extremely popular following the American Revolution until the end of his life. As Linda Colley charts, before the Revolution there is evidence to show that George was actively disliked, particularly by the Wilkite rioters in London. Satirical cartoons of him were often derisory and offensive, depicting him as a villain, a tyrant, a puppet or a closet Catholic.[[723]](#footnote-723) From the 1780s onwards, however, he became the personification of patriotism, frequently depicted as John Bull, or Saint George, or as a homespun farmer.[[724]](#footnote-724) As a limited monarch, and therefore somewhat divorced from national politics, George avoided most of the blame for the English defeat in America, which instead passed to the former Prime Minister, Lord North. Instead, he embodied both the reassuring stability of the Island Nation, and the vulnerability of an honest and sick man.

During a turbulent time, George III was associated with an assertively nationalistic royal image, and this combination of national pride and personal pity conflated the image of the king with that of a father. His longevity as a monarch and a man became a symbol of the nation’s relative stability and prosperity in comparison with many of the European monarchies at the time. But despite this relative peace, George III’s reign saw Great Britain experience poverty, war, near-famine, conscription and, as Miss Wardour states in *The Antiquary*, ‘invasion from abroad and insurrection at home’.[[725]](#footnote-725) His successor, George IV, did little to ease the concerns of the country. Despite Scott’s affirmation, he was generally unpopular with his people, viewed as selfish, unreliable and dissolute, particularly in relation to his wife, Caroline of Brunswick, who he unsuccessfully attempted to divorce. His behaviour dimmed the prestige of the monarchy, and throughout the Napoleonic Wars, the nation looked to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, not to George for leadership and victory. As Colley notes, ‘From the day of George IV’s coronation in 1821 […] to his unlamented death in 1830, this British king was both widely denounced and mercilessly ridiculed’.[[726]](#footnote-726) Scott’s British audience had a troubled relationship with monarchy and had experienced both dissolute and, if not effectual, then at least popular monarchs. They were as invested in interrogating the necessary qualities of leadership, the role of the monarchy and their responsibility to the people as Scott was.

The contemporary politics surrounding Scott’s audience are especially relevant to their reading experience of his Gothic novels. Historical Gothic fiction often stressed the continuity between the ancient and the modern, acknowledging a continuous national character that offsets the ‘otherness’ of the domestic past. Just as Reeve’s characters resemble middle-class eighteenth-century gentlemen more than twelfth-century knights, so too do Scott’s ancient characters often betray modern manners. Whereas the otherness and outlandishness of the distant past is often a key theme in Gothic fiction, Historical Gothic often shows the progressive nature of the Medieval Period and demystifies the national past to make it less a threat and more an ancestry. When Oldbuck takes a party out to the nearby ruins of Saint Ruth on Sir Arthur’s property in *The Antiquary*, the reader recognises a prime location for Gothic events. In fact, however, the ruins are treated as a heritage site, inclusive of a full description of the picturesque scene by the narrator, a detailed tour with a full history by Oldbuck, and an extensive conversation about the loss of learning occasioned by the Reformation, and about the selective nature of national history. The ruins are a relic of Scotland’s Catholic and feudal past, traditionally a site of tyranny and fear in Gothic novels, but Scott’s narrative sanitises them and reduces them to a vestige of local heritage and history. Oldbuck’s lament at the monastic library and the loss of five thousand volumes characterises the site as one of peaceful learning, rather than Catholic mysticism. It effectively divests the ruins of their Gothic atmosphere and incorporates them into both the literary heritage of the nation, and the antiquarian trend of the contemporary day.

Through Lovel’s discussion of the selective formation of national history, Scott addresses how British history has become sensationalised and alienated from the present. History is formed by ‘the events which leave the deepest impression on the minds of the common people’ and therefore the ruins are associated with the ‘fear and tribulation’ of Catholic superstition, tyranny and corruption, rather than with the ‘peaceful abbots’ who inhabited the monastery.[[727]](#footnote-727) When characters attempt to exhume the vestiges of this Gothic past, Scott is quick to ridicule and dismiss them, preferring instead to view the past through an antiquarian lens. It is the ridiculous German charlatan professor, Mr Dousterswivel, who endeavours to evoke the Gothic with his stories of ‘de hand of glory’ that the Catholic monks used to hide their vast treasures, and the ‘divining rod’ with which he can locate hidden water sources around the ruins, and with his tales of the Inquisition and their auto-da-fé.[[728]](#footnote-728) On each occasion, Oldbuck is quick to mock his opinions and dismiss his acts as ‘mystical pieces of jugglery’.[[729]](#footnote-729) During their lunch among the ruins, Miss Wardour produces her narrative of one of Mr Dousterswivel’s German tales, which he in turn calls a ‘very true story’, complaining that she has reduced it to ‘just like one romance, as well as Goethe or Wieland could have done’.[[730]](#footnote-730) She defends herself by saying that ‘the romantic predominated in the legend so much above the probable that it was impossible for a lover of fairy-land like me to avoid lending a few touches to make it perfect in its kind’.[[731]](#footnote-731) Thus, Dousterswivel’s Gothic tale of goblins and sorcery is reduced to an amusing fairy-tale, in the same way that the foreboding Catholic ruins are reduced to a scenic picnicking spot.

When Lovel finishes reading the tale, Oldbuck compares Miss Wardour’s skill to alchemy, in that she ‘had contrived to extract a sound and valuable moral out of a very trumpery and ridiculous legend’ and pompously articulates a popular denouncement against the ‘fashion to admire those extravagant fictions’.[[732]](#footnote-732) Oldbuck’s ridicule stems from his own engagement with, and respect for, national and local history. He takes pride in his acts of national curation, in establishing the stadial progress of history from the ancient past to the present day, and in providing evidence to support it. Thus, he rejects the ‘othering’ of the past that Miss Wardour’s Gothic tale and Dousterswivel’s mysticism promotes with a patriotic flair: ‘for me, I bear an English heart, Unused at ghosts and rattling bones to start’.[[733]](#footnote-733)

While Scott’s novel promises a variety of Gothic Romance and mystery, with its hopeless love, benighted aristocracy, dark family secrets, hidden treasure and a midnight funeral procession to a ruined abbey, his 1790s Scotland fails to deliver. The second visit to the ruins features the most Gothic elements of Scott’s novel: the use of sorcery to discover buried treasure, the unintentional summoning of an apparition who attacks Dousterswivel, and a secret Catholic funeral which is at first mistaken for an exorcism. Scott does not allow the mystery to linger long, however, and they are quickly discovered to have mundane sources: the treasure is a hoax by the German charlatan, who is attacked & robbed by Steenie Mucklebackit and Edie Ochiltree, and the funeral is for the late Lady Glenallan (the last Catholic rite that will be performed in the area as her son converts to Protestantism before the end of the novel). Once again, the Gothic drama is succinctly undermined and dismissed. The ‘otherness’ is incorporated into the familiar, the alien is made well known, the ‘uncanny’ is exposed, explained, assimilated. In Scott’s Historical novel, the Gothic past is a source of study and knowledge, not mystery and fear. As Fiona Price states, ‘the idea that radicals might paint the past as a place of gothic tyranny proved troubling to conservative writers […] thus the royalists tried to regain control of the fictional past – by promoting the supposedly historical, by privileging the romance, or making gothic work to the benefit of the aristocracy’.[[734]](#footnote-734)

In Scott’s work, the Gothic is understood as the heritage from which contemporary Britain has descended and developed, and is depicted as a source of native, national independence against the foreign, the ‘other’, the invader and usurper. Thus, Dousterswivel’s attempt to appropriate the Gothic for his dark combination of science and mysticism is roundly denounced and exposed as charlatanism. Rather, as in *Ivanhoe*, the Englishman sources his love of liberty from his Gothic ancestry, and stands against the continental, aristocratic and prelatic invaders of Norman feudalism and Roman Catholicism. Throughout Scott’s fiction, true Gothicism is entwined with the liberty of the subject, with national identity and native patriotism.

Conclusion

No shade was there, no meads of pleasant green,   
No brook to wet his lips or soothe his ear,   
Huge piles of corn-stack here and there were seen   
But thence no smoke upwreathed his sight to cheer;   
And see the homeward shepherd dim appear   
Far off—He stops his feeble voice to strain;   
No sound replies but winds that whistling near   
Sweep the thin grass and passing, wildly plain;   
Or desert lark that pours on high a wasted strain.

Long had each slope he mounted seemed to hide   
Some cottage whither his tired feet might turn,   
But now, all hope resigned, in tears he eyed   
The crows in blackening eddies homeward borne,   
Then sought, in vain, a shepherd's lowly thorn   
Or hovel from the storm to shield his head.   
On as he passed more wild and more forlorn   
And vacant the huge plain around him spread;   
Ah me! the wet cold ground must be his only bed.

* William Wordsworth, ‘Salisbury Plain’ (1793-94)[[735]](#footnote-735)

The first version of William Wordsworth’s poem, ‘Salisbury Plain’, records his turbulent feelings regarding the war with France and the condition of England. It follows a ‘hungry savage’ who wanders ‘naked and unhouzed’ across ‘unknown plains’.[[736]](#footnote-736) It would be easy to assume that this opening scene takes place abroad and that the narrative will be transported to Salisbury Plain, a plateau in central southern England. As the poem progresses, however, the reader realises that the ‘savage’ is an Englishman, already at home on English soil, and yet a wanderer in a bleak and barren land. The description of the English landscape, quoted above, paints it as an inhospitable and relentless space, bare of shelter, company or sustenance. ‘No shade’, ‘no meads’, ‘no brook’, ‘no smoke upwreathed’, ‘no sound’ – only the wind whistling across the plain, ‘more wild and more forlorn’, ‘ vacant’, ‘huge’.[[737]](#footnote-737) Like the wanderers who populate the national Gothic literature discussed in this thesis, Wordsworth’s vagrant passes through a desolate and inhospitable version of England. He can find neither shelter nor succour from his fellow Britons, and is reduced to the state of an animal struggling to survive in the wilderness.

As the poem progresses, the wanderer finds a female vagrant who tells her own story of losing her home through local tyranny, her husband to the war, and her children to starvation and sickness.[[738]](#footnote-738) When she returns to England – ‘Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board / A British ship I waked as from a trance restored’ – it is to a life of exiled wandering and starvation.[[739]](#footnote-739) The nation to which she is ‘restored’ has no provision for her; having pressed her husband into service in the army, it repays her with ‘a comfortless half-sheltered bed’.[[740]](#footnote-740) The powerful imagery he evokes of her decline from the pastoral idyll of her childhood to the horrors of her rootless life on the barren plains is a statement on the corruption and oppression that Wordsworth saw ravaging the nation during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. This harrowing anti-war tale is the true horror-story that Wordsworth intends to tell. In a poem replete with spectres, tombs, disembodied voices, and new murdered corpses, the Gothic fixtures are merely an atmospheric foil to the real misery and suffering of war. On the barren plains of England, the ‘antique castle’, a relic of Britain’s military past, becomes a fire-lit ‘mountain-pile’ where ‘hell’s most cursed sprites’ conduct their midnight rites:[[741]](#footnote-741)

Mid priests and spectres grim and idols dire,

Far heard the great flame utters human moans,

Then all is hushed: again the desert groans,

A dismal light its farthest bounds illumes,

While warrior spectres of gigantic bones,

Forth-issuing from a thousand rifted tombs,

Wheel on their fiery steeds amid the infernal glooms.[[742]](#footnote-742)

The British past which Wordsworth resurrects here is not one of glorious ancestry, military prowess and united patriotism. Instead, he evokes the priests and spectres of Britain’s Catholic past, worshipping dire idols amid human moans. After them come the warriors and steeds of ancient wars who are condemned to groan and wheel in eternal, infernal gloom across the plains. These antique ghosts of a thousand rifted tombs are not the celebrated ancestors of Britain, but the revenants of war, revived to haunt a nation once again ‘lap[ping], their very nourishment, their brother’s blood’.[[743]](#footnote-743)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge praised ‘Salisbury Plain’ extensively in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), stating that it effected a:

[…] union of deep feeling with profound thought; [a] fine balance of truth in observing with the imaginative faculty in modifying the objects observed; and above all [an] original gift of spreading the tone, the *atmosphere*, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops.[[744]](#footnote-744)

For Wordsworth, however, the poem would satisfy for a very brief time only and in the autumn of 1795 he revised it extensively. In 1798 he published the woman’s story as ‘The Female Vagrant’ in *Lyrical Ballads*, and over forty years later the original poem was converted into that published as ‘Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain’ (1842). His poetic treatment of this material occurred at widely different periods of his career, with this first poem occurring at the most exciting and creative stage in his literary development. It captures his horror at the modern political barbarism of the Reign of Terror and the consequent war with France, which he compares to the Druid human sacrifice which supposedly took place at Stonehenge. The ‘sacrificial altar fed/ With living men’ is both the ancient standing stones, and the French guillotine, and the battlefield to which the female vagrant’s husband is dragged.[[745]](#footnote-745)

In ‘Salisbury Plain’, a young Wordsworth encapsulates the central themes of nationalist Gothic literature: the hostile, alien landscape which is an ‘uncanny’ version of a once beloved home; the returning native, dispossessed, forgotten and exiled to wanderer beyond the bounds of society; the ancestral remnants of Britain’s past returning to haunt the present and provoke an engagement with inherited national identity. His female vagrant most closely resembles Smith’s despairing wanderers in her stark representations of a corrupted, inhospitable Britain. Rejected from the increasingly hostile society that Smith and Wordsworth saw developing in reaction to the French Revolution, she finds herself back on British soil, husbandless, childless and homeless:

And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,  
'And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.

'Three years a wanderer round my native coast   
My eyes have watched yon sun declining tend   
Down to the land where hope to me was lost;   
And now across this waste my steps I bend[[746]](#footnote-746)

This harrowing account recalls other examples of reformist literature from the 1790s, by authors such as Smith and Godwin, written in protest against an increasingly authoritarian British government and their reactionary policies. In referring to a wanderer - destitute, friendless, dispossessed of identity and home – however, Wordsworth’s poem recalls the work of all of the authors studied here. Despite their disparate intentions in setting their Gothic fiction in Britain, they are all united in representing a need for varying degrees of social and political reform.

While Smith’s early fiction reflects her admiration for the French Revolution and its promotion of individual liberty and equality, Reeve’s Gothic novels promoted a counter-Revolutionary, anti-levelling social hierarchy. Her critique of Britain, then, stems from a perceived lack of unity and strong leadership. The corruption and lawlessness that her heroes encounter upon their return home is a product of a destabilised nation, where a weak monarch has allowed selfishness and greed to take the place of chivalry. By promoting Britain’s ancestry, and thereby the inherited traditions of chivalry, military prowess and social stability, Reeve sought to counter Revolutionary sentiment. Conversely, William Henry Ireland revived Britain’s feudal past in order to challenge the shared national identity that Reeve was helping to establish. His troubled personal identity led him to question the national identity that was being formed as the nation refashioned itself following the 1707 Act of Union, the global Seven Years’ War, the loss of the American colonies, and the French Revolution. As the British Empire took shape, a new identity as the world’s dominant colonial power was born. Ireland’s Gothic fiction resurrects the Anglo-Scottish conflicts of the Fourteenth Century in order to trouble this narrative of unity, camaraderie and shared heritage. Instead, he notes that England’s eighteenth-century attitude towards the French, and other foreign people’s seeking liberty and resisting tyranny, was echoed in their earlier treatment of the Scots. His representation of Scotland’s struggle and his support for Robert the Bruce contains a coded advocacy of the Revolution and Napoleon.

T. I. Horsley Curties also uses the British setting of his Gothic literature to discuss contemporary politics. Like Reeve, he wanted to promote a secure and inclusive social hierarchy with a strong leader at its head. Beyond simple royalist narratives, however, Curties interrogates the qualities of a good ruler and joins the debate over primogeniture and elected leaders. He stages his fiction in Britain and engages with national history as a way of exploring some of the issues which were being hotly debated in the wake of the French Revolution: the suitability of leaders, their required qualities, the extent of monarchical power, and the right of the people to choose their own rulers. Meanwhile, his contemporary, Walter Scott, adopted the British setting at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century to assess the state of the nation a hundred years after the formation of Great Britain. His work is a testament to the Gothic genre’s genesis in Historical and nation tales, and his national Gothic novels combine the excitement of Romance with the reality of antiquarian study. Rather than the impassioned calls for reform that can be found in the earlier works of Reeve, Smith and Ireland, Scott’s work – like Curties’s – is more reflective of the events of the Eighteenth Century. His work explores the loss, fragmentation and refashioning of national identity after the 1707 Act of Union; the creation of cultural identity through the curation of a shared antiquarian past; the legitimacy or fictionalisation of history, and the narration of the past as an act of identity formation. Instead of calling to reform or refashion the nation, Scott explores what the nation is, how it sees itself, and where that shared perception originates.

Despite the differences in these works, then, all of the authors here engage closely with contemporary domestic politics, and share a preoccupation with national identity which references the genre’s roots in the Historical Romance and national tale. Whether used to promote patriotism as Reeve did, or for reform like Smith; to question national identity like Ireland, or to interrogate good rulers like Horsley-Curties; or to examine the post-1707 formation of the nation as Scott did: for whatever purpose writers adopted a British setting for their Gothic fiction, they all addressed the same political crises and social tensions. These recurring themes and motifs identify this type of Gothic literature as a generic subtype - one which focuses on Britain to express and explore the contemporary anxieties of its citizens. By acknowledging that the Gothic has its genesis in a turn to an imagined past, in the mythmaking process of personal and national identity, and in interrogating political systems of power and leadership, previously marginalised novels are reimagined as Gothic. In such a heterogeneous and multi-faceted genre, it is necessary to acknowledge the inclusion of texts which may shift the generic boundaries. While these novels lack the geographical and temporal distancing that has come to characterise the genre in critical opinion, they were fundamental to developing Gothic tropes and narrative techniques, and they used them to explore contemporary anxieties at home. The suturing together of a nation to create an ‘uncanny’ simulacrum; the fragmentation and loss of individual and collective identity; and the exhumation and resurrection of the national past to inform the present: all make Britain a fertile terrain for the Gothic.

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2. *Northanger Abbey*, p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Northanger Abbey*, p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Northanger Abbey*, p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. I use Britain here and hereafter to refer to events occurring after the 1707 Act of Union in which Scotland was joined to England and Wales to create the united Kingdom of Great Britain. Many of the political and social concerns I discuss in the thesis are nation-wide, and the novels I examine often include action set across Scotland, England and occasionally Wales, making the use of the inclusive term ‘Britain’ more accurate. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (1816) (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1871), p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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10. [Anon.], ‘The Terrorist System of Novel Writing’, *Monthly Magazine*, 4:21 (August 1797), 102-4 (p. 102). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For more on this see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale: University of Yale Press, 2005), p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. These family feuds are frequently addressed in Scottish Gothic novels where dual identities, doublings and brotherly rivalries are recurring themes. For example, in the fiction of Walter Scott, James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson. I address this further in Chapter Five on Walter Scott’s Gothic novels. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Northanger Abbey*, p. 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. I am adopting Sigmund Freud’s term ‘*das unheimliche*’ or ‘the uncanny’ here to represent the psychological concept of something that is both familiar and incongruous. I expand on this concept in Chapter One on Clara Reeve, p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
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18. Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820: A Genealogy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 1; Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 4; Angela Wright, *Gothic Fiction: A Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For a full history of the Visigoths see Nick Groom’s first chapter ‘Origins of the Goths’, in his *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 1-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. I discuss the political resonance of the Gothic in parliamentary rhetoric further in Chapter One, pp. 48-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Robert Molesworth, Viscount, *The Principles of a Real Whig; contained in a Preface to the famous Hotoman’s Franco-Gallia* (London: J. Williams, 1775), p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *A Perswasive to the Union Not On Foot* (London: Booksellers of London and Westminster, 1706), p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Nick Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. E. J. Clery, ‘The Genesis of ‘Gothic’ Fiction’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Richard Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 10 October 2013], p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Horace Walpole, ‘Preface to the Second Edition’, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Alfred E. Longeuil, ‘The Word ‘Gothic’ in Eighteenth-Century Criticism’, *MLN*, 38 (1923), 453-60 (p. 458). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. K. K. Mehrotra, *Horace Walpole and the English Novel* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1934). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Alexander Bicknell, *The History of Edward Prince of Wales* (1776), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 20 October 2013], p. xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Mehrotra, *Horace Walpole and the English Novel*, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For a full biography of William Longespée, 3rd Earl of Salisbury, see the Encyclopaedia Britannica, http://www.britannica.com/ [accessed 15 October 2013]. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Critical Review,* XIII (1762), 252-257. Referenced in Dan McNutt (ed.), *The Eighteenth-century Gothic Novel* (Kent: Garland Publishing, 1975), p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For a history of Britain and its conflicts, see Linda Colley, *Forging the Nation* (1994), Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (1998) and *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth-Century* (2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See, for example, Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (1777-8)or *Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), Sophia Lee’s *The Recess, or a Tale of Other Times* (1783-5), James White’s *Earl Strongbow* (1789) and *The Adventures of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster* (1791) and *The Adventures of King Richard Coeur de Lion* (1791), T. I. Horsley Curties’s *Ethelwina; or, The House of Fitz-Auburne* (1799), *Ancient Records; or, The Abbey of Saint Oswythe* (1801), *The Watch Tower; or, The Sons of Ulthona* (1804), Richard Warner’s *Netley Abbey: A Gothic Story* (1799). All of the above employed a medieval British setting for their conservative Gothic narratives. James White can be said to bridge the gap between Walpole’s frivolous Gothic and the loyalist stance, but despite the humour in his work, he saw himself as contributing to the refashioning of the national image and claimed that, ‘this and other chronicles, which I have written, may be looked upon as supplements to the history of this nation, and as such, should be valued and applauded by the worthy’ (James White, *The Adventures of King Richard Coeur de Lion*, 3 vols. (London, 1791), III, p. 166). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. For a discussion of Gothic fiction in relation to patriotism, see James Watt’s chapter ‘The Loyalist Gothic romance’ in *Contesting the Gothic* (1999), pp. 42-69. For more on British national identity and its relation to Protestantism, see Linda Colley’s chapter ‘Protestants’ in *Forging the Nation* (1994), pp. 11-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 70-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Charlotte Smith, ‘Preface’, *The Banished Man,* 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1794), vol. 1, p. iv. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Michael Gamer, ‘Gothic fictions and Romantic writing in Britain’, *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Horace Walpole, ‘Preface’ to *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Eugeneia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Clara Reeve, ‘Preface’, in *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1778) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *The Yale Edition of Walpole’s Correspondence*, vol. 31 (1961), ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-1983), p. 221. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Clara Reeve, ‘Preface’, *The Old English Baron,* p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. E. J. Clery, ‘The Genesis of ‘Gothic’ Fiction’, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. For more on this see J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (London: Methuen, 1932), p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (1937), trans. H. and S. Mitchell, (London: Merlin, 1962), p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Clara Reeve, ‘Preface’, *The Old English Baron,* p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, ‘Gothic Criticism’, in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), p. 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Robert Miles, ‘Introduction’, in *The Italian* (1796) (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), p. xxiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. As Dale Townshend explains in his article ‘T. I. Horsley Curties, Romance, and the Gift of Death’, *European Romantic Review*, 24:1 (2013), 23-42,Curties’s name was printed in his novels as ‘T. J. Horsley Curties’, but the ‘J’ was simply an antiquated print version of an ‘I’ for his middle name, ‘Isaac’. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Clara Reeve, ‘Preface’, in *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (London: Hookham & Carpenter, 1793), 3 vols., http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco [accessed 10 February 2014], vol. 1, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. E. J. Clery, *Women’s Gothic* (Tavistock: Northcote House Publishing, 2000), p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ellen Moers, ‘Female Gothic: the monster’s mother’, *New York Review of Books*, 21 (1974), p. 24. Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: Women’s Press, 1978), p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Gary Kelly (ed.), ‘General Introduction’, in *Varieties of Female Gothic*, 6 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002), vol. 1, p. xi. For the period that Kelly’s work covers – ‘the decades just before and after 1800’ (p. xiv), his assertion that Female Gothic was written exclusively by women is probably correct. The exception being some male copycats of Radcliffean Gothic like Anthony Holstein who adopted the Female Gothic style. When applied to Victorian literature, however, the term Female Gothic is not restricted to women writers. Critics like Tamar Heller (*Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic,* 1992)and Alison Milbank (*Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction,* 1992) have written on the appropriation of Female Gothic tropes by Victorian male writers like Wilkie Collins. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Regarding the theoretical history of the category Female Gothic, see the special issue of *Women’s Writing* (2:1) edited by Robert Miles (1994); the double issue of *Gothic Studies* (6:1) edited by Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace (2004), and the chapter entitled ‘Female Gothic’ by Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik in *Teaching the Gothic* (2006), edited by Anna Powell and Andrew Smith. For an excellent discussion on the debatable value of the separate literary term ‘Female Gothic’ see *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, ed. by Diana Wallace & Andrew Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Julian Fleenor (ed.), *The Female Gothic* (Montreal & London: Eden, 1983). For an excellent discussion on the debatable value of the separate literary term ‘Female Gothic’ see *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, ed. Diana Wallace & Andrew Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, vol. 1, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron* (1778) (London: Edward & Charles Dilly, 1778), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Kate Furguson Ellis, ‘Otranto Feminized: Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee’ in *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 1989), pp. 57-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Gary Kelly (ed.), ‘General Introduction’, in *Varieties of Female Gothic*, vol. 1 of 6 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2002), p. xxxi. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 58-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832*, p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. While Walpole’s tale does have a hero – Theodore – he is not a particularly strong male figure. He frequently fails to act, needs to be rescued, does not save his heroine, and ultimately marries Matilda because only she can sympathise with his life-long grief over the lost Isabella. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. E. J. Clery, ‘Introduction’, *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. xiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. For a history of domestic British politics during this period, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. iii. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. v. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Samuel Johnson, ‘Novel versus Romance’, *The Rambler*, no. 4 (1750), in *Gothic Documents: A sourcebook 1700-1820*, ed. E J Clery & Robert Miles (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Samuel Johnson, ‘Novel versus Romance’, p. 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘Review of Lewis’s *The Monk*’ (1797), in *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840*, ed. by Rictor Norton (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 296. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Hugh Murray, *Morality of Fiction* (1805), in *Gothic Documents: A sourcebook 1700-1820*, ed. E J Clery & Robert Miles (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, 2 vols. (Colchester: W. Keymer, 1785), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 3 March 2014], vol. 1, p. 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, p. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Quoted in Spector, *The English Gothic*, p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (London: Harrison & Co., 1740). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. For more on the old and new Whig politics, see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: N. J., 1975), especially chapter 14; see also J. G. A. Pocock, ‘The Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform: A History of Ideology and Discourse’, in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 215-310. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. x. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. James Watt, ‘Introduction’ to *The Old English Baron*, ed. James Trainer (Oxford: OUP, 2003), p. xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Most of the recent criticism on *Baron* notes its unusual structuring which emphasises Reeve’s preoccupation with middle-class economic concerns. Ruth Perry describes it as a ‘structural oddity’ because ‘the sequence of supernatural discovery is completed before the novel is halfway over and the entire second half is devoted to working out in painstaking detail the means by which Edmund can claim his place’ (‘Women in families: the great disinheritance’, in Vivien Jones (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 116). She also notes the unusual ‘mixture of conventions… [where] it begins as Gothic Romance and ends with realistic legal consequences’ (‘Women in families’, p. 117). George Haggerty remarks that Reeve ‘is less engaged by scenes of haunting than by the legal squabbles of a group of petty aristocrats’ (*Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later 18th Century* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 55). Emma Clery identifies the plot’s emphasis as residing in ‘the arduous task of legal, social and economic reparations, in what might seem an over-extended coda’ (*Women’s Gothic*, p. 36). Finally, Carol Margaret Davison observes that ‘*earthly* retribution is an equally consequential component of *Baron*’ and that Reeve’s ‘painstaking delineation of the legal arrangements relating to Edmund’s inheritance renders her middle-class preoccupations tediously and anachronistically clear’ (*Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009)?>, p. 80). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Ruth Perry, ‘Women in families: the great disinheritance’, in Vivien Jones (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 187-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 48. There is little evidence of Reeve’s political position beyond that suggested within her own work, but she repeatedly contented for ‘a subordination of ranks and degrees of men… consistent with the most perfect liberty that mankind are capable of enjoying’ throughout her literary career, *Plans of Education; With Remarks on the Systems of Other Writers* (London, 1792), p. 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. For more on Reeve’s politics see Gary Kelly, ‘Clara Reeve, Provincial Bluestocking: From the Old Whigs to the Modern Liberal State’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1/2, *Reconsidering* *the Bluestockings* (2002), pp. 105-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Helmut Nickel, ‘The Dawn of Chivalry’, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 32, No. 5, pp. 150-152 (p. 150). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Sheila Cottrell, ‘The Devil on Two Sticks: Franco-Phobia in 1803’, in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, ed. Raphael Samuel, 3 vols. (London, 1989), 1:263. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Howard Weinbrot, ‘Politics, Taste, and National Identity: Some Uses of Tacitism in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, in *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition*, ed. J. J. Luce and A. J. Woodman (Princeton, NJ, 1993), 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Michèle Cohen, ‘“Manners” Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830’, *Journal of British studies*, vol. 44, no. 2 (April 2005), pp. 312-329 (p. 318). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Richard Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 10 October 2013], p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. René Wellek, *The Rise of English Literary History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), pp. 153-156. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, pp. 13-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, pp. xv-xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1, p. xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. E. J. Clery, ‘The genesis of “Gothic” fiction’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 21-39 (p. 34). [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Toni Wein, *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Gary Kelly, ‘General Introduction’ to *Varieties of Female Gothic*, p. xxxii. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. For more information, see H. T. Dickenson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978), 103-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Nick Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* , p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Kelly refers to Reeve’s hometown of Ipswich as ‘a bastion of “old Whig” politics’ which would have greatly influenced her social and political views. This is supported by Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 100. For more on Robert Walpole and his involvement with various scandals, including the South Sea financial scandal, see Jeremy Black, *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990) and Christine Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole: Politics, Poetry, and National Myth, 1725-1742* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Gary Kelly, ‘Clara Reeve, Provincial Bluestocking: From the Old Whigs to the Modern Liberal State’, p. 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Walpole’s failings are discussed at length in the ‘old Whig’ publication *Cato’s Letters* (1720-23) by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon. The collection of essays covered a diverse range of topics including politics, morality, religion, philosophy and culture. Among their titles relating to Walpole are ‘The Fatal Effects of the South-Sea Scheme, and the necessity of punishing the directors’; ‘Civil Liberty Produces All Civil Blessings, and how, with the baneful nature of tyranny’ and ‘The Contemptibleness of Grandeur Without Virtue’. Walpole and his political regime were widely condemned in *Cato’s Letters*  and other Whig writings that Reeve would have had access to. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. W. S. Lewis, *Horace Walpole* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Gary Kelly, ‘Clara Reeve, Provincial Bluestocking: From the Old Whigs to the Modern Liberal State’, p. 123-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 155-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. ‘Review of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*,’ in *The Critical Review*, 19 (1765), 51-52 (51). [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *The Old English Baron*, p. vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. E. J. Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Toni Wein, *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824*, p. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Toni Wein, *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824*, p. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. The regicide and settlement of succession in William III made the fiction of inherited authority expendable and indifference to genealogical inheritance as an explicit article of the theory of English kingship obligatory. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817) (Boston: Little, Brown & co., 1903), p. 243. Austen’s statement here is satirical and clearly gestures towards the reactionary and oppressive policies of the British government during and after the French Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Linda Colley, *Britons,* p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. x, xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Commonly called the *Wisdom of Sirach*, it is a work of ethical teachings written by the Jewish scribe Shimon ben Yeshua ben Eliezer ben Sira of Jerusalem and is the largest wisdom book to have been preserved from antiquity. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, pp. xvii-xviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xx & xxiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xxi. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Yale University press, 1992), p. 88. For more on Britain and Francophilia see Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Clara Reeve to Joseph Cooper Walker, Ipswich, April 1791; letter in the collection of Reeve’s correspondence in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, MSS 1461/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Clara Reeve to Joseph Cooper Walker, letter of 12 April 1791. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Clara Reeve to Joseph Cooper Walker, letter of 7 September 1792. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. *British Critic* (1793) and *Critical Review* (1793) in Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh 1788-1802* (London: Methuen, 1978), pp. 163-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. For my argument on T. I. Horsley Curties’s royalism, see p. 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, p. 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon*, pp. 80-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Charlotte Smith, ‘The Emigrants’ (1793), in *Romanticism: An Anthology*, ed. Duncan Wu, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), Book I, pp. 102-11 (line 244-47). [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Jacqueline Labbe, *Writing Romanticism: Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Stuart Curran, ‘Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism’, in *South Central Review*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Summer, 1994), 66-78 (70). [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), p. 178 & Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* (1995), Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism* (1998), Rictor Norton (ed.), *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840* (2000), Angela Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s* (2000), Jerrold E. Hogle, *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002), David Punter & Glennis Byron (ed.), *The Gothic: Blackwell Guides to Literature* (2003), Robert Miles, ‘Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis’, in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (2012), Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, ‘Gothic Criticism’, in *A New Companion to the Gothic* (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, ‘Gothic Criticism’, in *A New Companion* *to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 267-288 (p. 270). Rictor Norton (ed.), *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840* (London: A&C Black, 2000), p. 286. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. See, for example, Duncan Wu (ed.), *Companion to Romanticism* (1999), Nicholas Roe, *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide* (2005), Duncan Wu (ed.), *Romanticism: An Anthology* (2012), Stuart Curran (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (2012). For Smith and Romanticism see, for example, Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1989), Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (1993), Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women’s Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (2004), Jacqueline Labbe, *The History of British Women’s Writing, 1750-1830: Volume Five* (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Curran, ‘Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism’ (1994), p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Curran, ‘Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism’ (1994), p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Samuel Richardson, ‘To Aaron Hill, 1741’, in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. J. Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. The full title for William Godwin’s 1794 reformist novel was, *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*. It sought to popularise the ideas presented in his 1793 treatise *Political Justice* and show the abuses of the tyrannical British government and its institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. For an introduction to Smith’s use of architecture see Loraine Fletcher, ‘Charlotte Smith’s Emblematic Castles’, *Critical Survey*, 4 (1992), 3-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism* (1998), p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Curran, ‘Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism’ (1994), p. 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues. With Notes.* (1794), 7th edition revised (London: T. Becket, 1798), p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, 3 vols. (1799), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 1, pp. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 20 October 2013], p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pp. 115-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Jane Aaron, *Welsh Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), p. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. James Henderson, ‘The Gothic Novel in Wales, 1790-1820’, in *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 11 (Summer 1960), 224-254 (249). [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Griffiths ap Griffiths, Esq., *A Cambro-British Historical Tale of the Fourteenth Century* (London: Minerva Press, 1816), p. 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. Matthew Arnold, *The Study of Celtic Literature* (London: Smith, Elder, 1867), p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. Although probably much older, the first recorded use of the term was in the sixteenth century, when William Camden called the area *Anglia Transwalliana.* In Welsh it is commonly known as *Sir Benfro Saesneg*, meaning ‘English Pembrokeshire’. For more information see Edward Laws, *The History of Little England Beyond Wales: and The Non-Kymric Colony Settled in Pembrokeshire* (1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. Aaron, *Welsh Gothic*, p. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. Colley, Linda, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837 (London: Pimlico, 2003), pp. 195-96. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, pp. 90-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. The wording of Smith’s description of the castle is just one example of her influence on Radcliffe. For more on this, see Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (1995) and Dian e Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (1998). For more on their mutual exchange see also Loraine Fletcher *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. The debate on the restoration or reform of British institutions and policies involves Smith’s work in the pamphlet debates of the 1790s between Thomas Paine, Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft. I discuss Smith’s fiction and personal politics in relation to these writers on pp. 67-68; 70-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. As the jurist William Blackstone explains the doctrine of coverture in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765): ‘The Husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose total protection and cover, she performs everything.’ (quoted in Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender*, p. 6). [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 7. Joseph Addison’s *The Spectator* was widely-circulated during its publication, between 1711 and 1712, and while it declared itself to be politically neutral, it was widely recognised as promoting Whig values to the emerging middle classes. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. Smith, *Emmeline or, The Orphan of the Castle*, vol. 1, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. Sue Chaplin, *The Gothic and the Rule of Law, 1764-1820* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007), p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 198 [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. Charlotte Smith, *Desmond* (1792), 3 vols. , *ECCO,* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 1, p. 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) (London: Broadview, 2001), p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820: The Import of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. Samuel Johnson’s *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) and James Boswell’s *A Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1785) record their eighty-three-day trip together through Scotland in the late summer and autumn of 1773. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. For more on the history of maps of Scotland, 1560-1928, see the National Library of Scotland website, http://maps.nls.uk/scotland/index.html [accessed 11 December 2013]. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. Fred Botting, ‘Preface: The Gothic’, *The Gothic: The English Association Essays and Studies*, ed. Fred Botting (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), pp. 1-6 (p. 2). [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. Charlotte Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, 5 vols. (1789), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 1, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. James R. Foster, ‘Charlotte Smith, Pre-Romantic Novelist’, *PMLA* 43, no. 2 (June, 1928), pp. 463-75 (470-71). [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. For more on the Radcliffe’s archetypal heroines, see the section ‘Radcliffe and the Heroine’ in Robert Miles, ‘Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis’, *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp.93-109 (98-102). [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1754) [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. See *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake,* vol. 1, Googlebooks http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=BiNWAAAAYAAJ&printsec [accessed 21 October 2013], p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, pp. 2; 35-6. This is very similar to the opinion of the Marquis's new wife, Maria de Vellorno, to their ancestral seat in Ann Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 1, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 5, p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 5, pp. 209-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 5, p. 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. Smith, *Ethelinde; or, The Recluse of the Lake*, vol. 5, p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. Loraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 110-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*, p. 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. Loraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*, p. 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. Charlotte Smith, *Celestina*, 4 vols. (1791), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 1, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. Smith, *Celestina*, vol. 1, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. Smith, *Celestina*, vol. 1, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. Smith, *Celestina*, vol. 1, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. Smith, *Celestina*, vol. 4, p. 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. Smith, *Celestina*, vol. 4, pp. 220-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp. 121-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 167. Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House,* 4 vols. (1793), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 3, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. Smith, *The Old Manor House*, vol. 3, p. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. Through the short-sighted vanity of Mrs Rayland, Smith illustrates Wollstonecraft’s desperate demand, ‘Why was it a duty to repair an ancient castle, built in barbarous ages, of Gothic materials?’ (*A Vindication of the Rights of Men,* 1790) [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, pp. 177-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 1, pp. 31-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, p. 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, p. 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. Jacqueline Labbe, ‘Metaphoricity and the Romance of Property in *The Old Manor House*’, *Novel* 34.2 (Spring 2001), 216-31 (217). [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. Clara Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco [accessed 10 February 2014], p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. Smith, *The Old Manor House*, vol. 1, p. 69; vols. 2, p. 160, 180, 280, 285; vols. 3, p. 221, 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 280 and vol. 1, p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. Charlotte Smith, ‘Preface’ to *The Young Philosopher*, 4 vols. (1798), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 1, p. vii.This attack on the legal system and its agents was no doubt augmented by her personal struggles with the law. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. Deborah Russell, ‘Domestic Gothic: Genre and Nation in Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House*’, *Literature Compass*, 10.10 (Winter 2013), 771-782 (777). [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 1, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. Smith, *The Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 76, 199, 219, 224; vol. 4, p. 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, p. 194 & vol. 2, p. 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State Press, 1998), p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. For example, Valancourt receives gunshot wounds in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and his residence at *La Vallée* is tenuous and at Emily’s discretion. Equally, at the end of *Jane Eyre* (1847), Rochester must be metaphorically, ritualistically castrated - blinded in one eye and missing one hand – in order to become a chastened partner to the heroine. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, p. 363. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 1, p. 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. ‘The Old Manor House. A Novel.*’*, Smollet, Tobias George (ed.) *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature*, 8, (May 1793), 44-54 (54). [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. ‘ART. V. The Old Manor House’, Griffiths, Ralph (ed.) *The Monthly Review*, 11 (May 1793), 150-53 (153). [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. Jacqueline Labbe, ‘Introduction’, *The Old Manor House* (1794) (Toronto: Broadview, 2002), p. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, pp. 276-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, pp. 276-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, p. 279. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 3, pp. 337-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, pp. 29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, p. 42, 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, pp. 193-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, p. 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, p. 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 4, p. 339. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. ‘Mortmain’, *OED*, http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/122498 [accessed 26 October 2013]. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. Smith, *Old Manor House*, vol. 2, p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Charlotte Smith, *The Banished Man*, 4 vols. (1794), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 4, p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. Charlotte Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, vol. 4, p. 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, vol. 4, p. 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, vol. 4, p. 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, vol. 2, p. 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. Charlotte Smith, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, 3 vols. (1800), *ECCO* http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco/ [accessed 2 October 2013], vol. 1, p. 12 & 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. Jacqueline Labbe, *Romantic Visualities* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. Labbe, *Romantic Visualities*, p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. Smith, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, vol. 1, pp. 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. Smith, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, vol. 1, p. 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. Smith, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, vol. 1, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. Smith, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, vol. 1, pp. 306-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. Smith, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, vol. 1, pp. 275-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Marquis de Sade, ‘Idée sur les romans’ (1800), from *Selected Writings of de Sade*, trans. by Leonard de Saint-Yves (New York: British Book Centre, 1954), p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. de Sade, ‘Idée sur les romans’, pp. 48-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. de Sade, ‘Idée sur les romans’, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. William Henry Ireland, ‘Epilogue to King Henry the Second’, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland: Containing the Particulars of His Fabrication of the Shakespeare Manuscripts: Together with Anecdotes and Opinions (hitherto Unpublished) of Many Distinguished Persons in the Literary, Political and Theatrical World* (London: Ellerton and Byworth, 1805), p. 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. Ireland, *The Confessions*, p. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. The article is W H Ireland’s obituary from Cobbett’s *Register*, but is pasted, without date or page numbers, in British Library Manuscripts, Additional 37, 831. Quoted in Robert Miles, *Romantic Misfits* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. ‘Male Gothic’ novels are often characterised as those which dwell vividly upon murder, death, torture and sexual immorality. Examples include Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) and Charles Robert Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. In Smith’s *Desmond* (1792) Montfleui French estate is describes as approaching a pleasant democracy. While he still has ‘tenants’ and ‘peasants’, they are ‘happy and prosperous’ due to the ‘effects of the [land] management’ mutually decided upon by Montfleuri and the tenants (Charlotte Smith, *Desmond*, ECCO [accessed 3 September 2014], vol. 1, pp. 169-70). Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794) features another democratic group – a den of thieves who share their spoils equally and have no leader. Despite calling Raymond ‘Captain’, he calls them ‘Comrades’ and claims, ‘a thief is of course a man living among his equals; I do not pretend therefore to assume any authority among you’ (William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, ECCO [accessed 3 September 2014], vol. 3, pp. 25-27). [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. William Henry Ireland, *Gondez the Monk*, ed. by Jeffrey Kahan (Thousand Oaks, California: Zittaw Press, 2005), pp. 42, 56, 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Anon, Review of *The Bruce; or the History of Robert I. King of Scotland.* Written in Scottish Verse by John Barbour. The first genuine Edition, published from a MS. dated 1489; with Notes and a Glossary, *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal, 1752-1825*, 15 (Dec 1794), 431-437 (431). [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. Robert Heron, *History of Scotland, from the earliest Times, to the Era of the Abolition of the Hereditary Jurisdictions of Subjects, in the Year 1748*, 6 vols. (London: Caddell and Davies, 1798). [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. ‘Reflections on the State of Ancient Scotland’, *The Scots Magazine, 1739-1803*, 61 (July 1799), 337-342. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. John Lockhart, Esq., *The Works of Robert Burns; Containing his life* (Hartford: Judd, Loomis & Co., 1836), p. 406. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. For more on the Scottish Wars of Independence see Alexander Grant, *Independence and Nationhood: Scotland, 1306-1469* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. William Henry Ireland, *Vortigern, An Historical Tragedy, in five acts* (London: J. Barker, 1799), *ECCO*, *http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco* [accessed September 2014], p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 48-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 180-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. Price to Jefferson, 3 August 1789, *Correspondence of Richard Price*, ed. W. Bernard Peach & D. O. Thomas (Durham, N.C. and Cardiff: Duke University Press & University of Wales Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. William Godwin, ‘Preface’, *Caleb Williams* (1794) (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p. 312. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. Gwyn A. Williams, *Artisans and Sans-Culottes: Popular Movements in France and Britain during the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (London: Libris, 1989), p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. Clive Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. M. O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. Philips, *The French Revolution*, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. Richard Price, *Political Writings*, ed. by D. O. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 124-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. Ireland, *Gondez,* p. 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 86-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. Ireland, *Gondez,* p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 68, 69, 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 46, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. For more on Ireland’s attitude to Catholics and Protestants, see pp. 114-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. Linda Colley, *Britons, Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. A. Boyer, ‘Numb. III. ARTICLES of UNION’, The Appendix, *The History of the reign of Queen Anne: digested into annals* (London: A. Roper, 1707), *ProQuest*, search.proquest.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk [accessed February 2016], p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. Quoted in Grebanier, *Shakespeare Forgery*, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. Quoted in Grebanier, *Shakespeare Forgery*, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. Grebanier, *Shakespeare Forgery*,p. 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. Ireland was inspired to his forgeries by Herbert Croft’s *Love and Madness* (1780), itself a series of forged letters, in which he makes reference to the infamous forgers James Macpherson, William Dodd and most significantly, Thomas Chatterton, with whom Ireland frequently compared himself. Reviewing Croft’s publication, the *Gentleman’s Magazine* referred to the late eighteenth-century as ‘this age of literary fraud’ (*Gentleman’s Magazine* 50 (1780): 288). [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History form the Restoration to the Present* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1990), p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. There is yet an important distinction to be drawn between Chatterton, Macpherson and Walpole on the one hand, and Ireland on the other: that the former three created their own authors while Ireland impersonated a real man. As Robert Miles points outs, ‘In forging Rowley, Chatterton hurt no one: in passing as Shakespeare, Ireland grievously wounded all those with an ideological investment in bardolatry’ (*Romantic Misfits* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 42). [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. W.H. Ireland, *An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts* (London: J. Debrett, 1796), p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. Samuel Ireland, *Miscellaneous Papers* (London: Cooper and Graham, 1796), p. 29. References are to the page image numbers of the electronic text at *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. W. H. Ireland, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland* (London: Ellerton and Byworth, 1805), p. 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. Ireland, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland*, p. 119. This involves Ireland directly in the late eighteenth-century debates surrounding Shakespeare, and his position as a legitimate and respectable literary figure, despite his frequent violations of Aristotelian unities and inclusion of lower class figures in his work. These debates came to affect larger national discourses about how to define British literature – in opposition to continental literature – during the age of the novel. For an example of this debate, see Horace Walpole’s ‘Preface to the Second Edition’ of *The Castle of Otranto* and his discussion on Shakespeare and Voltaire. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. Michael Keevak, ‘Shakespeare’s Queer *Sonnets* and the Forgeries of William Henry Ireland’, *Criticism*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Spring, 1998), pp. 167-189 (167). [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. With characteristic arrogance and self-righteousness, Ireland always claimed that his forgeries assisted Shakespeare to fame by improving him in the eyes of an eighteenth-century audience: ‘By such alterations the world supposed that all the ribaldry in his other plays was not written by himself but foistered in by the players and printers, herein it cannot be said I injured the reputation of *Shakspear*, on the contrary, the world thought him a much more pure and even writer than before’ (*Authentic Account*, p. 19). [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. Deborah Russell, ‘Domestic Gothic: Genre and Nation in Charlotte Smith’s *The Old Manor House*’, *Literature Compass*, 10 (2013), 771-782 (772). [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. *The Complete Poetical Works of James Thomson*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (Oxford: OUP, 1908), p. 420. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. For more on this, see Linda Colley’s chapter on ‘Protestants’ in, *Briton: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837,* pp. 11-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 44-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 45, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. Isabel is caught in a storm whilst trying to escape England for Scotland (164-5). Equally Maude and her mother make the same journey and are nearly dashed to pieces in the waves (167-8). The first journey to Oronza is met by storms (45), as is Avinzo’s journey to the Isle of Jura (184) where he faces the Tall White Man. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp, 287, 312. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1937* (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright, *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. Clara Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), *ECCO*, http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco [accessed September 2014], p. xxi. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 178. This also echoes Reeve’s ‘hand of Providence’ in *The Old English Baron*. For more on this see Stefan Andriopoulos, ‘The Invisible Hand: Supernatural Agency in Political Economy and the Gothic Novel’, *ELH*, 66:3 (1999), 739-758. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 178. Ireland is so taken with this tale of heavenly intervention for the good of the Scottish that he repeats the tale again later in the novel with no less enthusiasm or detail (309-10). [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 310. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. King Edward II’s distaste of war produced a protracted period of peace, but Ireland terms it a ‘weak policy’ and reviles him. He seems to have more respect for the bloodthirsty and vengeful King Edward as he is at least a worthy foe for Robert the Bruce. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. Maria Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism: religion, cultural exchange and the popular novel, 1785-1829* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 204 & Diane Long Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology: religious hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British popular fiction, 1780-1880* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 347. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 49-50. Compare this to the description of Schedoni from Radcliffe’s *The Italian*: ‘His figure was striking […] it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth […] His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, encreased [sic] its severe character […] There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity […] and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men’ (Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 3 vols.(London: T. Cadell, 1797), vol. 1, p. 100). [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 231. Again, compare this to Radcliffe’s Schedoni: ‘A dark malignity overspread the features of the monk, and at that moment Vivaldi thought he beheld a man, whose passions might impel him to the perpetration of almost any crime, how hideous so ever’ (*The Italian*,vol. 1, p. 149). [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. Benjamin Franklin Fisher, IV, ‘Introduction’ to *The Abbess*, 4 vols. (1799) (New York: Arno, 1974), vol. 1, p. xxiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. Diane Long Hoeveler, ‘William-Henry Ireland, T. J. Horsley Curties, and the Anti-Catholic Gothic Novel’, European Romantic Review, 2013, Vol. 24, No. 1, 43-65 (48). [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. Ireland, *Gondez,* p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. The anachronism of a convent populated by ‘fathers’ and an ‘Abbot’ is common in Gothic literature as the Protestant writers rarely knew facts about the Catholic Church. Similar errors occur in Lewis’s *The Monk*. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 315. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. R. I. and S. Wilberforce, *Life of Wilberforce*, 2 vols. (London: 1838), ii, 114; quoted in *Times*, 13 Nov., 1795. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. Clive Emsley, ‘Repression, ‘Terror’ and the Rule of Law in England during the Decade of the French Revolution, *The English Historical Review*, vol. 100, no. 397 (Oct. 1985), pp. 801-825 (p. 807) quoting *Derby Mercury*, 5 June 1794. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 341. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. Ireland, *The Abbess*, vol. 3, pp. 11-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. While Ireland focuses on religious trials in his fiction, his own was very much couched in the rhetoric of the court room. Newspaper articles and pamphlets frequently described the controversy as a ‘trial’ and discussed the papers as a quasi-legal case, tried at the public bar. Malone, who had studied the law, framed his *Inquiry* as a legalistic assessment of the Papers with analysis, evidence and witness testimony. He concludes by claiming to have represented the victim, Shakespeare, and cleared his name: ‘I trust I have vindicated Shakespeare from all this ‘imputed trash’, and rescued him from the hands of a bungling impostor’ (Malone, *Inquiry* (London, 1796), p. 360). For a full discussion of Ireland’s quasi-legal trial see Nick Groom, *The Forger’s Shadow* (2003), Paul Baines, *The House of Forgery* (1999) and S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives* (1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. Jeffrey Kahan, ‘Introduction’, *Gondez the Monk* (Thousand Oaks, California: Zittaw Press, 2005), p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. William Henry Ireland, ‘Preface’, *Vortigern* (London: J. Thomas, 1832), p. xiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. Kahan, ‘Introduction’, *Abbess*, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. Ireland, *Confession*, pp. 42-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. William Henry Ireland, *An Authentic Account of the Shakespearian Manuscripts* (London: J. Debrett, 1796), p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. Edmund Malone, *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments… In a Letter Addressed to the Right Hon. James, Earl of Charlemont* (London: T. Cadell, Jun. & W. Davies, 1796), p. 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. William Henry Ireland, *Woman of Feeling* (London: D. N. Shury, 1804), vol. IV, pp. 252-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. Both of his confessions were condemned by the press: in December 1796, the *Monthly Mirror* stated that ‘the style of the pamphlet is contemptible and strongly insinuates the incompetency of W H Ireland to compose the Play of Vortigern and the Profession of Faith…’. The *True Briton* also claimed that there was not a vestige of talent or feeling such as are manifested in the manuscripts. Other publications such as the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Gentleman’s Magazine* agreed that Ireland was far too simple and unskilled to have forged the documents himself, something his father staunchly agreed with (All referenced in Grebanier, pp. 265-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. William Henry Ireland, *The Catholic, An Historical Romance* (London: W. Earle, 1807), vol. III, p. 294. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. Ireland, *The Catholic*, vol. III, p. 303. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 324. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. Anonymous reviewer, *Fantasy and Horror: A Critical and Historical Guide to Literature, Illustration, Film, TV, Radio, and the Internet*, ed. Neil Barron (Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1999), p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. William Henry Ireland, *The Abbess* (1796), ed. Jeffrey Kahan (Milton Keynes: Zittaw Press, 2006), p. 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 114, 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 161, 143, 276, 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. Interestingly, in discussing Ireland’s habit of writing and rewriting his own life and identity, Nick Groom refers to it as ‘a process of self-mythologisation’, thus linking Ireland’s interest in national identity formation and personal identity formation. (Nick Groom, *The Forger’s Shadow* (London: Picador, 2002), p. 220). [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. It is particularly interesting that Ireland’s witches, of which there are several in the novel, are not associated with pagan rites, but are either in league with the devil or the aids of Providence. Ireland’s engagement with Britain’s ancient roots does not stretch back far enough to include paganism but focuses instead of the uses and abuses of Catholicism in the nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 69-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. Reeve, Clara, *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

     1967) , p. 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. Maria Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. John Bell and Peter Stuart, *The Oracle* (Wednesday, 26 September 1792). [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. Diane Long-Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, p. 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. Purves records that ‘the Irish rebellion of 1798 and the Concordat of 1801 and coronation of 1804 when the Roman Catholic Church and the French Republic and Empire were reconciled, fanned anti-Catholic flames […] reaching a peak in 1805 when a petition aimed at realising the new Act of Emancipation promised by Pitt before his resignation in 1801, was brought before Parliament for the first time’ - *Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 246. [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 347. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. Vortigern was a 5th century British warlord. While his life is shrouded in legend, his existence is very likely and he is thought to have invited the Germanic brothers Hengist and Horsa to aid him in fighting the Picts and the Scots. He was later betrayed by them leading to the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain. There was a framed image depicting the Vortigern legend above the fireplace in the Ireland’s home which probably provided the idea for the forged Shakespeare play. His representation of Vortigern is a combination of Macbeth and Hamlet and acts as a forerunner for his pro-Scottish, anti-English novel *Gondez*. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. Ireland’s play is variously known as *The Tragedy of Vortigern , Vortigern, An Historical Play* and *Vortigern and Rowena*. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. William Henry Ireland, *Vortigern, An Historical Tragedy, in five acts* (London: J. Barker, 1799), *ECCO*, *http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco* [accessed September 2014], p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. Ireland, *Gondez,* p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. James Boswell, *Boswell’s Journal of A Tour to the Hebrides With Samuel Johnson, LL.D. 1773,* eds. Frederick A Pottle and Charles H. Bennett (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1936; rpt. 1961), p. 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. Ireland, *Vortigern*, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. Ireland, *Gondez*, p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. Ireland, *Gondez*, pp. 294-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. His list of pseudonyms is extensive: Mr H,Cervantes, Charles Clifford, Satiricus Sculptor, Ben Block, Thomas Fielding, Esq., Henry Boyle, Richard Fenton, Paul Persius, Baron Karlo Excellmans, Anne-Jean-Marie-René Savary, duchess de Rovigo, Pauline Adélaïde Alexandre Panam, H. C., Anser Pen-Drag-On, Esq.. For a full discussion of his *nom de plumes*  and the wider cultural implications of them see H. Kahan, ‘The Search for W. H. Ireland’s *Bruno*’, European Romantic Review, 2013, vol. 24, No. 1, 3-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. Miles, *Misfits*, pp. 43-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. Quoted in Grebanier, *Shakespeare Forgery*,p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. Anna Letitia Aikin, *Sir Bertrant: A Fragment* (1773), in *Gothic Short Stories*, ed. David Blair (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2002), pp. 3, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. In his chapter ‘The Curse of Shakespeare’, *Shakespearean Gothic*, ed. Christy Desmet & Anne Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), pp. 60-83, Jeffrey Kahan refers to a series of letters Ireland forged to himself. They were addressed from a woman who was the prisoner of a sensuous scoundrel and referred to herself as Incognita. Over a series of letters she begs Ireland to rescue her, to meet her at the parish church by night, hints at her undying love for him, apologises for breaking their appointment due to illness, laments that she is being forced to marry her captor – a man allegedly known to Samuel Ireland – and pens mournful poetry befitting a gothic heroine with ‘very long Flaxen Hair’ (p. 66). Interestingly, the letters were dated October 1796, four months after Ireland had actually married a strange, plain-looking girl called Alice Crudge. Admittedly, his flaxen-haired fantasy is much more in keeping with his flair for the dramatic. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House* (London: J Bell, 1793), vol. 4, *ECCO*, http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco [accessed September 2014], p. 339. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. Anonymous, ‘\Review of W H Ireland, *Rimualdo; or, The Castle of Badajos: A Romance*’, *The Monthly Review* (1801), *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook 1700-1820*, ed. E. J. Clery & Robert Miles (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 257-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. William Henry Ireland, ‘Romance Writer’, *Scribbleomania: or the Printer's Devil's Polichronicon: a Sublime Poem*, (London: Sherwood, Neely & Jones, 1815), pp. 146-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. William Henry Ireland, ‘Romance Writer’, p. 147. Curties’s name was printed in his novels as ‘T. J. Horsley Curties’, but the ‘J’ was simply an antiquated print version of an ‘I’ for his middle name, ‘Isaac’. [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. William Henry Ireland, ‘Romance Writer’, pp. 146-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. T. I. Horsley Curties, ‘Preface’, *Ancient Records: Or, The Abbey of Saint Oswythe. A Romance.*, 4 vols.(London: William Lane, 1801), v. 1, p. vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. Curties, ‘Preface’, *Ancient Records,* v. 1, p. vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. Dale Townshend, ‘Royalist Historiography in T. J. Horsley Curties’s *Ethelwina, Or The House of Fitz-Auburne* (1799)’, *Gothic Studies*, 14/1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, May 2012), pp. 57-73 (p. 58). [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. Curties, ‘Preface’, *Ancient Records,* v. 1, p. vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. T. I. Horsley Curties, ‘Preface’, *Ancient Records,* pp. vi-vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. Curties, ‘Preface’, *Ancient Records,* v. 1, p. vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. Curties, ‘Preface’, *Ancient Records,* v. 1, p. viii. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. For my argument on Ireland’s support for the Revolution and Napoleon, see pp. 102-3, 113, 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. Dale Townshend, *T J Horsley Curties and Royalist Gothic: The Case of The Monk of Udolpho (1807)*, ‘The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies’, http://irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com/HorsleyCurtiesGothic.html [accessed 21/11/15], para. 12 of 22, 22 of 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. Townshend, *Royalist Historiography*, p. 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. For more on Curties’s depiction of sacrificial service for a monarch, see Dale Townshend’s article, ‘T. I. Horsley Curties, Romance, and the Gift of Death’ in *European Romantic Review* (Routledge, 2013), vol. 24, no. 1, 23-42. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. T. I. Horsley Curties, *Ethelwina; Or The House of Fitz-Auburne*, 3 vols. (London: Minerva, 1799), v. 3, p. 258. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. T. I. Horsley Curties, *The Watch Tower* (1804), 5 vols. (Brentford: P. Norbury, 1803), vol. 1, p. 3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. T. I. Horsley Curties, *St Botolph’s Priory; or, The Sable Mask. An Historic Romance*., 5 vols. (London: J F Hughes, 1806), v. 1, p. 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. Curties, *St Botolph’s Priory*, v. 3, p. 43; v. 1, p. 10; v. 3, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. Curties, *St Botolph’s Priory*, v. 3, p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), (London: J Parsons, 1793), p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. Dale Townshend, ‘Curties, Romance, and the Gift of Death’, *European Romantic Review*, 2013, vol. 24, No. 1, 23-42 (p. 32). [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 7, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. Dale Townshend, ‘Royalist Historiography in T J Horsley Curties’s *Ethelwina, Or The House of Fitz-Auburne* (1799), *Gothic Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, May 2012), 57-73 (p. 58). [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. Marquis de Sade, ‘Idée sur les romans’ (1800), from *Selected Writings of de Sade*, trans. by Leonard de Saint-Yves (New York: British Book Centre, 1954), p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ‘Review of *The Monk* (1797)’, *Critical Review*, vol. 19 (February 1797), pp. 194-200 and Thomas Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues,* 12th edn. (London: T. Becket, 1798), Dialogue IV, pp. 244-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary*, cited in Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. Watt, *Contesting*, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. Watt, *Contesting*, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. Markman Ellis, *A History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. Nick Groom, *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-26), ed. P.N. Furbank, W.R. Owens & A.J. Coulson (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. Curties, *The Watch Tower* , vol. 2, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. Curties, *The Watch Tower*, vol. 5, p. 340. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. Dale Townshend, ‘T. I. Horsley Curties and Royalist Gothic: The Case of *The Monk of Udolpho* (1807), *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* (para. 17 of 17). [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. Herbert Butterfield, *George III, Lord North and the People, 1779-80* (London, 1949), p. 380. For more on this introspective nationalism, see J D Merriman on the renewed popular interest in British folklore, *The Flower of Kings: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in England between 1485 and 1835* (Lawrence, Kan., 1973), pp. 95-8, 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. Linda Colley, ‘The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation 1760-1820, *Past and Present*, 102 (1984), pp. 94-129 (p. 102). Colley sourced the prints from F G Stephens and M D George, *Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: Division I, Political and Personal Satires*, 11 vols. (London: 1870-1954). [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. Colley, ‘The Apotheosis of George III’, p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. William Hazlitt, ‘On the English Novelists’, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, vol. VI in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: Dent, 1931), p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. For more on this see Watt’s chapter, ‘The Loyalist Gothic Romance’, in *Contesting the Gothic* (1999). A variety of writers have since resorted to the medieval era as an ideal example of idyllic, feudal living; see, for example, William Morris’s *A Dream of John Ball* (1888). [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. David Cannadine, ‘The Making of the British Upper Classes’, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), 9-36 (p. 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. Linda Colley, ‘The Apotheosis of George III’, p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. Watt, *Contesting*, p. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. William Godwin, *The Adventures of Caleb Williams; or, Things as they Are* (1794), 3 vols. (London: G. G. & J. Robinson, 1796), vol. 3, p. 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. William Godwin, *Life Of Chaucer*, 4 vols. (London: T. Davison, 1804), vol. 2, p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Godwin, *Life Of Chaucer*, vol. 2, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. Dodsley, 1790), p. 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. Godwin, *Life Of Chaucer*, vol. 2, p. 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. Godwin, *Life Of Chaucer*, vol. 2, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
534. Godwin, *Life Of Chaucer*, vol. 2, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
535. *Ethelwina* (1799), *Ancient Records* (1801), *Scottish Legend* (1802) and *The Watch Tower* (1804) are all set in the fourteenth century, and variously depict the reigns of Edward I, II, and III. Aware of literary trend among loyalists, many liberal or reformist writers employed Gothic devices in the present day to confront the reader with ‘things as they are’, including Charlotte Smith and William Godwin. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
536. Curites, *Ethelwina* (1799), ECCO, vol. 1, p. 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
537. James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 46-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
538. Clara Reeve, ‘Preface’, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), http://find.galegroup.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ecco [accessed 10 February 2014], p. xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
539. Clara Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), ECCO, vol. 1, p. xvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
540. T. I. Horsley Curties, *Ethelwina, Or the House of Fitz-Auburne*, 3 vols. (London: Minerva Press, 1799), vol. 1, pp. 1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
541. Curties, *Ethelwina,* p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
542. Curties, *Ethelwina*, p. 25-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
543. Horace Walpole, ‘Preface’, *The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story* (London: William Bathoe, 1764), p. viii. [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
544. Curties, *Ethelwina*, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
545. Clara Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), ECCO, vol. 1, p. xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
546. Curties, *The Watch Tower,* vol. 2, pp. 36-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
547. William Henry Ireland, *Gondez the Monk* (1805), p. 310. [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
548. Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
549. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation,* p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
550. Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic,* p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
551. Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1987), p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
552. Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism*, p. 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
553. Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
554. May McKisack, ‘Edward III and the Historians’, *History,* vol. 45, no. 153 (1960), pp. 1-15 (p. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
555. David Hume, *The History of England,* (8 vols.), vol. 2. p. 443. [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
556. Hume, *History of England*, v. 2, p. 429. [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
557. Hume, *History of England*, v. 2, p. 429. [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
558. Clara Reeve, *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon* (1793), vol. 1, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
559. Clara Reeve, *Sir Roger*, vol. 1, p. x, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
560. Hume, *History of England*, v. II, p. 429. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
561. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 1, p. 58, 87, 92; vol. 3, p. 179. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 1, p. 58. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 3, p. 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
562. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 1, p. 105. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 1, p. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
563. J C L Simonde de Sismondi, *Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe*, trans. Thomas Roscoe (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1871), vol. 1, p. 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
564. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 1, p. 1; vol. 3, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
565. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 2, p. 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
566. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 2, p. 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
567. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 1, p. 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
568. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 2, pp. 27-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
569. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 3, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
570. Curties, *Ethelwina*, vol. 3, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
571. Dale Townshend, ‘T. J. Horsley Curtsies and Royalist Gothic: The Case of *The Monk of Udolpho* (1807)’, *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, para.10 of 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
572. Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
573. John Barell, *Imagining the King’s Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793-1796* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
574. Scott Waugh, ‘From Court to Nation’, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Culture*, ed. Andrew Galloway (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), pp. 15-42 (p. 23). [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
575. Curties, *The Watch Tower*, vol. 2, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
576. Curties, *The Watch Tower*, vol. 2, pp. 36, 37, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
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