GROVES OF BLARNEY:
FAKE SONGS, MOCK-HOAXES, AND STAGE IRISH IDENTITY IN WILLIAM MAGINN AND FRANCIS SYLVESTER MAHONY

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In this chapter, I cast the Stage Irish tradition in a new light by demonstrating its interdependence with the history of the Irish literary hoax. At first blush, these representational discourses appear to be united through a certain rhetoric of the false or the fake: the hoax is a willed self-misrepresentation, while the stock figure of the Stage Irishman is, perhaps, an imposed and othering misrepresentation. However, my argument is that the connection between these literary traditions and their histories runs deeper and is more complex than such a characterisation allows. Indeed, I suggest that closer analysis of the Irish literary hoaxer and the Stage Irishman renders such clear-cut distinctions between agency and imposition untenable. These figures are, in important ways, co-emergent and track each other's developments closely. The Irish literary hoax interfaces with, and functions at times as a counter-discursive foil to, the dominant Stage Irish hetero-stereotype – particularly in instances in which Irish authors wilfully assume the stereotypes of Paddywhackery to deceive certain audiences and to deconstruct or ridicule certain discourses about national identity.

To demonstrate the co-implication of these cultural histories and literary modes, I focus here on the nineteenth century, a pivotal moment both for Stage Irish representation and for the Irish literary hoax. However, while most histories of the modern Irish stereotype begin with Dion Boucicault's late-century melodramas *The Colleen Bawn* (1860), *Arrah-na-Pogue* (1864), and *The Shaughraun* (1874), I wish to draw our attention to the negotiation of Stage Irish imagery in an earlier period and context: the Tory-Whig periodical wars between *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and the *Edinburgh Review* in the 1820s-1830s. The decisive players on the Irish Tory side are two notorious Corkonians: William Maginn – a Protestant satirist, translator, and editor known to his contemporaries as "The Doctor" – and Francis Sylvester Mahony – a Jesuit conservative wit known to posterity as "Father Prout." Their key rivals are literary and cultural figures who contribute to Whig publications, Irish antiquarians and romantic nationalists, supporters of Catholic Emancipation, and science popularisers, such as Dionysius Lardner and Thomas Moore. These encounters take place in the context of post-Union debates about redefining Irish identity, culture, and politics; as such, they reflect a diversity of aesthetic, political, religious, and national positions in response to Daniel O'Connell's movements for Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Union. In their interventions into these disputes, Maginn and Mahony stake out a series of diverging but also at times overlapping coordinates and positions: Cork *vs.* Dublin; London *vs.* Edinburgh; Ireland *vs.* England; Protestant *vs.*

Catholic; unionist *vs.* nationalist; conservative wit *vs.* romantic idealist, and so on. Positioned simultaneously outside *and* within categories of Irishness and Britishness, Maginn and Mahony emerge as figures who both exemplify and complicate post-Union Ireland's situatedness outside *and* within the "administrative political" and cultural structures of Britain and the Empire (McCaw 4). What I wish to show is that Maginn and Mahony are particularly relevant to these intersecting histories of Stage Irish representation and Irish literary hoaxing as figures who engage with these political and cultural debates *both* by casting their rivals as stereotypical Irish dissemblers *and* by assimilating those same stereotypes in their own deceptive, mock-hoax performances of the cultural signifiers of Stage Irishness.

In his 2003 essay "'A Poet May Not Exist': Mock-Hoaxes and the Construction of National Identity," Brian McHale distinguishes between three different kinds of hoax:

1. *genuine hoaxes*, which are "perpetrated with no intention of their ever being exposed" (236)
2. *trap hoaxes*, in which "the intention […] is for the hoax to be exposed by the hoaxer […] when the time is right, to the discomfiture of the gullible" (236)
3. *mock-hoaxes*, in which "issues of authenticity and inauthenticity are elevated to the level of literary 'raw materials'" for "self-reflective art" (237).

Purposely adorned with signs of self-exposure, mock-hoaxes "typically refer in a more or less veiled manner to their own double nature" (McHale 237). Unlike genuine hoaxes, mock-hoaxes intend for certain readers to perceive the text's unreliability, often towards aesthetic, thematic, comic, satirical, political, or philosophical ends. Unlike trap hoaxes, however, mock-hoaxes involve no moment of authorial revelation and, therefore, no ulterior motive "to edify, remediate, or punish" (McHale 237). The Maginn and Mahony texts under analysis here are mock-hoaxes of this third kind.[1]

To narrow my focus, I concentrate on a series of periodical mock-hoaxes dedicated to Maginn and Mahony's *faux* discoveries and hoax translations of Irish songs. I show how these elaborate gags ridicule the nationalism of Moore's *Irish Melodies* specifically and the discursive constructions of authentic Irishness at play in Irish antiquarianism, Irish romanticism, and Irish Orientalism more broadly. I argue that Maginn and Mahony draw on Stage Irish imagery in their spurious translations and pseudo-antiquarian mock-hoaxes also to stage a parodic performance of their own liminal Irishness as unionist, conservative Corkonians writing in Scottish and English periodicals for diverse audiences both 'home' and 'abroad.'

To begin, I situate Maginn and Mahony in a trajectory of overlapping Stage Irish and Irish literary hoax histories, with an emphasis on the significance of fake translations and dissembling performances of national identity to each of these traditions, espe-

1 While a full overview of the recent 'fakelit' critical turn to historicise and theorise the literary hoax is beyond the scope of this chapter, my reading of Maginn and Mahony's mock-hoaxes takes place within the context of a broader critical conversation which comprises, among others, monographs by Haywood, Grafton, Stewart, Baines, Ruthven, and Groom (*Forger's Shadow*).

cially as they intersect in the aftermath of James Macpherson's *Ossian* 'forgery' (1761-1765). Then, I turn to the relevant test cases: first, Maginn's "Odoherty on Irish Songs" (1825) in *Blackwood*, then Mahony's "Father Prout's Plea for Pilgrimages" (1834) in *Fraser*. These examples are chosen to demonstrate how these conservative wits blend hoax translations with Stage Irish performance at once to ridicule their political enemies and to renegotiate nineteenth-century Protestant and Jesuit Irish unionist literary identity on their own satirical terms. In conclusion, I show how these conservative wits critique Irish Antiquarianism and Irish Orientalism, triggered off by the Ossian debate and other nationalist quasi-forgeries, through the creation of a disruptive anti-archive of faked traditional songs and spurious translations.

Irish Facts: Some Dissembling Required

The cultural construction of the Irish as essentially deceptive and prone to false self-presentations emerges as a key trope of the seventeenth-century Anglo-Irish novel. In his 1665 picaresque novel *The English Rogue Described*, Richard Head portrays how his titular rogue, Meriton Latroon, by virtue of "having been steeped for some years in an Irish bog," develops the ability, not shared by his Protestant English-born parents, to "dissemble" (Head vii, 7). The plot is a cautionary tale of how the English in Ireland are "degenerated into Irish affections and customs" (Head 11), told through the figure of Latroon who, "thanks to being born in Catholic Ireland […], excels in his capacity to 'deceive, revenge, equivocate' and proceeds to cheat his way around the British Isles and the Indies" (Loveman 41-42). This essentialist articulation of the Irish as inherent dissimulators cast a long shadow, informing diverse articulations of Irishness from the tricksy Stage Irish figure to Matthew Arnold's influential depiction of the Celt "chafing against the despotism of fact" (103), or Hugh Kenner's claim that Irish literature is distinguished by its creative exploitation of the "Irish Fact," which he defines as "anything they will tell you in Ireland, where you […] had best assume a demeanour of wary appreciation" (3).

The stereotype of the Irish dissembler abounds in nineteenth-century Stage Irish texts. Consider Samuel Lover's story "Paddy the Sport," in which Paddy is a typical Stage Irish drunken dissembler who is "fond of dealing in mystification" (107). Paddy's stereotypical Stage Irish characteristics are framed by the story's epigraph, a quote from Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well*: "He will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool: Drunkenness is his best virtue" (Lover 107). In the story, Paddy the Sport fools the local peasants into thinking that his artist companion, the story's first-person narrator, is a tax collector, leading the locals to hang their dogs rather than owe money on them. Paddy reveals his arbitrarily cruel deception to the artist upon discovery of the hanged animals:

> "By gor, sir, I wouldn't like offindin' your honour; but you see, (since you must know, sir,) that whin *you tuk* that little green book out iv your pocket, *they tuk* you for […] – I beg your honour's pardon – but, by dad, they tuk you for a tax-gather." […]
> "Ha! Paddy," said I, "I see this is a piece of your knavery, to bewilder the poor people."

> "Is it me!" says Paddy, with a look of assumed innocence, that avowed, in the most provoking manner, the inward triumph of Paddy in his own hoax. (Lover 109)

The sport that the Stage Irishman derives from his hoax not only casts him as a conspiratorial dissembler, but also reveals a paranoid fear at the heart of the Stage Irish hetero-stereotype: namely, that the Paddy or Teague's buffoonery, blunders, bulls, and brogues may be the affectations of a wilfully deceptive performance designed to exploit their English audience's naiveté.

This suspicion that Stage Irishness might be less an inherent identity than a cunning performance is explicitly put on stage in George Bernard Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* (1904). As Maebh Long notes, the "fawning, drinking and 'rollicking stage brogue'" of Shaw's Tim Haffigan deceives the Englishman Tom Broadbent, until he is disabused "of his self-satisfied, imperial indulgence" by the Irish expatriate Larry Doyle, who "argues that Haffigan's demeanour and dialect is no more than a useful mask that plays on English conventions of the Irish idiot" (35). Doyle explains to Broadbent that:

> No Irishman ever talks like that in Ireland, or ever did, or ever will. But when a thoroughly worthless Irishman comes to England, and finds the whole place full of romantic duffers like you, who will let him loaf and drink and sponge and brag as long as he flatters your sense of moral superiority by playing the fool and degrading himself and his country, he soon learns the antics that take you in. (Shaw 15)

Numerous Irish counter-discursive hoaxes assume such a dishonest posture and inhabit such a false voice – in mock tracts, proposals, essays, letters, lectures, translations, columns, and so on – to exploit their audience's naiveté and ridicule stereotypical attitudes towards Ireland and 'Irishness.' I am thinking here of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and *Drapier's Letters*, of Maria Edgeworth's *Essay on Irish Bulls* and James Clarence Mangan's spurious translations of invented poets, of Oscar Wilde's fascination with Thomas Chatterton and James Macpherson, of W.B. Yeats's poetics of the mask and Samuel Beckett's Trinity lecture on the invented poet du Chas, of the hoax aesthetics of Flann O'Brien and Medbh McGuckian, among others.[2] Key to the historical relationship between (a) the charge that dissembling is an essential Irish quality and (b) the hoaxes that perform and affirm this stereotype in bad faith in order to deconstruct and ridicule it, is the strange symbiosis we can observe in an Irish counter-discourse that plays satirically with modes of false appearance in order to critique a discourse that fixes the Irish, and Irishness itself, as always already a fake.

Nick Groom notes that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century obsession with sorting 'authentic' national identities and cultural histories from 'spurious' ones arises out of "the heightened need for a sense of national identity engendered by" the 1707 and

2 For more on Swift's hoaxes, see Valerie Rumbold's collection of his Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treatises; on Mangan's hoaxes, see Lloyd; on Wilde, see Bristow and Mitchell; on Beckett's hoaxes, see Fagan, "Beckett's 'Le Concentrisme'" 161-77; on Flann O'Brien's hoaxes, see Fagan, "Expert Diagnosis" 12-41.

1800 Acts of Union ("Romanticism and Forgery" 1625). This tension is most notoriously borne out by the scandal of Macpherson's '*Ossian* hoax,' in which Irish and Scottish cultural histories are contested variously by English, Irish, and Scottish antiquarians as the products of nationalist conspiracy. The dominant critical narrative of the *Ossian* affair echoes the contemporary estimation of the English writer Samuel Johnson that the poems are outright forgeries and fabrications, which have been brought to prominence by the post-Union nationalist fervour of "Caledonian bigotry" rather than by virtue of their historical authenticity (274). There is no need here to revise the debate over whether Macpherson is "an imposter, and his work a fiction" (MacNeill 42), or if his *Ossian* poems are best considered "a 'collage' [of] reworked authentic material, together with a liberal admixture of pure Macpherson" with some genuine antiquarian significance (Thomson 10).[3] What is significant for my purposes is that the claims that Macpherson makes for Ossian's authenticity are inextricable from his attempts to reframe Irish literary antiquity – with its competing claim to "the most ancient and, consequently, most superior of songs" on the islands (Sorensen 80) – as a modern invention and hoax (the very charge that Johnson had levied at Macpherson himself).

> From internal proofs it sufficiently appears, that the poems published under the name of Ossian, are not of Irish composition. The favourite chimera, that Ireland is the mother country of the Scots, is totally subverted and ruined. The fictions concerning the antiquities of that country [i.e., Ireland] […] are found, at last, to be the spurious brood of modern and ignorant ages. […] I have just now, in my hands, all that remain, of those compositions; but, unluckily for the antiquities of Ireland, they appear to be the work of a very modern period. Every stanza, nay almost every line, affords striking proofs that they cannot be three centuries old. Their allusions to the manner and customs of the 15th century are so many, that it is [a] matter of wonder to me, how anyone could dream of their antiquity. (Macpherson xxvii)

The circulation of claims and counterclaims for 'authentic' or 'spurious' discoveries and translations of national ballads, poems, and songs in the aftermath of the Macpherson scandal was "instrumental in focusing the work of the already active literary nationalists on the *different*," rather than the united, "poetic and linguistic sources in the fragile cultural construct that was called Britain" (Kristmannsson 96).[4]

Maginn and Mahony enter this history in the 1820s and 30s, amid a rejuvenated cultural and political "debate on national origins" (Dunne 453) driven by the Catholic Emancipation movement and advanced by the nationalist inflections of popular antiquarian and romantic literary projects such as Thomas Crofton Croker's fieldwork translations and Moore's *Irish Melodies*. In the periodical pieces under analysis here, Maginn and Mahony each exploit the key coordinates and signifiers of these debates over 'authentic' and 'spurious' national cultures within the union – poems and songs of dubious national and temporal origin; faithful *vs.* forged translations; the dissem-

3 For more on this debate see Stafford, *passim*.

4 For an excellent analysis of the Irish response to Macpherson, see O'Halloran 69-95.

bling Celt *vs.* the honest Anglo-Saxon – in a series of pseudonymous mock-hoaxes. Across these pieces, they play up tropes and affectations of Stage Irishness both to ridicule Irish antiquarianism and Romantic nationalism, and to negotiate a position for themselves as simultaneously unionist Britons and distinctively Irish writers under these shifting cultural and political coordinates.

William Maginn: The Crystallised Paddy

Maginn was eulogised by Edward Kenealy for *Dublin University Magazine* in 1844 as "the leading periodical writer of his day" (72). Yet, Maginn's significance to the periodical culture and comic literature of the era – in particular, through his contributions to two major Tory publications, the Edinburgh-based *Blackwood's Magazine* and the London-based *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* – has been diminished and obscured by literary, biographical, and critical narratives that attribute to him unreflectively the clichés of Stage Irishness. In an 1835 letter to his brother John, Thomas Carlyle vents at the stage-Scottish caricature of his person that had been published by the "mad, rattling Irishman […] Paddy Maginn" in *Fraser's Magazine*, a publication which, despite having contributed to it himself, Carlyle disparages as a "'drunk man's vomit' of an (Irish) Magazine" (n.p.). In her 1897 biography *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and His Sons*, Margaret Oliphant derides Maginn as having emerged "out of the unknown" region of Cork, "a place more associated with pigs and salted provisions than with literature" (362). Oliphant describes Maginn as "one of the best specimens of the typical Irishman, the crystallised Paddy, ready to jest and sing, to speechify, to fight, to flatter, to make promises and to break them, with all the unstable charm of a being beyond rule" (364).

When we turn to Maginn's own life and writing, we find that this role of the drunken, dissembling Stage Irishman was a part he would readily and self-ironically perform. As Fergal Gaynor observes, the author's legacy has been defined by his ambivalent complicity with the clichés of Stage Irishness, as "Maginn was both fitted and fitted himself to the mould of the comic, good-natured Celtic eccentric" (313-14). An anecdote, supposedly told by the author himself, describes Maginn's first visit to the Edinburgh office of *Blackwood's Magazine*, which had spent the previous months sending checks to the fictitious figure of "Ralph Tuckett Scott, Cork" in recompense for Maginn's contributions. Maginn recalls that his deception had set "a clear stage for some sport" in his meeting with the editor William Blackwood:

> I made a rather formal bow, and giving him a touch of the Cork brogue, I said, "Ye'r Misther Blackwood I presume, sir." "Yes, sir," was the answer, "at your service." "Be gor, sir," said I, "If you were only at my service a week ago, you'd have saved me a journey […], there's some rascal in Cork – you know Cork, don't you? Well there's some blackguard there after making use of my name, in your old thrump of a Magazine, and I must know who he is." "Oh! sir," said Blackwood, "I deny your right to ask any such questions, and those requests cannot be granted without delay, and consideration." "Consideration, indeed," I cried, "aren't you after writing to one Scott there?" "I really cannot answer you, sir." "Maybe it's going to deny what you wrote you are,

> maybe you'll deny this, and this, and this," said I, throwing a bundle of his letters on the table before him. "Maybe you'll say they're not to the man that writes for you, and maybe you'll say that I'm not the man himself." (Maginn, *Vol. 5* xxxii)

The theatricalised language that Maginn employs ("stage," "bow") to describe his hoax is revealing, as part of his "sport" clearly stems from casting himself in the role of the Stage Irishman and aggressively confronting the Scottish Blackwood with an uncomfortable encounter with his Celtic other ("aren't you after writing to one Scott there?"; "you know Cork, don't you?"). Elsewhere, in his tongue-in-cheek pen portrait for *The Maclise Portrait Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters with Memoirs*, Maginn characterises himself as "[a] randy, bandy, brandy, no Dandy, Rollicking jig of an Irishman!" (qtd. in Bates 38).

It is essential, then, to counter the hetero-stereotypical depictions of the Cork writer by situating Maginn's mediated, ironic, hoax-like auto-stereotypical performances of his Irishness – what might be termed his parodic or creative self-marginalisation – both within the history of the Irish literary hoax and against the nineteenth-century predominance of Stage Irish representations. Throughout his writing, Maginn satirises the Stage Irish figure to political ends (conservative, unionist, Tory) and to ridicule others (romantic nationalists, antiquarians, Catholics,[5] Whigs). Yet, these same performances also use the devices of the literary hoax to mockingly inhabit, perform, and satirise the image of *himself* as the dissembling, drunken, mad Irishman that is reflected back to him by his rivals and critics. Even as it provides ammunition to critics who would position him as a wild, debauched, and dissembling Stage Irish Other, Maginn's wilful double exposure articulates the fact that he is both a devout Protestant unionist, and still, to much of his Scottish and English audiences, a product of the "unknown" *terra incognita* of Cork. Thus, Maginn's taste for ironic self-fashioning and performative national simulation constitutes not only a satirical literary device designed to ridicule his Catholic and Whig rivals, but also a way of negotiating the complexities of his own Irish identity under the Union.

Odoherty On Irish Songs

Maginn's first publication for *Blackwood* was a forged back-translation of "The Ballad of Chevy Chase" into Latin and Greek, submitted to the editor under the "fictitious signature" of 'Olinthus Petre' (Mackenzie xxviii). The mock-hoax directly pokes fun at the scholarly authority that antiquarians attempt to foster by linguistically, temporally, materially, and culturally 'translating' oral ballads into the modern print idiom. More indirectly, it burlesques the romantic mythologising that draws on such revivalist discourse to authenticate a given nationalist project by tracing it back to a constructed

5 The Limerick-born editor Shelton Mackenzie, Maginn's contemporary and the first major scholar of his work, describes the Corkonian as an "extremely anti-Catholic" writer who was "steady all his life, in enforcing his convictions (in newspapers, magazines, and reviews) that [Catholics] were unworthy of being trusted […] even with political freedom" (xxvii-xxviii).

and always-already mythologised point of origin. The mock-Macphersonian hoax aesthetics of Maginn's *Blackwood* debut is localised in Maginn's outright fabrication of songs in the Irish tradition. Mackenzie relates anecdotally that

> one of [Maginn's] amusements was to compose *quasi*-Irish songs and narrative poems, and gravely pass them off on some of his enthusiastic countrymen as originals, which he had collected from the chanted recitations of old crones in country districts. As might be expected, any pilgrims who essayed to retrace his steps and emulate his labours, seldom found the exact locality which he described and never happened upon the aged ballad-reciters. (xiv-xv)

Beyond his own sport, it seems clear that Maginn's intention here is twofold: first, to mock the antiquarian nationalist project of 'filling in the gaps' in the fragmentary record of pre-Union Irish cultural history; second, to contaminate that project's archive with fakes that undermine its claims to authenticity and divert sincere scholarly efforts.

Stage Irish representation was already a commonplace of *Blackwood's Magazine* by the time Maginn's voice was introduced to the magazine with the faked "Chevy Chase" translations in November 1819. Maginn wrote to Blackwood following the March 1822 publication of "Rhapsodies over a Punch-Bowl," which is attributed to "Paddy from Cork" (actually, the Scottish novelist John Galt), to correct a giveaway error in its attempt to simulate a Corkonian:

> Paddy from Cork is a clever fellow – but not a Cork man – else he would never have headed his article "Rhapsodies over a punch-bowl" there not being one in this good city. Remedy it in the next "over a tumbler of punch" or "the tenth tumbler of punch" that being from time immemorial our average number – sometimes it true [*sic*] exceeded but seldom not reached. (qtd. in Wardle 720-21)

The letter is characteristic of Maginn's broader intervention into *Blackwood*, as he writes both to correct *and* to play up the magazine's misrepresentations of the Irish (here, in the form of the Stage Irish drunkard). This duality is most evident in the magazine's most famous representation of Irishness, 'Morgan Odoherty,' a byline and persona under which several contributors wrote, including, after he joined the roster of authors at *Blackwood*, Maginn himself.[6]

6 Maginn's dedication to concealing and diversifying his authorial personae under numerous pseudonyms is attested by the fact that so many of his contemporaries and subsequent scholars struggle to identify his contributions. Amid this confusion, the reflex of early critics was to attribute any pseudonymous or anonymous piece in *Blackwood* with an Irish theme to Maginn. Mackenzie details that George Moir "erroneously attributes many *Blackwood* articles to Maginn," including the piece "Daniel O'Rourke," which is credited to the doubly Irish personage "Fogarty O'Fogarty," although it had, in fact, been written by William Gosnell, the son of a Cork apothecary. Yet, Mackenzie's further assertion that the fact that Maginn *was* Odoherty "was generally known among the reading public" (lii) has, in turn, been overturned by Ralph M. Wardle (Odoherty is, in fact, the creation of Scottish author Captain Thomas Hamilton), even as this misapprehension endures in critical literature regarding the period (716).

In the introduction to his 1894 compendium of *The Humour of Ireland*, D.J. O'Donoghue specifies that to forge a definitive canon of Irish comic writing he will leave aside "the anonymous, the hybrid, the spurious" (xvii). O'Donoghue conscripts Maginn as an ally in this cause of scrubbing the Irish comic tradition of all that is fake and deceptive:

> Maginn's great service in exposing the true character of the wretched rubbish often palmed off on the English public as Irish songs deserves to be noticed here. He proved most conclusively that the stuff thus styled Irish, with its unutterable refrains of the "Whack Bubbaboo" kind, was of undoubted English origin, topography, phraseology, rhymes, and everything else being utterly un-Irish. The internal evidence alone convicts their authors. […] Any compiler who gives a place in a collection of Irish songs to such trash as "Looney Mactwolter," "Dennis Bulgruddery," or any other of the rather numerous of their kind, with their Gulliverian nomenclature and their burlesque of Irish manners, is an accomplice in the crime of their authors. (xvi)

O'Donoghue's reference is to the article "Odoherty On Irish Songs," published in the March 1825 edition of *Blackwood*. It seems likely that O'Donoghue attributes the article to Maginn owing to its inclusion in Mackenzie's collection of the *Odoherty Papers*. This is a potentially perilous assumption given how few of *Blackwood*'s Odoherty pieces Maginn penned; however, Wardle assures us that "On Irish Songs" is "undoubtedly by Maginn" (726-27). Yet, O'Donoghue *is* in error in evoking "Odoherty on Irish Songs" in support of his argument, as Odoherty's piece on the fakeness of Stage Irish songs also deceives in its apparent *anti*-anti-Irish agenda.

Odoherty opens his dissertation on Irish songs with a seemingly straightforward declaration of the "disinclination becoming very visible on the part of the English, to believe us Irish people, when we tell them that they know nothing about us" – a fact that Odoherty proposes to demonstrate by perusing a collection of popular Irish songs for evidence of what the English "put into our mouths when they think fit to write as Irish" (318). Odoherty protests how often the representation of supposed Irish speech in these songs fails to capture authentic local pronunciation and spelling and implies that the speech given to their Irish characters is a kind of bastardised Cockney passed off as an Irish brogue. Odoherty blasts the "immensity of blarney" evident in songs such as "The Sprig of Shillelagh;" and indeed, the song itself appears to offer the quintessential portrait of the Stage Irishman, who "drinks and […] fights […] With his sprig of shillelagh and shamrock so green" – although it does counter these tropes with references to Pat's "good-humoured […], honest and sound" heart (qtd. in Roe 279).

However, this seeming alliance with a pro-Irish or anti-English cause is deceptive, as Odoherty reveals that despite his claim to speak for "us Irish people," his view is partisan and partial. Odoherty, in fact, contends that "The Sprig of Shillelagh," with its praise in the second verse for the "glory" of the Donnybrook Fair, could not have been written by an Irishman as his own experiences with the Fair were of a "squalid misery" which "gathers the blackguard men and women of a metropolis, to indulge in

all kinds of filth" (318).[7] Odoherty's argument, then, tailored specifically for his predominantly Edinburgh and London audiences, that these songs could not be written by an authentic Irish composer, is based less on scholarly research or a resentment at the Stage Irishness of the representation than a disbelief that such positive odes could be written about a "disgusting" class of people engaged in "revolting" activities and "drunken riot" (318). Indeed, he avers that he "should rather see the magistracy of Dublin employed in suppressing [the Donnybrook Fair], than hear silly songwriters using their rhymes in its panegyric" (318).

The curious element of this derogatory commentary is that Odoherty focuses exclusively on the song's superficially positive representations of the Irish urban working class and completely glosses over the fact that the final verse reveals "The Sprig of Shillelagh" to be a pro-Union song:

> May the sons of the Thames, and the Tweed, and the Shannon,
> Drub the foe who dares plant on our confines a cannon;
> United and happy, at loyalty's shrine,
> May the Rose and Thistle long flourish and twine
> Round the sprig of shillelagh and shamrock so green. (qtd. in Roe 280)

There is a strange irony in the fact that Odoherty employs the term "us Irish" to establish a feigned sense of Irish unity in writing about a song that flatters the Irish so as to finally unite them with Scotland and England in defence of "our confines" against common foreign foes – even as this purported unity is undone by the article's subsequent anti-Irish (or at least, anti-urban working class and Catholic Irish) sentiments.[8] The article continues in this contradictory vein, with Odoherty chastising Irish songs as poor English fakes while surveying the country with a kind of Gulliverian squeamishness: Paddy MacShane's "Seven Ages," for instance, is unbelievable as an authentic Irish song given its neutral representation of Ballyporeen, which Odoherty describes as a "dirty village" (318).

Yet, the piece's ironic distance from even these propositional claims comes to the fore in its failure to stick to its own argument. Rather than moving towards a concluding *dénouement*, Odoherty's attention wanders and his argument unravels. He pursues a tangent concerning an article by English journalist John Black in the Whig paper *The Morning Chronicle* that had argued that Scotland's superiority over Ireland was due to its greater number of larger towns. Odoherty refutes this assertion by list-

7 The endurance of this stereotype can be seen in Maurice Bourgeois's 1913 description of the Stage Irishman as being "peerless for cracking skulls at Donnybrook Fair" (110).

8 Odoherty's appraisal of the song can be profitably contrasted with that of Owen Roe, who, in the 3 February 1877 issue of the pro-Irish Dublin journal *The Shamrock*, praises "The Sprig of Shillelagh" as a positive representation of "the lower-class Irish," but complains that they are "compelled to differ from our poet in his nauseating West-British professions of loyalty. We have no ambition, much less desire to drub any foreign soldiers, while an ally of such questionable faith as John Bull stands by our side. […] We fervently wish that the day may be far distant when the Shamrock will, in peaceful harmony, be entwined with either the English Rose, or the Scotch Thistle" (280).

ing Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Kilkenny, Belfast, Drogheda, Sligo, Carlow, Clonmell, Derry, Youghall, "and several others" (321). The internal contradiction that this assertion establishes with his argument against the "disgusting" and "dirty" urban spaces of Ireland is not addressed in the article; rather Odoherty turns to tease the representations of the Irish in the *Courier* by its editor William Mudford, who "is quite horror-struck at the notion of us" (322). (Note again Odoherty's use of "us" to describe the Irish as distinct from the British.) The Roman Catholic Association had brought a criminal charge, established in Cork, against Mudford for comments made in the paper about Maynooth College. Odoherty assumes that the English Mudford "looks on the Corkagians as no better than Ashantees, and, no doubt, anticipates […] the fate of poor Sir Charles M'Carthy" (322). The allusion is to the Cork-born soldier and British Governor Sir Charles McCarthy, who, in the First Ashanti War in 1824, "was taken and his skull made into a ceremonial drinking bowl for the Ashanti king" (Harrison 72). Maginn is likely not targeting the complicity of Irish subjects in British colonialism; rather, the reference trains its satire on the British representational tendency of aligning Irish and African races as savage Others,[9] and more specifically at the English ignorance of Maginn's native Cork, despite its place as a major city and port in the Union. Odoherty assures Mudford that Cork "is well munitioned with victual and drink, and he has but a small chance of being eaten alive there" – a point he develops with an absurdly lavish catalogue of the rich food and drink available across Ireland that extends across two columns (322). Again, this vision of the "peerless" riches of Ireland's land and waters – from Kinsale to Cobh, from Cork to Wicklow – and the superiority of its resources and delicacies when compared to those found in London strikingly contradicts the earlier image of "disgusting" and "dirty" villages and fairs.

Odoherty closes the dissertation with a sudden start: "But what is this I am about? Digressing from a disquisition on songs, pseudo-Irish, to the way in which a stranger, who knows how, could live in Cork. It can't be helped – I have lost the thread of my argument. So, I think I had better conclude" (322). This lack of closure betrays Odoherty's opening promise to "prove [his] assertion" (namely, that the English know nothing about Ireland and are disinclined to believe Irish people who tell them this) by "patiently examin[ing]" the "specimens of Irish wit" found in an Irish song book (318). Such a strategy of establishing an argument and methodology and then allowing it to unravel hints towards a hoax-like bad faith declaration of epistemological certainty that is established only to be ultimately withdrawn, undermined, or deflated through a willed or planned failure to follow through on its stated convictions. By thus ultimately pulling the rug out from under itself, the article reveals the seams of its own contradictions and inconsistencies. Maginn's Odoherty asserts that he will expose the Eng-

9 This association of the Irish and the Ashanti people can be seen to have endured in Frederick Burr Opper's notorious Stage Irish cartoon "The King of A-Shantee," published in *Puck* on 15 February 1882, which plays on the quasi-homophony between 'Ashanti' and 'a (Irish) shanty.'

lish imposition of *faux* Irish songs on Ireland, yet he categorises them as fakes because they are implausibly positive about Ireland's people, places and culture. At the same time, he takes issue with Black and Mudford's ignorance of Ireland, particularly his native Cork.

Thus, what appears to O'Donoghue at a cursory glance to be an article by an Irish native taking up a coherent stance about the misrepresentations of Stage Irish songs dissolves on closer reading into a farrago of contradictory views and self-defeating digressions and tangents, with distraction and drift as its organising principles. Yet, I contend that such a method also allows Maginn to express the complexities of his own Irish identity, in which the satirical double exposure granted by the form of the mock-hoax allows him, even paradoxically, at once to mock any Irish nationalist pride in the country's 'invented' histories, places, and cultures, and to mock any British stereotyping of Ireland's savage backwardness (or even, total ignorance of the island's people and politics) with a declaration of pride in these same histories, places and cultures. Maginn's Stage Irish performances – whether as "Ralph Tuckett Scott" for the editor Blackwood or as "Morgan Odoherty" in *Blackwood's Magazine* itself – distinguish themselves in so far as they are clearly intended both to mock the persona (and in some ways, 'Irishness' itself) and to unsettle or disarm the expectations of his Scottish or English audiences, rather than purely to entertain or beguile them.

Polyglot Editions: Father Prout, The Blarney Stone, and Irish Orientalism

In 1830, Maginn launched *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, a publication which offered a "riot of false logic, forged literary sources, fictional encounters and high learning" (Gaynor 313). On April Fool's Day 1834, *Fraser* became the home to the *Prout Papers*, a serially published collection of posthumous tracts and dissertations that had been authored, ostensibly, by the late parish priest of Watergrasshill, Cork, a learned cultural connoisseur by the name of 'Father Prout.' In truth, the gullible antiquarian was the *nom de plume* of Corkonian Francis Sylvester Mahony. Unlike Maginn, Mahony was a "failed Jesuit" and "pious right-wing Catholic" unionist (Eagleton 4). Like Maginn, Mahony employed a mixture of *faux* erudition and faked translations to lob barely concealed barbs at personal rivals, namely O'Connell, whose "democratising measures [Mahony] abhorred" (Campbell 49) and cultural avatars of Catholic Emancipation – in particular, Thomas Moore.

I should like to focus on a seldom studied instalment of the *Prout Papers*: "Father Prout's Plea for Pilgrimages, and Hospitable Reception of Sir Walter Scott When He Visited the Blarney Stone," published in the May 1834 edition of *Fraser*. This essay, the second in the series, describes the occasion upon which Prout supposedly accompanied the Scottish historical novelist on an excursion to the Blarney Stone while giving orations on the relic's Phoenician ancientness. The selection from the *Prout Papers* echoes Maginn's ironic handling of Stage Irishness and antiquarianism (combined here in the image of *ancient Blarney*) and the satire's propositional content is

soon revealed, as Prout praises the stone's gift of the gab as the source of the Irishman's ability to deceive:

> Without this resource, how could Castlereagh have managed to delude the English public, or Dan O'Connell to gull even his own countrymen? […] When the good fortune of the above-mentioned individuals can be traced to any other source, save and except the Blarney stone, I am ready to renounce my belief in it altogether. (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 547)

As part of this gag, Prout attributes the success of the Dublin scientific writer and Whig Dionysius Lardner to kissing the Blarney Stone: "What else could have transmuted my old friend Pat Lardner into a man of letters?" (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 547).

Prout's reference to Dionysius as "Pat" (reminiscent of Carlyle's derision of William Maginn as "Paddy Maginn") takes part in a common contemporary practice of denigrating the acclaimed doctor as an exemplar of the Stage Irishman.[10] William Makepeace Thackeray satirises him thus in a series of comic sketches titled "The History of Dionysus Diddler," in which Lardner is made to bear all the trademarks of the 'Teague,' replete with brogues and shillelagh:

Fig. 1. "Dionysus Diddler Sketch 1" (Thackeray 653)

Fig. 2. "Dionysus Diddler Sketch 2" (Thackeray 653)

In the first illustration (Fig. 1), Thackeray sketches the young Dionysus Diddler during his days as a student at "Ballybunion University in the hedge" (653); in the second (Fig. 2), he presents Diddler "after forty years of fame, [as] he thinks upon dear Ballybunion" in a thick Stage Irish brogue: "'I'm femous,' says he, 'all the world over: but what's the use of riputetion? Look at me with all me luggage at the end of me stick – all me money in me left-hand breeches pocket – and it's oh! but I'd give all me celeb-

10 Incidentally, this association with Stage Irishness would later acquire extra resonance, unknown then to Mahony or Thackery, as Lardner is widely believed to have been the unacknowledged father of Dion Boucicault.

rity for a bowl of butthermilk and potaties'" (655). In his Scott piece, Mahony engages in similar sport at an Irish Whig rival's expense, yet the direction of the satire is complicated by the fact that he himself assumes the mantle of Stage Irishness, however ironised, in his performance as his Father Prout persona.

After thus using it to double down on the stereotype of the deceptive Irish for some localised political score settling, Prout presents the Blarney Stone to Scott as evidence for Ireland's oriental origins: "This palladium of our country was brought hither originally by the Phoenician colony that peopled Ireland and is the best proof of our eastern parentage […]. Hence the origin of this wondrous talisman is of the remotest antiquity" (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 547). As the final flourish that supposedly convinces Scott of this theory, Prout offers a cryptogrammatic reading of an equation he writes in the ground with his cane: "BaLeARes iNsulÆ = Blarnae" (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 548). Mahony's tongue-in-cheek reference is to Baleares insulæ, "the ancient name of the islands of *Majorca* and *Minorca*" (the Balearic Islands), which, according to the 1830 edition of William Blackwood's *Edinburgh Encylopædia*, were believed to have been "peopled by a colony of Phœnicians" (Brewster 216-17).

The target of Mahony's satire here is Irish Orientalism, a contemporary discourse that goes further still than the Irish antiquarian responses to Macpherson by positing the origins of the Irish culture and language at the dawn of civilisation in the ancient East, in some accounts tracing it all the way back to the Tower of Babel. As Joseph Lennon details, the Oriental origin legends of Irish antiquarians (Charles Vallancey, Joseph Cooper Walker) and historians (Charles O'Conor, Sylvester O'Halloran) are "carried over into literary and popular culture" in Irish romantic texts such as Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary* and Moore's *Lallah Rookh*, and into post-Union political writing, when "nationalist political pamphleteers began to increasingly invoke the Oriental origins of the Celt" (116-17). By travestying these Orientalist discourses of Irish cultural ancientness and authenticity as just another form of 'blarney,' Mahony satirises a nationalist project that he sees as legitimising itself by tracing a direct lineage from nineteenth-century ideas of the Irish nation back to a constructed pre-colonial point of origin at the dawn of civilisation.

The upshot of all of this is Prout's anachronistic claim that "the 'Groves of Blarney' have been commemorated by the Greek poets many centuries before the Christian era" and that Richard Alfred Millikin, the "reputed author" of the contemporary ballad of that name was "but a simple translator from the Greek original" (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 549). Mahony burlesques the antiquarian dependence on manuscript evidence (real or simulated) to construct its strident claims regarding the ancient roots of the national culture in oral tradition, as Prout claims to have discovered "in the library of Cardinal Mazarin, an old Greek manuscript, which, after diligent examination, [he is] convinced must be the oldest and 'princeps editio' of the song" (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 549). Cementing the piece as a mock-hoax, this falsified archival record is fiendishly disruptive of official antiquarian and Orientalist Irish cul-

tural histories, as Prout produces a whole "Polyglot edition" of different versions of "The Groves of Blarney" that supposedly pre-date Milliken's. These include:

> a Latin version; a French-Norman version from the "Livre de Doomsdaye, A.D. 1069," extra stanzas written by Mahony; and a spoof "Fragment of a Celtic MS., from the King's Library Copenhagen." This latter presented a version of the most risqué of Milliken's stanzas in a print pastiche of the so-called Hardiman font, the type cast for the Gaelic poems in the *Irish Minstrelsy*.[11] (Campbell 49-50)

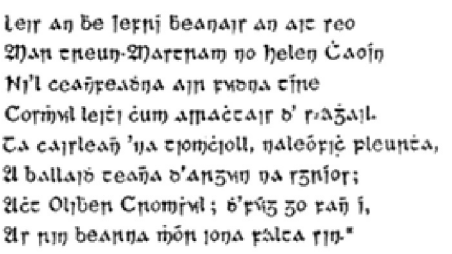

Fig. 3. The Fragment of a Celtic MS in Father Prout's "Polyglot Edition" of "The Groves of Blarney" (Prout 96)

For Matthew Campbell, Prout is "an embodiment of one sort of conservative rhetoric, where the best way to combat change is to suggest that the new thing is simply the old thing in new clothes" (52). I agree, of course, with Campbell in the main here, yet Mahony's choice of "The Groves of Blarney" – much like Maginn's choice of "The Sprig of Shillelagh" in the earlier piece – complicates a straightforward reading of the satire's direction, given that the song itself, despite giving off the impression of an authentically Irish romantic ballad (and often nowadays sung as such), is a parody of such Irish romantic airs. Millikin himself was a fellow Corkonian who, as well as being a trained lawyer, was a literary figure and editor somewhat in the Maginn and Mahony mould, writing many of his pieces "in burlesque on the doggerel flights of the hedge schoolmasters and local bards" (Read 129). Charles A. Read details the origins of "The Groves of Blarney" as a parody of "Sweet Castle-Hyde," composed when Milliken undertook to write another song "which for absurdity would far surpass" that "ludicrous" ballad (129). Patrick W. Joyce's 1909 volume of *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs* describes the parody as a "vile caricature," claiming such songs "did not in any sense represent the people – they represented nothing indeed but the depraved taste of the several writers" (qtd. in McDermott n.p.). Kevin McDermott draws our attention to the song's exploitation of the "self-contradictory form of humour known as an 'Irish bull'" in lines such as "All by the *murmuring* of sweet *silent* streams" which are "banked with posies that *spontaneous* grow there / *Planted in order* by the sweet Rockclose" (n.p.; emphasis added). Indeed, Milliken's parodic mode would fit right in with Maginn and Mahony's diverse takes on the 'fakeness' of Irish songs for *Black-*

11 The reference is to James Hardiman's two-volume *Irish Minstrelsy; or, Bardic Remains of Ireland* (1831), a collection intended to establish the antiquity of Irish verse.

wood and *Fraser*, especially in its implications of a faked or constructed Irish tradition and identity. As McDermott notes:

> [t]he central metaphor might be Blarney's "rock close," an early 18th-century assemblage of manufactured scenery given romantic names such as the "Fairy Glade," "Druid's Circle," and "Sacrificial Altar" – all of which were built around, and completely overwhelm, what is probably an actual prehistoric monument. The song, like the rock garden, offers a stark contrast between an artificial and whimsical fantasy of Ireland's past created by and for her conquerors and the genuine remnants of Ireland's high, indigenous culture – clad in beggar's robes and ridiculed by those who destroyed it. (n.p.)

This image of a form of Blarney that combines genuine elements of Irishness with shoddy simulations thereof mirrors the hybridised nature of Prout's own character – part classical scholar, part Stage Irishman – as captured in the description of him as:

> that rare combination of the Teian lyre and the Tipperary bagpipe, of the Ionian dialect blending harmoniously with the Cork brogue; an Irish potato seasoned with Attic salt, and the humours of Donnybrook wed to the glories of Marathon! (Mahony, "Prout's Carousal" 681)

As with Maginn's Irish writing, Mahony's blending of Stage Irish performance with a mock-hoax of post-Macpherson antiquarianism and romantic nationalism betrays an ambivalent attitude to the country. The *Prout Papers* provide a forum for anti-Irish sentiment – as when readers are informed that Prout "despised the vulgar herd of Corkonians with whom it was his lot to mingle" (Mahony, "Plea for Pilgrimages" 539) – even as they exhibit a deep, if often comic or satirically derisive, interest in Ireland's popular cultural ephemera.

Conclusion: Maginn and Mahony's Anti-Archive

Maginn and Mahony's mock-hoax aesthetic of bad faith evaluations and spurious translations of fake Stage Irish songs is advanced, and perhaps perfected, in the most famous instalment of the *Prout Papers*, "The Rogueries of Tom Moore" published in the August 1834 issue of *Fraser*. Prout 'reveals' that Moore also undertook frequent "pilgrimages" to the Blarney Stone as "an excuse to visit Prout's Watergrasshill home, where the national bard sought out foreign-language songs that might be surreptitiously smuggled into 'the melodious ballads of his country'" (Dunne 456). In an astounding display of mock erudition and specious back translation, Prout lays out the evidence that all of Moore's *Irish Melodies* are unacknowledged plagiarisms from previous, non-Irish sources.

> By translating a number of Moore's songs into French, Greek and Latin, backdating their period of composition, and attributing to each a fictitious original author, Mahony parodically misrepresented the *Irish Melodies* as a signal instance of literary theft. A series of derivative translations were thus portrayed as legitimate "originals," while Moore's authentic English-language ballads were retrospectively transformed into illegitimate poetic plagiarisms. (Dunne 454)

By enacting "a reversal of 'host' and 'parasite' text" so that "the present text claims priority over the original one, authoritatively reconstituting it as inauthentic" (Eagleton

4), Mahony's mock-hoax situates Moore in a genealogy of Irish roguery that extends back to Richard Head and the origins of the Stage Irish figure. At the same time, Mahony's "comic subversion of Moore's efforts to reproduce a distinctive Gaelic aesthetic in English" (Dunne 453) labours to delegitimise the authority of Irish nationalist balladry more broadly. Assuming the role of the Stage Irish antiquarian, Mahony falsifies the 'historical' documents that are vital to the nationalist project, disrupting the coordinates of origin, inheritance, and authenticity upon which it is based.

Drawing together the distinct practices, modes, and cultural politics of these post-Macpherson mock-hoaxes, we find that the "satirical, comic, irrational, almost-drunken-but-always-erudite" (Gaynor 313) art of Maginn and Mahony establishes a new set of aesthetic and affective possibilities for Irish literary hoax writing and Stage Irish self-presentation. Their 'anti-archive' of spurious translations of forged originals burlesques the era's reemergent anxieties over the problem of tracing or constructing the nation's fidelity to its cultural origins. Specifically, Maginn and Mahony exploit the form of the mock-hoax to critique "the politicised role of translation in contemporary efforts to offer an authentic literary and historical depiction of the Irish past" (Dunne 454). With ambivalence, their acts of parodic or creative self-marginalisation both exhibit and reject anti-Irish bigotry in slippery, provocative performances of their 'hybrid' status as both unionists and fully-fledged Stage Irish writers.

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