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Fantasy Island: Greece and Rome in two Eighteenth-Century Irish Authors

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Abstract

Two Irish authors from the 'long eighteenth-century' are examples of how Ireland, an island remote from the centre, absorbs and reforms Greco-Roman culture. In the west of Ireland, in Galway, when Roderic O'Flaherty (1629-1718) wanted a title for his history of Ireland published in Latin 1685 he chose Ogygia, Or a Chronological Account of Irish events /Ogygia seu Rerum Hibernicarum Chronologica. Psyche: or The Legend of Love by Mary Tighe (1772-1810) draws on the central section of a second-century AD novel Apuleius' Metamorphoses, the story of Cupid and Psyche (M. 4.28-6.24). Two Irish authors remake what they have chosen from the classics of Greece and Rome into two totally different contributions to creation of a 'fantasy' Ireland.

Introduction

Roderick O'Flaherty/Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Flaithbheartaigh (1629-1718) and Mary Tighe (1772-1810) were two Irish

writers whose lives bookend the eighteenth-century.¹ O’Flaherty died at the beginning of the century in Galway and Mary Tighe was born towards its close in Dublin. After some words of context for each author, this article will discuss O’Flaherty first and then Tighe. The aim of this discussion is to show the significance of the classics of Greece and Rome to each one especially in their different constructions of a fantasy island, Ireland.

Roderick O’Flaherty’s account of Ireland *Ogygia: Ogygia seu Rerum Hibernicarum Chronologia, or A Chronological Account of Irish events* (1685) was the only one of his works O’Flaherty saw published during his life, and his *Ogygia Vindicated* was published for the first time in 1775 by the antiquarian scholar Charles O’Conor (1710-1791). *A Chorographical Description of West or H-Iar Connaught* was published in 1846 for the Dublin Archaeological Society by the historian of Galway and librarian in its University, James Hardiman (1782-1855).² *Ogygia, or a Chronology of Irish Things extracted from*

¹ Hill (2001) 222: ‘The last decades of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were watersheds in Irish history. The 1690s ushered in a new era of penal laws for Catholics and witnessed the start of regular meetings of a more assertive Irish parliament; the 1790s saw the virtual dismantling of those laws and the abolition of that parliament.’ A version of this article was read at ‘The Reception of Apuleius’ Cupid and Psyche from 1600 to Today’: An international conference at the University of Leeds, 13th – 15th July 2016 and at the Maynooth Classics Seminar, December 1, 2017. My thanks to both audiences for their comments and questions.

² O’Flaherty’s text of *H-Iar Connaught* written in English, amounted to about 120 pages but Hardiman’s edition with all his notes amounts to over 450 pages. Full titles for *H-Iar Connaught* and for *Ogygia Vindicated* are in the bibliography to this article.

very old sources, carefully collated from the letters of the first races of the world bolstered by supporting evidence (from them) in chronology and genealogy to give it its full title was translated into English in the late eighteenth-century by Reverend James Hely and published in 1793.³ Mary Tighe's longest poem *Psyche: or the Legend of Love* is about young woman's, Psyche's, journey through an island landscape in her quest to find the one she loves. This journey is a metaphor for the poet's own difficult journey towards poetic inspiration and writing excellence: 'Forgetful of the dangers of her way/Imagination oft would Psyche bear/To her long travel's end, and that blest day/When Love unveiled should to her eyes appear.'⁴

A poem of about 28,000 words in 6 cantos of Spenserian stanzas, it was published several times from as early as 1795, and again in 1811 the year after her death. Famous in its day, this poem draws on the central section of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the story of Cupid and Psyche.⁵ Thomas Moore (1779-1852) in *On reading Mrs Tighe's Psyche* (1803) finds the poem 'so pure to feel, so sweet to hear.'⁶

Ogygia: Ogygia seu Rerum Hibernicarum Chronologia

³ For Hely's own translation of the title see the bibliography to this article.

⁴ *Psyche: or the Legend of Love*, Canto 3, stanza 41, lines 361-4. See Kramer Linkin (2005) 98; or Wordsworth (1992) 95.

⁵ Apuleius (AD 125-180) is Latin writer. An edition of this tale is edited by E.J. Kenney (1991). The Spenserian stanza is a nine-line stanza comprising 8 five-foot iambic lines with just 6 iambic feet in the last line, and rhyming: ababbcbcc.

⁶ Full text of Moore's poem in Kramer Linkin (2005) 269.

*Ireland is justly called Ogygia, i.e. very ancient according to Plutarch, for the Irish date their history from the first eras of the world; so that in companion with them, the antiquity of all other countries is modern, and almost in its infancy!*⁷

This statement early in *Ogygia* is a display of O’Flaherty’s learning because he quotes William Camden’s prestigious *Britannia* (1586), which had ‘enhanced his own and England’s prestige among continental scholars’.⁸ *Ogygia*

⁷ Hely’s translation Vol. 1, 35, spellings changed by me. Translations into English from *Ogygia* in the remainder of this paper are mine. *Ogygia* I 22, quoting Camden. gives a flavour of the Latin: Nam Ogygiae titulum assumpsi, qua ratione apud Camden (*m: Camd.Brit.tit.Hibernia published 1586*) habetur: Non immerito haec insula Ogygia i. perantiqua Plutarcho dicta fuit. A profundissima enim Antiquitatis memoria historias suas auspicantur; adeo ut prae illis omnis omnium gentium Antiquitatis sit novitas et quodammodo infantia. Ogygium, ait Rhodogonus (n) id appellant poetae, tanquam pervetus dixeris, ab Ogyge (o) vetustissimo. O’Flaherty is, as he says, quoting William Camden *Britannia* (1586), who had used Plutarch; see also ‘Preface to the Reader’ 34 on Camden. Cf. Verg. *Aen.* 3.167-8, the famous Penates dream explaining that the land of Dardanus is not Crete but Hesperia because Dardanus the legendary founder of Troy originated in Italy.

⁸ Hill (2001) 236 n. 7; she also notes pp.222-3 that O’Flaherty was not on his own in this type of writing, citing Richard Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana: or the History of Ireland from the Conquest thereof by the English, to the Present Time* (2 vols. London 1689-90), Hugh Reily, *Ireland’s case Briefly Stated* (1695), William Moyneaux, *The case of Ireland’s Being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England, Stated* (Dublin, 1698). Camden adduces less complimentary evidence in some passages about the ‘ancient and modern manners of the Irish’ from Strabo 1.4: the Irish are cannibals.

is used by O’Flaherty to denote a mythical place or somewhere very old, just as Plutarch (AD 46-120) does in one of his *Moralia*.⁹ These Greek prose ‘essays’ were so popular in the late middle ages and Renaissance that vernacular translations appeared in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries for example into English, by Philemon Holland in 1603, and earlier by Amyot into French. It is not clear that O’Flaherty knew Greek and he may not have read in Homer’s Greek of Calypso’s Ogygia ‘a wave washed island, a wooded island, the navel of all the seas’ where the desolate Odysseus was imprisoned (*Od.* 5.55).

However, ‘Ogygia’ in O’Flaherty’s title, stands for Ireland and was written to make Ireland, ironically given his use of the name of the far-off island, less remote and more acceptable to the future James II (1633-1701), and to encourage James to favour the O’Flaherty clan.¹⁰

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/camden/william/britannia-gibson-1722/complete.html#part160>

⁹ *Ogygia* I 22: O’Flaherty states: ‘Whether this is the particular Ogygia of Plutarch which he placed to the west of Britain in his book on the face of the moon or not, as others aver, it is all the same to me’ (Plut. *De fac.* 941a-b). It is not clear that O’Flaherty himself will have seen the reference from Homer (*Od.* 7.244) quoted by Plutarch. Note the parallel between Plutarch’s geography and Atlantis’ location in Plato’s *Timaeus* 24e-25a. See Kershaw (2017) 7, on the ample scope for discussion when locating mythical islands!

¹⁰ Praise of Ireland: *Ogygia* I 17, Ireland is ‘far superior to either’ i.e. to Britain or Scotland in the number of its bishops, a prestigious class. This may seem an odd point of comparison but see Hill (2001) 223, who notes historians in this time displayed a ‘preoccupation’ with ‘opinion in Britain’. Contention or awareness of division and attempting to bridge it was not surprising, even if only to gain personal advantage, see Ohlmeyer (2012) 355: ‘In 1685 the Catholic King

O’Flaherty himself was desolate and enchained by misfortunes in Ireland, no more than Ulysses on Ogygia. He was orphaned at the age of two and became a ward of court. This legal protection afforded him nothing during the Cromwellian depredations and his considerable lands in the west of Ireland were seized. O’Flaherty only ever received a partial restoration of these lands and property because he was discriminated against under the Penal Laws. At the age of twenty it is said that he fled Galway to Sligo where he met influential people who befriended him. The young O’Flaherty may have studied Irish language and literature under Dúalch MacFhirbhisigh (1600-1671) whom he reveres (*Ogygia* III 233). He remained proudly Irish-speaking throughout his life: ‘Scoti sumus non Galli, scotice loquimur non latine’!¹¹ He died in very poor circumstances (in Galway) aged 89 in 1718.

Ogygia is, according to W.B. Stanford, proof that classical and Gaelic scholarship can flourish together.¹² Ó Muraíle counts O’Flaherty as an important figure in the intellectual life of late seventeenth-century Galway though the question of where he learned his very good Latin and received his education must remain in abeyance.¹³ The ‘enthusiasm for education’ and ‘liberal atmosphere’ found by visitors to Galway impressed visitors to ‘this remote town on the outer circumference of

James acceded to the throne...The king actively promoted Catholics to military commands, often alongside Protestant Lords.’

¹¹ *Ogygia* I 31: ‘We are Gaels not Gauls, we speak Irish not Latin.’

¹² Stanford (1976) 206.

¹³ Ó Muraíle (1996)182-96. Also, Ó Muraíle (2004): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20574>.

Europe.¹⁴ O'Sullivan's account of the founding and fortunes of a 'lay school' teaching classics in the late sixteenth-century shows this enthusiasm. The school flourished in the 1620s under the guidance of John Lynch (1600-1674/1677) but closed in 1652 when Galway fell to Cromwell's forces.¹⁵ O'Flaherty penned a Latin epitaph to John Lynch who had fled to Brittany. A learned Latin letter written in 1665 to Lynch on the 'Chronology of Irish History' was attached to *Ogygia* on its publication in 1685. In the *Ogygia* O'Flaherty writes history in Latin prose, combining classical and Gaelic scholarship, and links the pre-classical Irish world to events in the world of Greece and Rome to glorify Ireland.

The text of *Ogygia* is prefaced by the 'Chronology' letter, a 'Preface to the Reader', a list of subscribers, and an elegant *epistola dedicatoria* dedicating the whole to James II. The content of the text proper is split into three parts. Amounting to about sixty pages Part I is about the island of Ireland, its first inhabitants, various names, dimensions, kings, and the manner of electing them; Part II covers the foreign affairs of *Ogygia*, or, a comparison drawn between foreign periods and generations, with the Irish; and Part III the domestic affairs of *Ogygia*, or, a more explicit account of Ireland from the flood to the establishment of Christianity. The first part is the shortest in length with Part II at hundred pages. Part III is the longest, surpassing the other two parts together at four hundred and fifteen pages.

¹⁴ M.D. O'Sullivan (1942) 455-6, who mentions visitors by name, poet Barnaby Googe (1540-1594), politician Sir Henry Sidney (1529-1586), and writer Sir John Harington (1560-1612).

¹⁵ M.D. O'Sullivan (1942) 458-67; Ó Muraíle (1996) 155-65.

Appended is a chronological poem about Ogygia detailing first inhabitants, colonies, and kings of Ireland from about 2000 BC, that is *anno mundi* 1657 to AD 432 and a Catalogue of the kings of Scotland.¹⁶ O’Flaherty’s method was to outline a chronology of Irish history which would establish the antiquity of an Irish kingship, beginning with the mythical Milesius, and listing his successors down to the last high king, Ruairdhi O Conchobhair, in the twelfth-century. According to O’Flaherty the first Scottish kingship was established by a colony of Irish origin in AD 500. This was why he hailed the Scottish Stuart accession to the throne of the whole UK in 1603 as the restoration of the ‘Milesian’ kingship in Ireland.¹⁷ Published just before the proscription of Jacobitism in the 1690s, *Ogygia* escaped the swift and direct action taken subsequently against every identified manifestation of Jacobite print.¹⁸ The following paragraphs give a flavour of some of O’Flaherty’s main concerns in *Ogygia*.

The rise of Congal the high King of Ulster in the first-century BC is compared to several years in Roman history. The most important of these dates is ‘*anno mundi*’ 3887, that is three thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven years since the creation of the world. Dating *Ab Urbe Condita* 691, that is six hundred and ninety-one years since the since the foundation of the city of Rome in BC 753 is also used:

¹⁶ O’Flaherty starts his chronology from the date of ‘the Flood’, which he advises is 1657 years after creation, i.e. *anno mundi*. 3950 is thought to be the year of Christ’s birth.

¹⁷ Summary by O’Halloran (2004) 19.

¹⁸ Kelly (2008) 156, thought because *Ogygia* was not seditious in the accepted political sense, and was written in Latin, may have helped.

3887/V.C.691 *M. Tullio Cicerone et C. Antonio Hybrida, M. Antonii triumviri patruo et socero consulibus; C. Octavius Augustus Caesar Romae natus est die 23 Septembris paulo ante solis ortum; cuius sc. Augusti diebus brevi ortus est Sol Iustitiae, et post tenebrarum diutinam noctem mundo illuxit. – Aurea condet secula qui rursus Latio (Aeneid L. 6). Ut de eiusdem Augusti tempore obiter, sed commodum praecinuit poetarum Latinorum princeps. Ogygia II.*

In the year [63 BC] when the consuls were M. Tullius Cicero and C. Antonius Hybrida, the latter both uncle and father-in-law of Mark Antony the triumvir, C. Octavian Augustus Caesar was born in Rome on the 23rd of September a little before sunrise. In the days subsequent to Augustus' birth a short while later there arose the Sun of Justice, and illuminated the world after a long night of darkness: "[to]Latium again and there/bring back the age of gold" (Aeneid Book 6). Just so the 'prince' of Latin poets predicted the glory of that very Augustan era now gone.¹⁹

Despite its concerns with accurate chronology this passage resonates with the author's keen appreciation of the relationship between a 'Caesar' and his favoured poet. In an elegant appeal to classical authority O'Flaherty identifies himself with the Latin epic poet Virgil (70-19 BC) whose most powerful patron was the emperor Augustus Caesar. James II who would accede to the

¹⁹ *Ogygia* II 121; quotation: Verg. *Aen.* 6.792-3.

throne in February of 1685, is then identified with Augustus, in a display of humble respect, or prescient forelock touching by O'Flaherty.

On the 11th June 1684 as O'Flaherty sat writing the dedicatory letter to his patron the future James II in his house at Park, between Furbo and Spiddal, he points out that James' relations had ruled Ireland in very ancient mythical times so that when James reads *Ogygia* he will see that he is indeed coming back home, home to Hibernia, 'the most ancient cradle of your ancestors' '*antiquissima majorum tuorum incunabula*'. Use of the word *incunabula* 'cradle' may refer to Virgil *Aeneid* 3. This part of Virgil's poem describes a crisis-point in Aeneas' and his people's difficult journey to reach their true home 'the cradle of our ancestors' located in an ancient unknown western land. This land, wrongly identified as the island of Crete, is variously named but called Hesperia by the Greeks.²⁰ Aeneas and his people must leave Crete and embark on another dangerous sea-voyage to reach their true home. In one swoop Ireland is identified with Hesperia, O'Flaherty with Virgil, and James with the prototypical Roman hero Aeneas. The book that O'Flaherty offers the king depicts a western land in great need of assistance from an epic hero despite her noble

²⁰ The prophecy of Apollo bids Aeneas and his people search out the land which first bore him from his parents' stock (*Aen.* 3.94-5), his 'ancient mother' (*Aen.* 3.97), which Anchises identifies with Crete using a version of *incunabula*, *gentis cunabula nostrae* (*Aen.* 3.105). *Est locus, Hesperiam Grai cognomine dicunt, /terra antiqua* (*Aen.* 3.167-8), in the words of the Penates who appear to Aeneas to offer him directions to a land variously named, see especially lines 161-71. The words repeat those of Ilioneus (*Aen.* 1.530-1).

origins and history. A mourning Hibernia offers a very sad ‘gift’ *lamentationes carmen et vae* to James II:

O most unvanquished leader, Hibernia, the most ancient cradle of your ancestors, implores most humbly your lofty patronage in bringing to public light her own antiquities. Though she be worthy of respect because of her snowy hair, she casts herself prostrate at your knees and offers herself to your intelligent consideration so that she can be contemplated by the eyes of your understanding. Clothed in tragic style with robes down to her feet, belted round in a sash of rough goat’s hair, her head covered in ashes, her hair untied and tears on her cheeks, she holds up a book in outstretched hands. In this book ‘Lamentations and woe’ are written. She keeps the mournful wail of Jeremiah the Prophet: ‘All have strayed from daughter Zion.’²¹

Not only heroic kings, but also writers with abilities of epic proportions were required in such circumstances. As a passionate Irish man of letters, O’Flaherty wanted to restore pre-eminence to the poets (*filí*) not only as poets but also as legislators. The role of the ‘file’ in ancient Irish society was quite different from the modern-day poet. He was like a public records office, recording traditional lore (*seanchas*), and was ranked with the highest kings and bishops.²² Decline of bardic poetry is often seen to

²¹ Book of Ezekiel: common theme is the agony of the people at the apparent desertion of Zion (Jerusalem) by God: Ezekiel 2.10: ‘the elders of daughter Zion sit on the ground in silence. They have dirt on their hair and put on sackcloth and ashes.’

²² Ní Bhrolcháin (2009) 12, 137-50.

coincide with the loss of influence of the Gaelic Roman Catholic world which disappeared into a kind of ‘hidden Ireland’ to use Corkery’s term, in the seventeenth-century.²³ Leerssen remarks that ‘native Ireland had no public space’ and the ‘hidden Ireland was a culture without a public sphere.’²⁴ O’Flaherty seeks to arrest the perception of decline in the public importance of the *filí* because as he says in *Ogygia* III they ‘were skilled in every liberal art’ which they placed at the service of their country (*Ogygia* III 215-16):

Those amongst us skilled in every liberal art used to be called fileadha or poets. Poets were the ones who because of their wisdom used to consult the interests of the state and so the fileadh, was so to speak, the philosopher. The Platonist, Maximus of Tyre, gives us evidence the poets were understood in the same way as philosophers, “Those who were actually philosophers but who were called poets have caused a hateful quarrel to come under the heading of that art which soothes the people. ... Nor in any situation should you ask which of the two – philosopher or poet – is better in discussing theological matters. Rather you should understand that each discipline was joined with the other from the beginning in a kind of complementary relationship, so that you should reckon

²³ O’Riordan (1990) 215: ‘the disintegration of the institutions of Gaelic society... included the demise of the bardic schools of poetry.’ D. Corkery (1878-1964) from the title of his 1925 published book *The Hidden Ireland*.

²⁴ Leerssen (2002) 31 and 36; and James Kelly (2008) 151, who counsels caution: ‘One may seek to modify rather than to deny Leerssen’s contention.’ Compare O’Riordan in note 23 supra.

*them to be the same not different to each other. For when you say philosopher, you understand poet too, and when you point out a poet you are pointing out a philosopher.” ... Therefore, from the time of Amergin to the time of Concubhor the king of Ulster, who lived in the time of Our Lord and Saviour, the judgements of the laws were the oracles of the poets, who used to give their legal opinions in charming speech.*²⁵

A special interest is the writing materials these learned philosophers and *filí* may have used. Writing materials were made of the birch tree before the invention of parchment (*Ogygia* III 233):

*which they called Oraiuin [birchbark scrolls?] and Taibhle Fileadh, that is, philosophical tables, tabulas philosophicas.*²⁶

Mention is made of Duaid Fírbíiss, that is Dubhaltach Mac Fhírbhíissigh, from a ‘well-known scribal family’ in Sligo, and a Mac Fhírbhíissigh connection with ogam writing is observed by O’Flaherty in the following

²⁵ He adduces Julius Caesar (*B Gall.* 6.13-18) on the druids in Gaul (*Ogygia* III 214). A lengthy quotation from Maximus of Tyre who flourished during the reign of Conn Cead-Cathach in Ireland and Commodus in the second-century AD; from the mythographer Natalis Comes (1520-1582) ‘who says in his *Orpheus*: the philosopher was generally the same type as the poet of old’; from Amergin (*sic*) i.e. Amairgen a mythical poet and ‘ollamh’, see Ní Bhrolcháin (2009) 138.

²⁶ ‘Oraiuin’ is mysterious.

passage (*Ogygia* III 233):²⁷

*Dualdus Firbissius, that unique keystone of Irish historical scholarship while he lived but its great loss now he has passed, wrote to me [i.e. to O'Flaherty] that he had some of these extant among monuments of antiquity in his house and about the different shapes of the characters of the script. He reviewed same in writing calling them craobh-ogam, that is, stick-like and detailing their number (one hundred and fifty) and age (from the time of Fenissius [i.e. Fénius Farsaid] on). Further concerning these characters, Lord Waraeus has it in his Antiquities of Ireland, Chapter 2 "Apart from the common writing characters, the ancient Irish used various obscure forms of writing, termed ogam, in which they used to inscribe their own secrets. I have an old book filled with them." The letters themselves were anciently called feadha, that is woods. Ogygia III.*²⁸

The characters were distinguished from one another by being given the names of trees, *alim* fir tree was A, or *beith* birch tree for B. Besides Mac Fhirbhisigh, Sir James Ware is adduced for evidence of the existence of the characters themselves.²⁹ O'Flaherty adds that

²⁷ Ní Bhrolcháin (2009) 23; Ó Muraíle (1996) 170. Ogam flourished between the fifth and seventh centuries.

²⁸ On the mythical ancestor of the Irish, a builder of the tower of Babel, Fénius Farsaid, see Carey (1990) 104 who notes that he was 'ancestor of the Gaels and one of the principal architects of their language.'

²⁹ Sir James Ware (1594-1666) encouraged by Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) began studying Irish history in Trinity College Dublin. O'Flaherty was one of the preservers of ancient manuscripts following Sir James Ware. John Lynch, Dubhltach Mac Fhirbhisigh,

because the ‘old Latins’ used to write at first on wooden tablets, their word for tree-bark (*liber*) also became their word for book, and so leaves (*folia*) came to be used for pages, *tabellarius* ‘courier’ so called from the wooden tablet he carried, and *tabellio* ‘legal notary’ from the time spent poring over such tablets. He finishes in a flourish with yet another quote from Virgil (*Aen.* 6.745; *Ogygia* III 234): Aeneas advises the Sibyl not to write her prophecies on leaves (*foliis*) which could blow away in the breeze.³⁰

O’Flaherty quotes his favourite Virgil once more in a discussion of the primary means of transport necessary to get off an island (*Ogygia* III 250):

The ancient Irish had, besides boats and canoes we use still in crossing ferries, these small wicker boats ... which St Isidore calls carabs (carabos) saying they were made of twigs and covered with rawhides, are made use of yet in coasting along the shores and islands. They are called in Irish corach, or noemhog.

These *coriacea navigia* ‘hide-sewn sailing vessels’ have a high classical relative in Charon’s ‘stitched ferryboat’ *cumba sutilis*. Virgil’s Charon drives all the other souls off the boat and lets Aeneas and the Sibyl embark ...*simul accipit alveo/ingentem Aenean. Gemuit sub pondere cumba/sutilis et multam accipit*

Geoffrey Keating (d.1644), and Philip O’Sullivan Beare (1590?-1660?) were historians of ancient Ireland doing the same sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

³⁰ *foliis tantumne carmina manda/ ne turbata volent rapidis ludibria ventis*: ‘only trust not your verses to the leaves lest they fly in disorder, the sport of rushing winds’.

rimosa paludem: ‘Then he took huge Aeneas into the hull of his little boat. Being only sewn together, it groaned under his weight, shipping great volumes of stagnant water under the seams’ (*Ogygia* III 253; Verg. *Aen.* 6.411-13).³¹ If Charon’s ferryboat was good enough for *ingens Aeneas* ‘huge Aeneas’, the currach, near relative to Charon’s craft, has to be good enough for use between Galway and the Aran Islands.

The religion and worship of the Irish receive classical comparisons also. O’Flaherty was not especially credulous in matters supernatural, but he did include strange tales in his work to illustrate a point and to add colour. *A Chorographical Description of West or H-Iar Connaught* contains a few in its detailed and localised description of this region. Among them are the fantasy boats which appeared once upon a time in Galway Harbour, or the crocodile in the River Corrib, or the tale of Morogh O’Ley who, after his kidnap and seven-year stay on the ‘enchanted isle’ of Hy-Brasil, returned home as a skilled surgeo.³² In *Ogygia* Greek oracles are compared with Irish oracles. In serious scholarly mode, O’Flaherty adduces the fifth-century BC Greek historian Herodotus for his descriptions of the oracles of Dodona and the Oracle of Jupiter Ammon in Libya ‘two of the first and oldest oracles’ (*Ogygia* III 196). He reports that Dodona the site of the oracle (*Ogygia* III 197):

³¹ A prolonged set of classical references to Claudian, Orosius, Solinus, Pliny, Sidonius Apollinaris, Lucan and Virgil are mixed with tales of three Irishmen in a boat fetching up in Cornwall, St Columba in the Orkneys and the voyages of St Brendan, the navigator.

³² *A Chorographical Description of West or H-Iar Connaught*, 31-2, and 19, and 68-73.

is a very ancient city in Epirus founded by Molossus. It is adjacent to an oak grove in which it was said speaking oaks grew which, as soon as people that approached to seek an answer, bestirred themselves and sounded out the answer which they had to give by way of a vocalised response.

The most celebrated oracle of Ireland is compared to the Greek oracle, for example, ‘the fatal [i.e. *the one that speaks*] stone now in the throne at Westminster’ (*Ogygia* III 197), probably Fál, a stone at Tara which foretold who would be king.³³ Cromcruach, a fierce ancient idol whose golden image used to give out prophecies until St. Patrick hit it with the crozier and another at Clogher, the *Lapis Aureus* ‘where an idol used to give responses from a golden stone’ (*Ogygia* III 197) are also mentioned as worthy comparisons. Nevertheless, O’Flaherty says that oracles are the work of the devil and that they were destroyed at the birth of ‘our Redeemer as the pagan writer Plutarch complains about in the beginning of the second-century’ (*Ogygia* III 197).³⁴

Ogygia is in Joep Leerssen’s words a ‘work of bardic mytho-antiquarianism’, if the items already mentioned do not convince, the concern of O’Flaherty to detail the many names of Ireland is a case in point with which to conclude this section.³⁵ According to O’Flaherty (*Ogygia* I 18):

³³ Ní Bhrolcháin, (2009) 86.

³⁴ Plut. *De def. or.* 413a is almost certainly the passage to which O’Flaherty refers.

³⁵ Leerssen (1986) 322.

Ireland is remarkable for the various names by which it was known, Irish as well as foreign. It was called Inis-fiodhbhadh, or Fidh-Inis, the woody island (insula nemorosa), because it abounded with woods.

Is not this wooded isle reminiscent of Homer's wave-washed wooded island in *Odyssey* 5? Phoenician, Greek and Irish scholarship and mythological lore is mined by O'Flaherty who notes that (*Ogygia* I 19; III 182):

Haec insula quinque vocabula tenet ut scripsit Fiechianus Scholiastes mille & amplius abhinc annis: Ere, Fodla, Banba, Fail, & Elga.

*This island had five names as Fiach the Scoliaist had it a thousand years or more ago: Era, Fodla, Banba, Fail and Elga.*³⁶

Ere, Fodla and Banba were 'three sisters of the royal blood of the Danans' queens of the people who revered the goddess Danu, the Tuath Dé Danann.³⁷ Fail, a name imported from the culture of the Tuath Dé Danann, and Elga the wife of Parthalón, were according to O'Flaherty why these names came to signify Ireland

³⁶ Fiach the Scholiast, quoted in John Colgan of Carndonagh (1647), Book 2 of his longer work on Irish saints.

³⁷ Ní Bhrolcháin (2009) 26 on the Tuath Dé Danann, a mythical people 'probably the primary gods who are said to have retreated underground after the arrival of the Gaeil, the children of Míl (Milesians).'

(*Ogygia* I 19).³⁸ He advises scholars intent on studying Irish place-names to be cautious, quoting the Latin satirist Juvenal (b. AD 67): ‘O holy people, for whom divine powers scorch to flame’ (Juv. 15.10-11). The import of this reference to a satirical poem about cannibalism in Egypt may constitute a warning that uninformed scholarly speculations about Irish place-names will be deservedly ‘scorched’ by those more erudite in such matters. Juvenal excoriates Egyptians who, although they venerate animals and refrain from eating meat, did not hesitate to eat a human being in a display of savagery over a local dispute. Those who identify the local Irish place-name Banna with the Latin *beatus*, blessed, are sorely mistaken because it derives from the Irish ‘banbh’ piglet: foreigners (*peregrinis*) are particularly inclined to lapse into such errors when discussing Irish place names because they lack knowledge of the Irish language (*Ogygia* I 19-20).³⁹ O’Flaherty warns (*Ogygia* I 20):

Vernacular names as Pliny [HN I] notes, ought to be adduced from those skilled in their own language. Otherwise how will they be explained by foreigners ignorant of the language? This is why Hibernus, ‘Irish’ is said to be Erigena from Eri: whence John Scottus, writer of the ninth-century, is dubbed Erigena in common

³⁸ Cross and Slover (1936) 3-27, on mythical invasion tales, and on Parthalón, ix; Rees and Rees (1961) 108-10.

³⁹ *o sanctas gentes, quibus haec torrentur ad ignem/numina*, a variant reading. The accepted modern line reads: *o sanctas gentes quibus haec nascuntur in hortis/numina*; ‘O blessed people for whom gods grow in gardens’. Camden, *Britannia*, in the passages on ‘Ireland in general’ puzzled on the derivation of Banna ascribing it to *beatus*!

parlance.

O’Flaherty’s favoured languages are Latin and Irish, and his sources are varied. In Irish he uses ‘Annals’, for example *Leabhar Leacan* (Mór agus Buí), *Book of Lismore*, *The Annals of Tigernach* and of Gilla Cóemáin, Ceitinn of course and Philip O Sullivan Beare, the last O’Flaherty says he has some of in a kind of samizdat in his ‘Preface to the Reader’.⁴⁰ O’Flaherty’s range of classical sources is staggering: Herodotus, Ovid, Juvenal, Caesar, Strabo, Plutarch, Martial and especially Virgil are favourites from the worlds of Greece and Rome. O’Flaherty makes the case for ‘the most profound antiquity’ and ‘royal majesty’ of *Ogygiae nostrae* ‘our Ogygia’ a fantasy Ireland.⁴¹ He creates flattering images of Ireland constructed from his knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics and Irish scholarship in hopes of raising the ‘ground down people’ *subactae gentis* of his homeland (‘Preface to the Reader’ 33).

The publication of *Ogygia* occasioned an attack by the ‘Scottish controversialist’ Sir George Mackenzie (1636-1691), who was ‘incensed’ by O’Flaherty’s rebuttal of the antiquity of the Scottish monarchy.⁴² Mackenzie’s objections expressed in *A Defence of the antiquity of the royal line of Scotland: with a true account when the Scots were govern’d by kings in the isle of Britain* in 1685, the same year as *Ogygia*. It caused O’Flaherty to write *Ogygia*

⁴⁰ ‘Preface to the Reader’/*Proloquium ad lectorem*, 31. Sharpe (2014) Appendix 2, 385-447.

⁴¹ ‘Preface to the Reader’ 44.

⁴² Ó Muraíle (1996) 190. On the ‘slight’ which O’Flaherty may have felt as deeply and personally, see Sharpe (2013) 148.

Vindicated which was not published until 1775, ninety long years after it was written and well after both O’Flaherty and Mackenzie were dead. How could Mackenzie know anything about Ireland without knowing the Irish language, says O’Flaherty? O’Flaherty flails Mackenzie’s ‘grave errors’, hitting home with a Latin dart: *tantae molis erat mentitum condere regnum*. He adapts one of Virgil’s most famous lines (*Aen.* 1.33): what a massive task it was to found the Roman race’ into ‘what a massive task it was to found a fake kingdom’ where *mentitum* ‘fake’ rewrites Virgil’s *Romam* ‘Rome’ and *regnum* ‘kingdom’ replaces Virgil’s *gentem* ‘race’. The Irish poetry dubbed ‘rhimes and rags’ by Mackenzie is passionately defended by O’Flaherty and his words must have been read with interest by the poet, Tighe, to whom the following paragraphs turn.

Psyche: or the Legend of Love

Mary Tighe, nee Blachford (1772-1810) a poet, the daughter of Theodosia Blachford (1745-1817) and the Reverend William Blachford, a Church of Ireland clergyman. Revd. Blachford, who was also keeper of Marsh’s Library in the period 1766-1773, died in his daughter’s infancy.⁴³ Tighe’s uncle Thomas, her mother’s step-brother from Theodosia’s father’s second marriage, was a clergyman and scholar. Educated at Eton and Harrow, Thomas subscribed to the scholarly *Ogygia*

⁴³ Henchy (1957) 3-14; Perkins (2004):
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27443>.

Vindicated (1775) probably when he gained a fellowship in Peterhouse College Cambridge at the age of twenty-three. Tighe's 'Reading Journal' in manuscript in the NLI, shows that she read a lot of antiquarian material including *Ogygia Vindicated*.⁴⁴

Tighe does not approach her classical knowledge differently to her eighteenth-century male counterparts, but she does use classical sources to figure the 'Love' her heroine Psyche is aiming toward as a metaphor for the poetic excellence towards which Tighe herself aims. *Psyche: or the Legend of Love*, hereafter *The Legend of Love* is based on Tighe's reading of the central section of Apuleius' novel *The Metamorphoses* also known as *The Golden Ass*. The story of *Cupid and Psyche* (*Met.* 4.28-6.24) tells of the attraction of Psyche (soul) to Cupid (love). Psyche is a young girl and Cupid is *Amor* the god of love. The tale has elements of the fairy-tale about it opening as it does 'once upon a time there was a king and queen: *Erant in quadam civitate rex et regina.*' In stark contrast to the ribald nature of the rest of the *Metamorphoses*, this central story offered Tighe a special Latin study though it is unlikely that she read the whole text of the *Metamorphoses* with similar care. It may seem a retreat from reality to bury oneself in re-reading a second-century Latin author. The last turbulent decades of the eighteenth-century ended in the United Irishmen's revolution of 1798, yet Tighe was a member of an intellectual and politically engaged family, and it is not credible that she saw her study of Latin as a retreat from

⁴⁴ NLI MS 4804. Kramer Linkin (2005) 211-23; Buchanan (2011) 107-8.

reality because it afforded her a way of confirming her status as a poet.

After her father's death her mother's natal family was influential in her life. For example, as devout Methodists, Theodosia and her brothers co-operated in founding a home for abandoned girls in 1791.⁴⁵ Mary Leadbeater (1758-1826), Mary Birkitt (1774-1817) and Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) are other late eighteenth-century examples of how 'philanthropy became an emancipatory force encouraging women to move into public life.'⁴⁶ Tighe's male relations were fully engaged from their arrival in Ireland in the sixteenth-century, taking public office including sitting as Members of Parliament.⁴⁷ Women also found ways of contributing to public discourse.⁴⁸ For example, Charlotte Brooke (1740-

⁴⁵ R. Roughter (2002) 681-90. Bunbury on Mary Tighe's wishes in her will: 'In her will, she bestowed the money she made from "Psyche" to an asylum on Baggot Street called "The House of Refuge" where "young women, of unquestionable character" were trained in "plain-work and washing, until they are provided with eligible places"':

http://turtlebunbury.com/history/history_family/hist_family_tighe_rossana.html Accessed December 2017. This is an informative source on Tighe's antecedents and descendants.

⁴⁶ Rodgers (2000) 138.

⁴⁷ Edward Tighe (1740-1801) was M.P. for Belturbet (1763-68), Wicklow Borough (1768-76), and Athboy (1776-83). He voted for Ponsonby's parliamentary reform motion and may not have sought re-election in 1797. Both his nephews William Tighe and Henry Tighe lost their seats in the Act of Union to which they were also opposed.

⁴⁸ Higgins (2010) 180: 'Aristocratic women had traditionally played a role in electoral politics, canvassing electors on behalf of their family interest in a parliamentary seat.' The 1790s were turbulent times in England with war being declared against France in 1793 and even in

1793), Tighe's contemporary, advocated unity of the Irish (elder) and English (younger) muses of poetry in her *Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789). Her 'cultural unionism' to use the Cathal Ó Hainle term, is clear-eyed about the difficulties of such a consummation: it cannot happen because of the difficulties of rendering the nuances of poetry in the Irish language into English.⁴⁹ Brooke fitted into the development of safe 'patriotic antiquarianism' aimed at promoting Irish culture and heritage, though not the Irish language, to first place in Europe.⁵⁰ Tighe's version, not rejection, of this political engagement is 'eloquence' to sooth all ills (*Sonnet Addressed to my Mother*). A recently published 'suppressed political stanza' of *The Legend of Love* shows Tighe engaging in her own form of cultural unionism by showing her love of the island of Ireland in her work:

*'Tis better to weave such simple rhymes
And thus the hours of indolence beguile,
Than magnify my bleeding country's crimes
Or torture truth to win a party smile.*⁵¹

Ireland perceived pro-French activism is repressed when Maynooth University was founded in 1795. The consequent polarisation of English society between Fox (Whig, Francophile) and Pitt (Conservative, and unsuccessfully pro-Catholic emancipation early 1800s because the king would not agree to it) means that a temporary peace in 1801 disappears after the deaths of Pitt and Fox (1806) and the rise of Napoleon. It is no wonder that the pro-Union Sarah Tighe, Mary Tighe's mother-in-law laments Ireland 'this unhappy country' in a letter to Sarah Ponsonby on 4 June 1798.

⁴⁹ Ó Hainle (1982) 43.

⁵⁰ Vance (1980) 235.

⁵¹ Kramer Linkin (2015) 192.

Her poetry, addressed to a romantic public, is antiquarian rather than romantic, but no less political for that. Her instinct is as Irish as that recognised by Douglas Hyde in his summation of early Irish literature: ‘the romantic as opposed to the realistic, dominates Irish utterance from first to last.’⁵²

Henry Tighe (1771-1836), whom the poet married in 1793, represented the borough of Inistioge in the Irish Parliament from 1790 until the Act of Union 1800. Educated at Harrow and Eton, he later attended St John’s College Cambridge. His work in politics took him and his wife to London where he qualified as a barrister. When Tighe became ill they moved back to Dublin and lived at Dominick Street and sometimes at Rosanna, her mother’s home in Wicklow. In 1809 she was almost permanently at Woodstock House, Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny and there, in the graveyard of St. Mary’s Church, her final resting place can be found.⁵³ Woodstock was the home of her brother-in-law William Tighe who edited Tighe’s papers after her death, although it is Henry who is credited with teaching her Latin.⁵⁴ Tighe learned her Latin in this informal way, but she learned it well.⁵⁵ The educational curriculum for

⁵² Hyde (1904) accessed online: www.ricorso.net.

⁵³ In a small stone house mausoleum. See Felicia Hemans’ (1793-1835) poem to Tighe: ‘The grave of a Poetess’. On her death Thomas Moore wrote: ‘I saw thy form in youthful prime/ nor thought that pale decay/would steal before the steps of time/and waste its bloom away, Mary.’

⁵⁴ Caroline Hamilton, journal: Wicklow papers NLI MS 4810; Kramer Linkin (2005) 254.

⁵⁵ Much as many others did, the poets John Keats and Brian Merriman for example, see Ó Cualaoich (1983) 69.

women, favoured astronomy, chemistry and botany because these ‘scientific’ subjects were perceived to have a practical side suitably related to the art of household management, unlike the study of Latin or the even more ‘elitist’ Greek.⁵⁶

Tighe acknowledges her debt to Apuleius in her preface to *The Legend of Love*: ‘The loves of Cupid and Psyche have long been a favourite subject for poetical allusion, and are well known as related by Apuleius: to him I am indebted for the outline of my tale in the two first cantos; but even there the model is not closely copied...’ a somewhat grudging acknowledgement perhaps designed to sooth those readers concerned about the overall tenor of Apuleius’ novel. It shows that she herself was concerned to impress with her knowledge of a classical precedent. The Latin prose tells of a fairy-tale princess with two ugly-minded older sisters, her parents distraught at their youngest’s lack of suitors not because she is ugly, but because she is so beautiful. This leads to everyone, including any prospective husband, seeing her as a god and worshipping her as though she were Venus. Our heroine submits to all this worship but finds it troubling because, as a human being, she cannot know how to be a goddess. Tighe erases the Apuleian epithet *ignara* (unknowing) from her Psyche to reveal a more knowing and poised heroine than her classical model. The beginning of the poem sees Tighe’s ‘unhappy’ Psyche already bereft, she has ‘lost’ love and she knows it wishing only for ‘her long travel’s end’ when she should glimpse love again (Canto 3, stanza 41). Some of the ways *The*

⁵⁶ Raftery (1997) 46.

Legend of Love describes the process involved in encountering this much desired vision are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Psyche is captivated by the god Amor (Love) in Apuleius' prose. Then she is separated from Cupid, although she tries to prevent his leaving by clinging to his foot as he departs the scene in a clear reference to Plato's *Phaedrus* on the longing soul has for *eros* (Apul. *Met.* 5.24; Pl. *Phdr.* 248c). Likewise, Psyche is 'enraptured' by her lover in Tighe's verse.⁵⁷ Apuleius' human Psyche is reunited with divine Amor to satisfy the demands of Platonic allegory, but Tighe's Psyche makes a different message to accessible its reader: 'Two tapers thus, with pure converging rays, /In momentary flash their beams unite, ... /Oh! bliss too vast for thought! by words how poorly traced!' (Canto 6, stanza 53). Psyche reaches her journey's end, but Tighe's aim is not the end but the means, that is, the way, this process can be described or 'traced' in words. Psyche's journey, described in the first line of Canto 1 as 'her long and dreary way', reveals that for Psyche it is her destination, not the journey, that is most important. On the other hand, Psyche's journey affords the poet an opportunity to foreground the process leading to the destination, rather than the terminus itself: 'imagination oft would Psyche bear/to her long travel's end.'⁵⁸ Imagination lends power to the poet and Psyche's journey is described in detail. Psyche does not see Amor again until Canto 6 only after she has heroically avoided the Bower of Loose Delight (Canto 3), Disfidia's Castle

⁵⁷ *The Legend of Love* Canto 6, stanza 59, the penultimate stanza of the entire poem.

⁵⁸ *The Legend of Love* Canto 3, Stanza 41.

(Canto 4), Castabella's palace of Chastity and sails along the coast of Spleen (Canto 5) and overcomes Glacella's cold land of Indifference (Canto 6). The process is fraught for any who should wish to undertake the journey, and the poet warns (*The Legend of Love*, Canto 6, stanza 54):

*Distance with cruel weight but loads thy chain
With every step which bids thee farther rove,
While thy reverted eye, with fruitless pain,
Shall seek the trodden path its treasure to regain.*

When the poet composes poetry, when she is seeking treasure on the trodden path, she flies to 'other worlds' (Canto 5, stanza 1). Such 'other worlds' are figured as an island early in the poem, when Psyche herself is depicted on one (*The Legend of Love*, Canto 1, stanza 16):

*Mid the blue waves by circling seas embraced
A chosen spot of fairest land was seen;
For there with favouring hand had Nature placed
All that could lovely make the varied scene:
Eternal Spring there spread her mantle green;
There high surrounding hills deep-wooded rose
O'er placid lakes; while marble rocks between
The fragrant shrubs their pointed heads disclose,
And balmy breathes each gale which o'er the island
blows.*

The beauty of the island is an ideal, a fantasy world, created by the poet's imagination. It is but a refuge for Psyche wooed by the soothing 'silence of the scene'

(Canto 1, stanza 30), yet it signifies a place where the poet can let her 'eloquence' explore the landscape. Psyche and her knight have been helped find safe harbour there by a female figure 'Patience' who saves them from a sea storm. She keeps watch permanently on the shore to welcome home her beloved, long since lost in a shipwreck and 'hence can no art / From those unlovely scenes induce her to depart.' (Canto 5, stanza 59). Observe that she is so identified with the landscape that (*The Legend of Love*, Canto 5, stanza 58):

*Long had she there in silent sorrow dwelt,
And many a year resigned to grief had known;
Spleen's cruel insolence she oft had felt,
But never would the haughty tyrant own,
Nor heed the darts which, from a distance thrown,
Screened by her cavern she could safely shun;
The thorny brakes she trod for food alone,
Drank the cold stream which near the grotto run,
And bore the winter's frosts and scorching summer's sun.*

Hospitable Patience kindles her fire, offers food, her own cloak and a bed to her visitors. She is as close to a personification of Hibernia as one can get (*The Legend of Love*, Canto 5, stanza 57):

*Her head unshielded from the pitiless sky,
Loose to the rude wild blast her tresses fly,
Bare were her feet which prest the shelly shore
With firm unshrinking step; while smilingly
She eyes the dashing billows as they roar,
And braves the boisterous storms so oft endured before.*

The 'shelly shore' and also the equally picturesque 'grassy centre of the isle' (Canto 1, stanza 18) provide 'angel forms' 'delightful visions', 'wonders' and 'harmony' for fancy, for the poetic imagination (*The Legend of Love*, Canto 5, stanza 1):

*Delightful visions of my lonely hours!
Charm of my life and solace of my care!
Oh! would the muse but lend proportioned powers,
And give me language, equal to declare
The wonders which she bids my fancy share,
When rapt in her to other worlds I fly,
See angel forms unutterably fair,
And hear the inexpressive harmony
That seems to float on air, and warble through the sky.*

This fantasy island is a place of rest for Psyche at her journey's end, but it is an exciting island of discovery for the poet to explore as she describes Psyche's journey back to Amor. Her anxiety is that her powers of expression will not be up to the task of describing the 'inexpressive harmony' revealed to her. The key thing for Tighe is the discovery of language and eloquence 'equal to declare' the wonders and delightful visions this landscape offers. These visions are 'dreams which hold my soul in willing thrall' she tells the reader, 'But scarce I seek the airy threads to weave / When quick confusion mocks the fruitless pain, / And all the fairy forms are vanished from my brain.' (Canto 5, stanza 2). The 'airy threads' weave poetic images 'fairy forms' which the poet uses to trace 'Psyche's wanderings' and to pursue 'her journey' on a

glowing canvas (Canto 5, stanza 4), to create poetry that will yield ‘pleasure, if not fame’ for her as the poet says modestly (Canto 5, stanza 3). Her difficulty is mirrored in Psyche’s difficult journey to ‘that fairy land she never could attain’ (Canto 4, stanza 33). Nevertheless, Psyche is as intent on reaching ‘that fairy land’ as the poet is to achieve ‘the fairy forms’ of poetry. The other world, figured as an ideal island landscape, affords the poet a tranquil space whose ‘silent charm’ allows her to compose her poetry, verse aptly characterised as ‘pensive pleasures’ in Canto 3, stanza 38. The ‘enemy’ of the poet who seeks calm surroundings is Folly: ‘They do not love who can to these prefer/the tumult of the gay, or folly’s roar; / the muse they know not; nor delight in her / who can the troubled soul to rest restore / calm contemplation.’⁵⁹

When Psyche reaches her destination, she does not hear Amor at first because she is captivated by the beauty of the ideal landscape before her eyes (*The Legend of Love*, Canto 6, stanza 48):

*He speaks, but scarce she hears, her soul intent
Surveys as in a dream each well known scene:
Now from the pointed hills her eye she bent
Inquisitive o’er all the sloping green;
The graceful temple meet for Beauty’s queen,
The orange groves that ever blooming glow,
The silvery flood, the ambrosial air serene,
The matchless trees that fragrant shade bestow,
All speak to Psyche’s soul, all seem their queen to know.*

⁵⁹ *The Legend of Love* Canto 3, stanza 39.

She marries Amor and ‘his fairy train their rosy garlands bring’ and Psyche ‘enraptured lives in his dear eye/ And drinks immortal love from that pure spring/ Of never-failing full felicity’ (Canto 6, stanza 60).

The poet also shows how she herself is captivated by the landscape in *The Vartree*, a paean to the River Vartry, in Ashford, Co. Wicklow (*The Vartree* 17-18, 25-26):

*The deepest foliage bending o'er thy wave
Tastes thy pure kisses with embracing arms, ...
Here, Mary, rest! The dangerous path forsake
Where folly lures thee, and where vice ensnares.*

This poem is an address to herself encouraging her to keep writing. Folly is not for her and the beautiful banks of the Vartry function as a metaphor for an ideal landscape to where her mind should now retire not to ‘barter solid good for brilliant cares’ but to ‘woo the muses in the scenes they love’ (*The Vartree* 28, 45). She picks flowers in *Rossana* and enjoys speaking scenery in *Written at the Eagles Nest, Killarney, July 26, 1800*, lines 9-10 ‘here magic sounds/celestially respondent shall enchant’ where the woods ‘wrap my charmed soul in peace profound’ (*On Leaving Killarney, August 5 1800*, 12). Poetic inspiration arrives as a dream when nature, the ‘well known scene’ speaks to the poetic soul. This soul is intent on avoiding folly as she gazes in wonder at a fantastic landscape. Such inspiration is as fleeting as the leaves that fall in contrast to Psyche’s eternal marriage (*The legend of Love*, Canto 6, stanza 60):

*Dreams of Delight farewell! your charms no more
Shall gild the hours of solitary gloom!
The page remains--but can the page restore
The vanished bowers which Fancy taught to bloom?
Ah, no! her smiles no longer can illumine
The path my Psyche treads no more for me;
Consigned to dark oblivion's silent tomb
The visionary scenes no more I see,
Fast from the fading lines the vivid colours flee!*

Tighe's fantasy island colours the poet's 'other world' of the island of imagination where her muse Psyche leads, comparable to the green and pleasant imaginary land fit for the highest royalty, even a god as in Apuleius. Hibernia is O'Flaherty's Muse leading him through the landscape of his fantasy isle, ancient and illustrious, her oracles, boats and books comparable to same in the Classical worlds of Greece and Rome. Here we have two Irish authors: one writes history in Latin prose, and links the pre-classical Irish world to events in the world of Greece and Rome, the other writes in English verse re-using a second-century Latin prose work, linking an Irish poet's 'life of the mind' to an allegory of soul. O'Flaherty's language is Latin, while Tighe is most at home in English. The long eighteenth-century was part of both their lives because their work heralds and bids farewell to it: O'Flaherty died in 1718, Tighe was born in 1772. Though neither composes in Irish the question for me is how both remake what they have found in their study of the classical languages into two totally different contributions to the creation of a fantasy Ireland.

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