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Cover image: Richard Thomas Moynan (1856–1906). Detail from The Artist in his Dublin Studio, 1887. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland. Photo © National Gallery of Ireland.
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The following issue explores one of the oldest significant migratory connections in both Irish and Scottish history – that connection binding the two countries to France. Often romanticised through reference to the Flight of the Wild Geese or the conceit of an Auld Alliance, both Ireland and Scotland have claimed a special affinity with their Gallic cousins. A shared cultural Celticism binds their national self-images, just as much as a tactical engagement with England’s rival to European and Imperial power brought Ireland and Scotland into the French political orbit. Much work has been done on precisely these engagements, exploring the myth history of the Celt and how the Jacobite communities in Britain’s other kingdoms integrated into the French military system. Yet beyond such potent symbolic ties, the value of a French connection to the Irish and Scottish populations is often obscure. In evaluating their intellectual and cultural engagement with France this volume makes its contribution.

In doing so it draws structural inspiration from Pascale Casanova’s The World Republic of Letters (2004). Therein, Casanova postulates the existence of an autonomous realm of literary power, with its own economies of credit, brokers of worth and ‘central banks’ holding cultural capital (23). At the heart of this transnational polity of the imagination Casanova places Paris – ‘the capital of the literary world, the city endowed with the greatest literary prestige in the world’ (24). To it, the cultural producers of Ireland and Scotland were, and continue to be, drawn. From as far back as the sixteenth century, Irish and Scots have gone to Paris for education and inspiration. In that, they allow us to draw out one of the postulates in Casanova’s thesis; that Parisian centrality is a consequence of ‘political liberty, elegance, and intellectuality’, a configuration that sustains the ‘historical and mythical’ literariness of the city (24).

The following essays take up those categories, beginning with the foundational intellectual institution of the University of Paris. Both Alexander Broadie and Tom McInally illustrate how the University acted as a lodestone for Scottish academics and students alike. Then, political liberty is interrogated in four essays which concentrate attention on the decade of the French
Revolution. The first two, those by Liam Chambers and Michael Rapport also highlight the fate of the Irish and Scottish Colleges in that tempestuous decade, while the second pair, authored by Michael Brown and Sylvie Kleinman, focus on the explicitly political ramifications of an encounter with revolutionary France through a case study of individual Scottish and Irish travellers. The elegance to which Casanova alludes is the topic of the next two contributions. John Morrison points up how Paris was to replace the Netherlands as the focal point of Scottish artistic culture in the nineteenth century, while Maebh O’Regan provides a survey of a generation of Irish artists trained in the French capital. Cumulatively these contributions set the context for the final essays, by Paul Shanks and Gavin Bowd. They attend directly to the place of France in the world literary culture that Casanova outlines. The continued vibrancy of France in the poetic imagination is illustrated by our final contribution, a newly published work by David Kinloch.

But these essays do more than illustrate the possible power of Casanova’s central conceit. They also shed light on the place Casanova assigned to the translator in ‘establishing value’ through ‘the power of consecration’ and the ‘enrichment’ of the source culture and the recipient (23). The people who populate the pages that follow were all, to a greater or lesser extent, involved in the process of cultural translation, communicating with and disseminating French culture from positions within the Celtic hinterland. Their power, as polyglots, was in no sense peripheral, however, for it was precisely the depth and longevity of their engagement with French culture that credited it with the capital it embodied.

This volume is a result of an AHRC sponsored research project on the Irish and Scottish Diasporas since 1600 which runs out of the University of Aberdeen, for details of which readers can go to www.abdn.ac.uk/riiss/events. A critical part of this wider exploration, concerned as it is with the cultures of migration and the intellectual ramifications of encountering foreign shores, this volume is the first in a sequence which will study the investment migrants make in their adopted land, the resources that they bring with them, and the cultural capital they retain in their place of origin. In that, the current volume sets the agenda for some later issues of the Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies.

Michael Brown

University of Aberdeen
Scottish philosophers had a prominent role in French academic life up to and beyond the Scottish Reformation in 1560. Until the Reformation the fact that the French universities were in large measure part of the intellectual life of the Catholic Church was no obstacle to the Scots. Thereafter the Scottish presence within the French universities diminishes sharply though they did enrol in Protestant colleges in France and also taught in them. That access to French academe, narrow as it was after 1560, became narrower still in 1685 with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the effective withdrawal of citizens’ rights from the French Protestants, including their right to maintain denominational colleges. Scottish non-Catholic philosophers did continue to visit France and, for example, were present in spectacular fashion in the eighteenth-century salon-culture, as witness the reception of David Hume and Adam Smith. But after 1685 Scots are barely visible within the French education system. This essay shall focus however on the Pre-Reformation period when they were a highly visible force within French universities.

Scotland’s first three universities, St Andrews, Glasgow, and King’s College, Aberdeen, were all founded in the fifteenth century. Prior to that century therefore Scots had to travel abroad for their university education. Some went to Oxford or to Cambridge, but the great majority went further afield, most commonly to France, and especially to Paris whose university was pre-eminent in Continental Europe. The first major Scottish philosopher to work at the University of Paris was the Franciscan friar John Duns Scotus (c.1266–1308), and his philosophy can be shown to have impacted significantly on the Scots who came after him at that university. Indeed, there is a sense in which Scottish philosophy since his day has been predominantly Scotistic.¹ This cannot be demonstrated here, but some aspects of the character of his philosophy may be noted. First, however, a word about his career, especially in France.

Duns Scotus was born in the village of Duns in Berwickshire, in the

¹ There are arguments for this claim in Alexander Broadie, A History of Scottish Philosophy (Edinburgh, 2009).
Scottish Borders, and aged about twelve was taken by two Franciscan friars down to Oxford where he began the study of philosophy and theology. In due course he taught at Oxford, but by 1302 he was in Paris lecturing on theology. In June of the following year he was exiled from France for siding with the Pope in an argument with the French monarch, Philip the Fair, regarding Philip’s wish to tax Church property. But by 1304 he was back in Paris where he resumed his lectures on theology. He remained there for a further three years before going to Cologne. The reason why he left Paris is not entirely clear but was probably related to the hostility he kindled through his teaching on the immaculate conception of Mary, Mother of Jesus. There is evidence that his departure from Paris was precipitate. He died in Cologne in the following year, 1308, and was buried there in the Franciscan Church.

Duns Scotus was the great philosopher of freedom of the Middle Ages. He held that the mind is a unity in the sense that though it has several faculties, such as intellect, will, memory and imagination, these different faculties are different forms that a person’s mind takes when he engages in a mental act, such as thinking, willing, remembering and so on. So the different faculties are not in reality different from each other; they are simply different ways in which the mind acts. Does that mean that when the intellect has thought up a plan of action the will must determine the implementation of the plan? Scotus says no, for he believes that we have free will, and that if the will must do what the intellect proposes, then the will is not free but necessitated. Being reasonable, we cannot help noting what our intellect proposes, but the will, as a free faculty, can always do otherwise. The point is not that had the situation been different, the will could have willed something else instead, but rather that in that very same situation it could have willed something else. Being reasonable, we in general no doubt will as the intellect dictates, but we can (and sometimes do) will something that is utterly crazy, and do so despite being presented with a perfectly reasonable proposal by our intellect.

This very strong libertarian doctrine emerges repeatedly in the contingent of Scottish thinkers who worked in Paris during the Pre-Reformation period and arguably was prominent in Scottish philosophical thinking long after. It was certainly a major feature of the Scottish common sense school of philosophy that was dominant in Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and given the circumstance that Scotus taught his doctrine of freedom in Paris it is perhaps especially appropriate that the dedicatee of the first

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Works of Thomas Reid, leader of the common sense school, was the French minister of education Victor Cousin.

St Andrews University, founded 1411–14, was linked in a variety of ways to the University of Paris. One is organisational—St Andrews was in many ways modelled on Paris. But, more importantly for us, significant Scottish thinkers associated with St Andrews were at both universities. The first of note was Lawrence of Lindores (1372–1437), Master of Arts (1393) and Bachelor of Theology (1403) at the University of Paris, where he also taught in the Faculty of Arts. He was also among the first teachers at St Andrews, where he lectured both in arts subjects and in theology, besides twice occupying the post of rector. Aside from his academic life, but closely related to it since he was a professional theologian, Lindores was also Scotland’s first inquisitor-general. In that capacity he was, shaming to relate, directly responsible for the burning of two men, one the English Wycliffist James Resby and the other the Hussite Pavel Kravar, whom Lindores judged guilty of heresy. Since St Andrews was founded expressly as a bulwark against heresy and ‘errors’, Lindores no doubt saw himself, qua inquisitor-general, as a faithful servant of the university’s values.

Perhaps of greater importance however was John Ireland (Johannes de Irlandia) (c.1440–95), possibly a native of St Andrews, and certainly a student there, though he left in 1459 without a degree. He immediately enrolled at the University of Paris from which he gained his MA in 1460. Thereafter he rose through the ranks at Paris, teaching arts subjects and then also theology, and twice holding the post of rector. In 1474 Louis XI of France prohibited the teaching of nominalist texts at Paris, and a deputation which included Ireland went to the king to argue for the withdrawal of the prohibition—without success. The ban was lifted in 1481. In the latter years of the seventies and the first two or three of the eighties Ireland wrote a great deal, mainly in the field of theology, and much of it now lost, though of his massive commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard books three and four survive. By late 1483

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5 The sole extant copy is in Aberdeen University Library, MS 264. The work has never been edited.
Ireland was back permanently in Scotland. Amongst his several positions were those of confessor to James III and to James IV and it was to the latter that Ireland dedicated his *Meroure of Wyssdome* (*Mirror of Wisdom*). This very large book, written in Scots, is in the ‘Advice to princes’ genre, and is the work for which he is now best known.

Underlying Ireland’s advice on good governance is the belief that human beings have free will, which he, as a moral theologian, would have understood in the context of the Church’s teaching that an act cannot be sinful unless freely willed. The teaching is motivated partly by the thought that sins are punishable and that we would not be punished by a just God for an act that we had no choice but to perform. Yet this prompts a question as to whether God could have so made us that, though free, we were by nature not free to sin.\(^6\) This was a question that Ireland answered in the negative, perhaps surprisingly since his answer seems to imply a rejection of the doctrine of divine omnipotence. For apparently there is at least one thing that God cannot do, namely create a being with free will whose nature prevents it sinning. Ireland was not explicit as to why he took this line but it is probable that he thought the alternative incoherent. Faced with a divine commandment our freedom is really no freedom at all if we are not free to say no. God can certainly prevent us from sinning but if he does then the principle of prevention is directly from God, not from the nature that he has given to us. If our very nature prevents us sinning then our freedom is not true freedom. Ireland’s concept of free will is remarkably similar to that of Duns Scotus, and in the circumstance it is of interest that Ireland cited Duns Scotus more often than he cited any other medieval thinker, and that Scotus is the only medieval thinker who is cited in all the extant writings of Ireland.

Ireland was active in Paris during a time of transition for the European universities, as humanistic values began to encroach on late-medieval modes of thinking. Shortly before Ireland left Paris to return to Scotland there arrived in Paris another Scot, James Liddell of Aberdeen, who graduated Master of Arts in Paris and immediately took up a teaching post, becoming examiner to the Scots students in 1486. Liddell is especially noteworthy because, while still a regent in arts at Paris, he became the first Scot to have a book published during his lifetime. The book, *Conceptuum et signorum* (*On concepts and signs*, Paris, 1495), is on the varieties of mental act, particularly those that find expression in linguistic acts, such as affirmations and denials.\(^7\) The subject was a common

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\(^{7}\) The sole extant copy is in the National Library of Scotland.
one among Scots in Paris, and in the generation after Liddell a number of them wrote extensively on the subject.

That next generation of Scots at Paris included a remarkable group of scholars. The dominant figure was John Mair (c.1467–1550), whose name appears in his lifetime, whether in print or in his own hand, as Mair, Maior and Major. Among the Scots were George Lokert (c.1485–1547), William Manderston (c.1485–1552), Robert Galbraith (c.1483–1544), and (more briefly in Paris) Hector Boece (c.1465–1536), all of whom returned to Scotland to take up major posts and thus in one form or another continued at home the work they had conducted in France. The first three of the four aforementioned scholars were members of a circle that formed around Mair in Paris. Three other Scots who were in the circle of John Mair in Paris were David Cranston (d.1512), Gilbert Crab (c.1482–1522) and William Cranston (c.1513–62). Of these only one, William Cranston, returned to Scotland where he became part of the new beginning that came with the encroachment of Renaissance Humanism into Scotland. David Cranston did not return to Scotland; he died in his early- to mid-thirties some weeks after receiving his doctorate in theology at Paris, and was buried in the chapel of the College of Montaigu, on the rue d’Écosse in Montmartre. Gilbert Crab took his master’s degree in Paris in 1503 and taught there for some years before taking up a position at Bordeaux where he died, a member of the Carmelite order.

John Mair, professor of theology at the University of Paris, principal of Glasgow University, and provost of St Salvator’s College, St Andrews University, was a central figure in the flowering of logic that took place in the first half of the sixteenth century. Born into a farming family in the village of Gleghornie, south east of Edinburgh, in all probability he attended a school in his village before going on to the grammar school at Haddington. Sometime thereafter, perhaps not immediately, he went up to university. So far as is known his first taste of university was at God’s House (to become known in 1505 as Christ’s College), Cambridge, where he spent one year c.1491.

Mair then transferred to Paris, to the College of St Barbe, receiving his master’s degree in 1494 and the following year incepted as regent in arts, at the same time beginning his studies in theology under the Flemish scholar Jan Standonck at the College of Montaigu, where Erasmus was one of his fellow students. Mair, with his colleague Noel Beda, took charge of the college in 1499 when Standonck, its principal, was banished from Paris. At about

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this time Mair also became attached to the College of Navarre, a wealthy and prestigious college which boasted among its fifteenth-century members Pierre d’Ailly, bishop of Cambray, and Jean Gerson (‘Doctor Christianissimus’), both men distinguished for their work on behalf of the idea that in certain circumstances a general council of the Church can overrule the Pope. This conciliarist position, extolling the authority of the Council as opposed to the authority of the Pope in certain defined circumstances, was a distinctive feature of the culture of the College of Navarre, and this point is of significance here for Mair also was a conciliarist. Questions, with a strong theological undertow, concerning the authority of the papacy in relation to a general council, and also in relation to the authority of civil institutions, must already at that early stage of his career have been exercising Mair, who in 1501 became bachelor in theology.

In 1506, while still at Navarre, Mair took his doctorate in theology, and began to teach theology at the College of Sorbonne, one of the great centres in Europe in that field—hence the fact that Henry VIII sought the Faculty’s opinion in connection with his prospective divorce from Catherine of Aragon. The Faculty membership, which consisted of doctors of theology of Paris, was a conservative body, as witness the fact that as late as August 1523, and therefore at a time when the humanist movement was well-established in the universities of western Europe, the Faculty passed judgment that translations of sacred texts from Greek into Latin, or from Latin into French, should not be tolerated. Mair himself was a conservative on doctrinal matters, even though on occasion he strongly criticised the behaviour of the Church. It should however be added that he was not wholly opposed to the encroachment of Renaissance Humanism. When the Italian scholar Girolamo Aleandro introduced the teaching of Greek to Paris Mair was one of his pupils. Aleandro tells us: ‘There are many Scottish scholars to be found in France who are earnest students in various of the sciences and some were my most faithful hearers – John Mair, the Scot, doctor of theology and David Cranston, my illustrious friends.’

Almost all the editions of virtually all of Mair’s many books were printed and published in Paris. He began publishing in 1499, with a logic text book, and in the course of his long career published well over forty books, covering logic, metaphysics, ethics, theology, biblical commentary and history, most of them appearing between 1499 and 1518 when he left Paris to take up the

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principalship of the University of Glasgow. His reputation, by then immense, was due to three things. First, there was the quality of his writings, many of which went into several editions, and were widely used as text books in France and beyond. Secondly, he knew how to inspire his students. Juan Gomez, writing to the Spanish king’s envoy in France, said: ‘I am following the theology course of John Mair with great interest as he is a deeply knowledgeable man whose virtue is as great as his faith.’ Thirdly, he was leader of a team of scholars, in most cases former pupils of his, the majority from Scotland or Spain, including the aforementioned Scots, David Cranston, George Lokert, Robert Galbraith, William Manderston and Gilbert Crab, and also the Spaniards Antonio Coronel (d. c.1521), Fernando de Enzinas (d. 1523), Gaspar Lax (1487-1560) and Juan de Celaya (c. 1490-1558).

At the end of this period in Paris Mair, as leader of a three-man team, published an edition of one of Duns Scotus’s chief works, the *Reportata Parisiensia*, a set of commentaries that Scotus had compiled, while teaching in Paris, on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Mair was in important ways very close to the philosophy of Scotus, and this publication was clearly a mark of his admiration for Scotus as well as a teaching aid for his students. It is noteworthy that throughout his career he referred to Scotus not only as ‘Scotus’ and *doctor subtilis* (‘the subtle doctor’—his honorific title), but also, and commonly, as *conterraneus*, my fellow-countryman. In his *History of Greater Britain* Mair wrote, with evident pride: ‘Near to [Richard Middleton] in date, only later, wrote John Duns, that subtle doctor, who was a Scottish Briton, for he was born at Duns, a village eight miles from England, and separated from my own home by seven or eight leagues only.’

Despite his administrative duties in Glasgow, Mair found time to write the book for which he is now best known, *Historia majoris Britanniae tam Angliae quam Scotiae* (*A History of Greater Britain as well England as Scotland*, which may also be translated *A History of Mair’s Britain*, though ‘Greater Britain’ is also to be understood as contrasted with ‘Lesser Britain’, that is, Brittany). It is probable that it was written with the intention (among others) of promoting the idea of a union of the two countries; and the dedicatee, James V, son of James IV and (as son of Margaret Tudor) grandson of Henry VII, was an appropriate symbol of the closeness of the relations between the two countries. The book, which is very large, was printed in Paris since there was no printing press

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10 See Dedication in Gaspar Lax, *De oppositionibus* (Paris, 1512).
in Scotland that could cope with such a work, and Mair himself interrupted his work in Glasgow to oversee the volume’s passage through the printing process.

In 1523 Mair transferred to St Andrews where for two years he was assessor to the dean of the arts faculty and in this capacity he served on a committee which revised along Parisian lines the St Andrews forms of examination. Thereafter he returned to Paris where he resumed his teaching career. Among the many who must have attended his lectures during this latter period were John Calvin, Ignatius Loyola, François Rabelais and George Buchanan. He was also active in the Faculty of Theology. However, he returned to Scotland in 1531, taking up in due course the provostship of St Salvator’s College, St Andrews, a post he retained until his death in 1550 at the age of about eighty three. He published no more works, so far as is known, during this long final period in Scotland. Almost all his many works were published during his Paris days, and most indeed appear to have arisen directly from his lectures there. The centrality of Paris for the life and work of John Mair is manifest and the benefit to Scotland of his Parisian experience, in terms of his teaching and administrative skills, is no less obvious.

Among Mair’s close colleagues in both Paris and St Andrews was George Lokert. Born in Ayr, on the south west coast of Scotland, to John Lokkart and Marion Multray, he studied arts at the College of Montaigu in Paris under David Cranston. He took his master’s degree in 1505 and in the same year gave his inaugural lecture as regent in arts. He then started to study theology, graduating bachelor of theology in 1514, and in that same year published his first book, *Scriptum in materia noticiarum* (*Writing on the subject of notions*), a ‘notion’ (*noticia*) being ‘a quality which immediately represents something or in some way to a cognitive power’. In seeing something one forms a concept of the visual appearance of the thing, in hearing something one forms a concept of the sound, and so on for the various sensory modalities. In thinking about numbers and geometric shapes one forms concepts of numbers and geometric shapes. These concepts were termed ‘notions’ by Lokert. Their status is that of mental acts; they are not the objects of mental acts, what the acts are directed to, but are instead the acts themselves, and these acts were described by Lokert as representing the objects with which one is in cognitive contact. The concept of a notion was a topic of widespread interest among philosophers of the time, but few subjected it to such extensive and close analysis.

Two years after the publication of his book on notions, Lokert brought out an important edition of writings on physics by Buridan, Thimon and Albert of Saxony, and thereafter a series of large volumes on technical questions in formal logic flowed from his pen. His intellectual achievements were noticed when in 1519 he was elected prior of the College of Sorbonne, a promotion that was followed a year later by the award of a doctorate in theology. But his thoughts were evidently turning towards Scotland. He returned to his native country in 1521 to take up a post as provost of the Collegiate Church of Crichton, in the village of Crichton some miles south of Edinburgh, and a year later was elected rector of St Andrews University, a post in which he deployed his skills to produce a grand revision of the examining procedures at the university, a revision that brought St Andrews quite closely into line with Parisian practices. Among those with whom he worked while in St Andrews was John Mair.

Around the start of 1525 Lokert returned to Paris, resumed his fellowship of the College of Sorbonne and his membership of the faculty of theology, and took up in addition the headship of the Scots College in Paris, an institution founded in 1325 by the bishop of Moray, who arranged for funds to be provided to enable scholars from the diocese of Moray to study in Paris. Meantime he became involved in an attempt, masterminded by Noel Beda, administrative head of the faculty of theology, to have certain of Erasmus’ works condemned as heretical. This put Lokert in a difficult position, since Erasmus had the support of François I, and Lokert no doubt felt his vulnerability as a foreign national criticising a man whom the king was trying to attract to the newly founded Royal College in Paris.

It may have been this consideration that led eventually to his return to the west coast of Scotland where he had his roots. For a brief period, 1533 to 1534, he was archdeacon of Teviotdale, and in March 1534 he was appointed dean of Glasgow, a post he held until his death. As dean he was required to be in Glasgow for six months each year and to preside over chapter meetings. He died on 22 June 1547. The Register of Decisions of the Sorbonne Community for 8 June 1549 records that ‘with the consent of all’ it was agreed that on the day after Quasimodo Sunday an obit was to be said for ‘our master Loquart’.13

Robert Galbraith (c.1483–1544) was, like Lokert, a Scottish member of the circle of John Mair. In 1505 Mair mentioned Galbraith as one of the

members of his circle who persuaded him, despite his suffering from bouts of fever and an overwhelming workload, to prepare his logic lectures for publication. Some five years later Galbraith published the only book he wrote that is now extant, a four-part work on propositional opposites, propositional conversions, hypotheticals and modal propositions called the *Quadrupertium*. On the title page he claims to have resolved almost all problems of dialectic. Another book of his, the *Liber Caubraith*, which was probably on his legal decisions, has vanished.

The *Quadrupertium*, which bears a dedication to the Scottish justice clerk James Henryson of Fordell, is one of the great logic works of the late-scholastic period. Galbraith did not, however, devote himself to logic. Instead he took up a post as professor of Roman Law at the College of Coqueret in the University of Paris, and it was to law that he dedicated the rest of his life. Galbraith was in addition a poet, with his name appearing in the list of poets in the poem 'Testament of the Papyngo’ by David Lindsay, a point that gives additional significance to the fact that Galbraith moved in an intellectual circle which included the poets Gavin Douglas and John Bellenden. Galbraith’s poetic interests are reflected in the fact that his *Quadrupertitum* contains a poem in praise of Galbraith written by James Foulis and dedicated to Henryson of Fordell.

Galbraith may have lived longer had he stayed with his *alma mater*; but he returned to Scotland, became a senator of the College of Justice in Edinburgh and, in 1528, advocate to Margaret Tudor. For four years from 1528 he was also treasurer of the Chapel Royal in Stirling (in which role he was John Mair’s successor). Galbraith was murdered on 27 January 1544 in the kirkyard of Grayfriar’s Church in Edinburgh. The murderer, John Carkettill, was fined, perhaps a rather mild punishment for a judge to mete out to a fellow judge’s killer.

No less close to Mair than were Lokert and Galbraith was William Manderston, who matriculated at Glasgow University in 1503, graduated three years later, and then studied in Paris under Mair, before becoming a colleague of his. He was elected professor at the College of St Barbe and then, in 1525, rector of the University of Paris. By this point Parisian publishers had brought out at least three works by him. The largest, an enormous book, is in effect a grand summary of the state of the art of logic in the year the book was printed, 1517. In that same year he also brought out an interesting book on moral philosophy, a work which bears close comparison with the doctoral thesis of his pupil Patrick Hamilton, proto-martyr of the Scottish
Reformation. Finally, he published in 1522 a short treatise on future contingent propositions, a topic that had held the attention of philosophers from the time that Aristotle had argued it was highly problematic whether such propositions could be said to be either true or false. Manderston’s period as rector of Paris was short-lived. A charge of plagiarism was levelled at him by the vigorously anti-Lutheran Dutch theologian Jerome de Hangest. It may be speculated that Hangest’s animosity had less to do with any real plagiarism than with some remarks Manderston made in his moral philosophy book on the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. Manderston’s position may not have been tough enough to satisfy Hangest. Be that as it may, Manderston left the University of Paris, took up a position at St Andrews and in due course became the university’s rector.

I should like to comment briefly on one more of the many Scots who were educated in France and who taught there before returning to Scotland to make a contribution to the country’s high culture. William Cranston (c.1513–62), a student at Paris, was then appointed regent in arts there, and finally rector of the University. He transferred to the University of St Andrews where he was Provost of St Salvator’s College from 1553 to c.1560. This friend of John Mair remained a Catholic after the Reformation in Scotland in 1560. His most prominent contribution to logic and philosophy is probably *Dialecticae Compendium* (*A Compendium of Logic*, 1540) which he dedicated to David Beaton, cardinal archbishop of St Andrews. In the book, which was only seven folios long, Cranston made a determined effort to discard his medieval heritage. At the start we are told, diagrammatically, that a term is a subject or predicate of a proposition and that it can ‘usefully’ be classified under one or another of only five headings. Cranston added that he omitted all other divisions and definitions because they are of little use to philosophers. This last is a truly extraordinary claim, especially coming from a man who had been brought up on the powerful logic which Mair and his Scottish colleagues at Paris had done so much to advance. With the *Compendium* Cranston returned to the *Organon*, the collection of logical works by Aristotle, though there are some non-Aristotelian elements in the book, such as the exposition of the so-called ‘hypothetical syllogism’. This is an inference in which at least one of the premises contains a complex proposition, that is, one composed of two propositions linked by ‘and’, ‘or’, or ‘if’. While in the first edition of the *Compendium* there is no reference to the later logicians who dealt with

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hypothetical syllogisms, in the second edition (published 1545) Cranston stated both that Aristotle did not discuss hypothetical syllogisms, and also that he, Cranston, was basing his remarks on Boethius.

In Cranston’s day logic was a compulsory part of the Arts curriculum, and if the compulsion was to remain then the subject had to prepare the students for the new age of rapid economic expansion in which more and more students were aiming to become merchants, secular lawyers and holders of civic office. William Cranston was in tune with the new mood. No one moved faster than he did to provide the new sort of logic book required in the changed climate.

Many Pre-Reformation Scots who went to France for their education did not return to Scotland, and here one might note Florentius Volusenus, Gilbert Crab and David Cranston. I have attended here primarily to some few of the many Scots who benefited greatly from the incomparable education available in the University of Paris, and who then returned to enrich those great institutions, the Church, the universities and the law, in their native land.

The fact that by the end of the fifteenth century Scotland had three universities, in St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen, naturally prompts a question regarding the immense attraction that the University of Paris had for Scots, an attraction demonstrated by the many who were there as students, and the many there as regents and professors. The answer is that the University of Paris was the greatest university in Europe, a centre to which large numbers of students flocked from all over Europe and at which they were taught at as high a level as was available anywhere. The teaching staff were assured the attention of students of the highest quality, they had on their doorstep many printing presses that could cope with books of whatever size, and they knew that their ideas would be transmitted far and wide via their books and via their students. The teachers also of course had colleagues of the highest calibre. These things are all blessings for dedicated and ambitious academics. The attractions of the University of Paris are therefore not far to seek. It should be added that the fact that so many Scots who went to Paris distinguished themselves as students and then as teachers is impressive testimony both to the schooling available in Scotland during those Pre-Reformation decades and also to the high value attached by Scots to education. That so many then returned to Scotland to enrich the culture that had nurtured them is no less impressive testimony to the intense loyalty that that same culture could engender in its beneficiaries.
The Scots College Paris, 1652–81:
A Centre for Scottish Networks
Thomas McInally

There has long been a tradition of Scots residing in Paris dating at least from the fourteenth century when an alliance with France against England became politically expedient. Dynastic marriages between the royal families of Scotland and France strengthened this association. Paris was also a destination for Scottish scholars. The records of the University of Paris contain the names of many Scots who enrolled as students prior to the Reformation.¹ During the short reign of Mary Queen of Scots the civil war in Scotland drove a number of the queen’s supporters to seek refuge in the Catholic countries of Europe. Paris became a principal centre for them. Archbishop James Beaton of Glasgow fled there in 1560. The queen appointed him ambassador to the court of her brother-in-law.² Another exile, Ninian Winzet, scholar and Catholic apologist, settled in Paris and was elected head of the German Nation at the university.³ Others, such as John Leslie, bishop of Ross, came to Paris to consult with Beaton and the other exiles regarding rescuing Mary from imprisonment in England. Their plotting extended to restoring her to her throne in Scotland and to her rightful place, as they saw it, as queen of England and Ireland. Acting in this way, Beaton, Leslie and the others were setting a pattern of treasonable activity for Scottish Catholics in Paris which was to endure for more than a century and a half.

The pattern consisted of refugees and exiles in the city organising support for Stuart claimants to the thrones of the three kingdoms and through military and political success hoping to achieve the return of Catholicism as the

¹ There are eighty-nine in total. Heinrich Dinifle and Émile Chatelain (eds), Auctarium Chartularii Universitatis Parisiensis, vol. 1: Liber Procuratorum Nationis Anglicanae (Alemanniae) ab anno 1333 usque ad annum 1406 and vol. 2: Liber Procuratorum Nationis Anglicanae (Alemanniae) ab anno 1406 usque ad annum 1466 (Paris, 1894, 1897).
³ The University of Paris was comprised of colleges but the student bodies were organised in four ‘nations’. The German Nation included all non-French students. Winzet’s position was one of prestige and some authority.
dominant religion in Scotland. The Scottish counter-reformation implied in these actions took many years to organise on a coherent basis but from the outset two factors were considered integral to its success. First, there needed to be colleges providing education for Scottish Catholics to maintain a supply of priests and an educated social élite and, secondly, there needed to be funds to support this work. Many of those involved in this counter-reformation were based in Paris although the principal centre was Rome. Due to the early influence of Archbishop Beaton and the strong pro-Scottish sentiment among the Parisians themselves, Paris came to play a major role in the work of the Catholic mission in Scotland. In this, developments in the third quarter of the seventeenth century were critical to the success achieved and it is to a recovery of this period of activity of Scots Catholics in Paris that this study is directed.

I. Origins of the Scots Colleges Abroad

Before the Scots College in Paris opened in 1603 there were two established colleges in the city which were used by Scots. David Innes, bishop of Moray, had established this earlier provision in 1326. Innes had studied at Paris and, after his elevation to the bishopric, he endowed a bursary to support four students at his old university. The income from a farm which he had purchased at Grisy-Suines, outside Paris, was used to fund his College of Grisy. Although the bishop’s intention was that the students should come only from his own diocese, by the sixteenth century the bursaries were open to any Scottish student.

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4 The long alliance between the two countries ensured favourable sentiment but the death of Mary Queen of Scots strongly reinforced it. The English ambassadors, Sir Edward Stafford and Sir William Wade, reported to Elizabeth I that when the news of Mary’s execution arrived in Paris neither of them dared venture onto the streets for fear of being attacked by the mob. They were also denied access to the court. Mary was sister in law to Henry III and to the Parisians she was a queen of France and of Scotland. J.B. Black, The Reign of Elizabeth 1558–1603 (2nd edition, Oxford, 1959), 388.

5 Here the term ‘his college’ does not imply the ownership of college buildings. The students appear to have been housed in other colleges or inns.

6 The bishop of Moray retained responsibility for selecting the bursars until the last pre-Reformation bishop, Patrick Hepburn, died in 1573. Afterwards the bishop of Paris took on this role. Violette Montague, ‘The Scottish College in Paris’, Scottish Historical Review, 4 (1907), 399–416. George Buchanan, the Scottish humanist and tutor to James VI is recorded as having been a student of the college in 1529. Scottish Catholic Archives (Edinburgh), Grisy College, 13/1 Avery, f.72.
The second college used by Scots was that run by the Society of Jesus. In 1550, the Jesuits opened their first seminary in Paris at the hôtel of Guillaume de Prat, bishop of Claremont. When the first Scottish novitiates arrived in 1563, the College of Claremont, as it became known, was still operating as a private institution.\(^7\) Public classes started in 1564 in the face of vehement opposition from both the Sorbonne and the Parlement de Paris. The hostility was based on the perception that the Jesuits were Spanish in political loyalty and therefore suspect in French eyes. Later in the 1580s, perhaps in an attempt to mollify the Parisian authorities, the Society appointed a Scot, John Tyrie, as rector of their college. French sympathy for Mary Queen of Scots at that time was extended to Scottish Catholic exiles such as Tyrie. However, this gesture of appeasement by the Jesuits was unsuccessful. The Sorbonne refused to incorporate Claremont College into the University of Paris and, following the assassination attempt on Henri IV in 1595, the college was closed, its librarian hanged for treason and the Society expelled from the city. Scottish involvement with the Society continued and grew but for almost twenty-five years there was no Jesuit presence in Paris.

By the terms of the Council of Trent (1545–63) those wishing to be ordained as Catholic priests had to be educated in seminaries. Special provision was made for students from northern countries such as Scotland where the establishment of a Catholic seminary was impossible. In 1573 Pope Gregory XIII opened the first such college for the use of Germans in Rome under Jesuit control. Mary Queen of Scots, from her imprisonment in England, in 1575 sent her ambassador, John Leslie, to Rome to negotiate a similar college for Scots. The queen and the pope provided the funds for a college and under a Scottish Jesuit rector, William Crichton, one was set up in Paris. Yet before any students were enrolled, it was deemed politically expedient to relocate it to Pont-à-Mousson in Lorraine as part of that town’s Jesuit university. The queen also provided additional bursaries for the College of Grisy to ensure that Scots continued to be educated in Paris. However, the funding ended on the queen’s death and the college at Pont-à-Mousson closed. Immediately the Scots began fund raising to resurrect the college. Crichton made use of all of the contacts he had gained while acting on the pope’s behalf in negotiations between Spain, France and Scotland for the

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\(^7\) The earliest recorded Scottish novitiates were Robert Abercromby and James Gordon of Huntly who both joined in 1563. Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), alphabetical card catalogue of members of the Society of Jesus.
reinstatement of Mary to achieve this. As well as receiving annuities from the king of Spain and Archduke Albert, the Hapsburg regent in the Spanish Netherlands, he obtained substantial contributions from others including Hippolytus Curle, a Jesuit who was nephew to one of Mary’s private secretaries during her imprisonment in England, and Colonel William Semple, a Scot in the service of Philip II of Spain. Using these resources, he was able to reopen the queen’s college in Douai in the Spanish Netherlands in 1593. Others also used his tactic of soliciting support from a wide range of contacts to good effect in the following century. Nor did Douai remain the only Scots College for long. John Leslie and another Scottish exile, William Chisholm, bishop of Vaison, were successful in petitioning Pope Clement VIII to open a Scots College in Rome as part of the jubilee celebrations of 1600.

By the time the Roman college opened, Archbishop Beaton in Paris was nearing the end of his life. He wished to leave his fortune to help establish a Scots College there. In 1602 he purchased a house in rue des Amandiers, invited the Grisy bursars to take up residence and, when he died the following year, left the house and remainder of his estate to establish a new Scots College. Since the Jesuits, who by reputation were the most competent educators in Europe, were still banned from the city, Beaton arranged for secular priests to staff the college. William Lumsden, a former Grisy scholar, was appointed rector and the college was put under the supervision of the abbot of the Carthusian monastery of Vauvert. From its foundation the Scots College in Paris was controlled by secular clergy with no involvement from the Society of Jesus – a position that its rectors guarded jealously for over a century. The college was successful in attracting students who on completion of their studies returned to Scotland. However, it failed in one important respect. Only a minority of the students who became priests were ordained at the college. Some transferred to the Scots College in Rome but most joined regular orders – mainly the Jesuits and Benedictines. In either case, few returned to Scotland as missionaries; they instead sought benefices in continental Europe, particularly France. Over time, Scots from the colleges obtained benefices allowing them not only to minister to a growing Scottish diaspora but also to form networks of friends and contacts throughout Europe. By the 1640s these networks with strong

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8 Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV), Fondo Carpegna, 55 F, 74V – 75R.
9 Also Hippolytus’ aunt Lady Curle was one of Mary’s ladies-in-waiting at the time of the queen’s execution. There was, therefore, a strong family commitment to the queen and reason to contribute generously to the survival of her college.
connections to the Scots College in Paris were proving valuable in many ways, particularly with regard to British and wider European politics.

Before discussing this, however, one remaining development of the Scots Colleges abroad needs mentioning. Colonel William Semple, the benefactor of the college in Douai, endowed a Scots College in Madrid in 1627. Its first rector was the colonel’s nephew, Hugh Semple, a Jesuit, and so like the colleges in Rome and Douai Jesuits came to control its administration. When the colonel died in 1633, he left his estate to his new foundation but, despite this, it continually struggled through lack of funds. During its 110-year history in Madrid it closed to Scottish students on two occasions, each lasting between ten and twenty years, and it was even appropriated by Spanish Jesuits before reopening to Scots in Valladolid in 1770. During the first half century of its existence, however, the college functioned like its counterpart in Paris although on a smaller scale, but again like Paris it produced very few priests for the mission. Nevertheless, its alumni were active in political and military matters in Spain and throughout Europe.

II. Scots Exiles and Intelligence Gathering in Paris

The community of Scottish exiles based in Paris valued news from home and trusted travellers from Scotland would always receive a welcome. This welcome extended to Scottish travellers from other parts of Europe. In time, the city became a centre used by networks of Scottish Catholics to gain intelligence on matters of importance to their aims of re-establishing Catholicism in Scotland. An early example of just such a network was that established around James Beaton. As ambassador for Mary Queen of Scots, the archbishop sent emissaries to Scotland, Rome and the Habsburg lands to negotiate on behalf of the queen. Beaton provided Mary with information on his dealings with the pope, the emperor and the king of Spain as well as her brothers-in-law, Charles IX and Henry III.

Later Scots who entered the service of European powers used their network of contacts through Paris to keep their employers briefed on matters in Scotland and the rest of Britain. One such was John Dalyell. In the 1630s and 1640s Dalyell was the treasurer of the Scots College in Madrid. The college

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10 Students seeking admission to the Scots College in Paris were either accompanied from Scotland by members of the exile community or carried references and letters of recommendation. Visitors were also closely vetted.
archives show that under his Spanish name of Juan de Ayola he frequently travelled to Paris. The purpose of these trips is not recorded but his papers include cipher codes in his handwriting which suggest that he was continuing the intelligencer work of his old friend and patron, Colonel Semple, who had acted as agent in Scottish affairs for three Spanish monarchs. Dalyell would have found his Scottish contacts in the Claremont and Scots Colleges extremely useful in providing information on Britain to the Spanish court.

It is clear from the records of the Scots Colleges that the community of Scots in Paris did not remain static and renewed itself continuously with new students, while those who had completed their studies returned home to Scotland. This was particularly so in the 1620s when large numbers of students from Scotland came to France and the Spanish Netherlands. However, the greatest expansion of the expatriate Scottish community in the city came in the 1640s when royalist refugees from each of the three British kingdoms arrived. The most prominent of these were Queen Henrietta Maria and her three sons. She established her court-in-exile with many of her husband’s supporters. The end of the war and the execution of the king added to the number of exiles in France. Confessional divisions seem to have been forgotten at this time in view of their common royalist sentiments and the shared hardship of exile. Giving mutual support and sharing information became common among many of the exiles in Paris.

A Scot, Patrick Conn, used this spirit of cooperation to his advantage. Conn was a nephew of George Conn, the papal envoy to the court of Queen Henrietta Maria in England in the 1630s. In 1648 Patrick Conn was engaged by Cardinal Francis Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, his uncle’s old employer, to buy books for his library in Rome. Conn had been educated at

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11 Archives of the Royal Scots College Madrid, Box 11 contains 196 items of correspondence from Dalyell to a number of contacts in Spain and abroad. They mainly cover finances and legal matters. Box 25/7 contains the key to the cipher he used to encrypt his correspondence.

12 Her youngest son, Henry, duke of Gloucester, was imprisoned in London by Cromwell and did not join his mother in Paris until 1652.

13 Her personal confessor was Robert Philip, a Scottish Oratorian friar, who had studied at the Scots College in Rome. Philip had held this position in England and, suspected of arranging financial support for the king from the pope, had been imprisoned by parliament.

14 Many Protestant supporters, however, left Paris with Charles II when, as a condition of the Treaty of Westminster 1654, he was excluded from French territory. The treaty ended the First Anglo-Dutch War and under its terms the United Provinces, Cromwell's Commonwealth and France made common cause against the Spanish Netherlands.
the Scots Colleges in Douai, Paris and Rome and the cardinal benefited from his familiarity with the city when he stationed Conn in Paris. In addition to adding to the cardinal’s library Conn was required to gather intelligence on affairs in Britain. The cardinal shared this information with the other members of the Curia.15 By using his contacts within the Scots College and the court of Henrietta Maria, Conn was able to engage with a large number of royalist refugees and pass on first hand accounts of matters such as the trial and execution of Charles I. Later he was able also to report on parliamentary infighting, the opposition to Cromwell and the disintegration of the Commonwealth after the protector’s death. This information came from a variety of sources within the parliament and the officer corps of the parliamentary army. These contacts were particularly important in keeping Conn and consequently the authorities in Rome abreast of the developing support for the restoration of Charles II. Conn was extremely adept at using his network of informants and, in this, his association with the Scots College in Paris was important. These contacts became even more effective for Conn’s purposes when the management of the Scots College in Paris passed to an extremely capable new rector.

III. Support for the Mission in Scotland and the New College

Robert Barclay was born around 1612, the son of David Barclay of Mathers and Elizabeth Livingston. The family was Calvinist but after graduating from the University of Aberdeen in 1633, Robert converted to Catholicism and went to Paris to study at the Scots College there. His arrival coincided with a period of heightened expectation among Catholics. Under the influence of his wife, Charles I had lessened the application of the penal laws in his kingdoms and as a result not only was Catholicism practiced more openly in Britain but there was a marked increase in the number of students attending seminaries abroad.16 The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), established in Rome in 1622 to coordinate missionary activity throughout the world, started to view Scotland as a suitable target for missionary work. The papacy had declared Scotland a mission in its own right in 1629 and made

15 P. Conn to Cardinal Francesco Barbarini, 11 February 1649, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Carta Diplomatici, Barb. Lat. 8666 ff. 98 – 9. Conn also corresponded with others in Rome including Cardinal Antonio Barberini, another nephew of Urban VIII, and William Leslie of Propaganda Fide.

financial support available for secular priests engaged in missionary work.\textsuperscript{17} This opportunity was not availed of immediately, as it needed the student intakes of the 1620s and 1630s to complete their studies and be ordained before there was any serious attempt at coordinated missionary work.

Barclay was a member of a group of idealistic Scottish priests who met in Paris in the late 1640s to prepare plans for expanding missionary activity. \textit{Propaganda Fide} appointed William Ballantine and John Walker as missionaries with funding to allow them to work in Scotland. William Leslie, the representative of the Scottish mission in Rome, initially attached himself to the household of Cardinal Charles Barberini but he later he became the first archivist of \textit{Propaganda Fide}. He held this important office for over forty years. Robert Barclay became the mission’s agent in Paris responsible among other things for the safe onward transmission of the payments from the Roman authorities to the missionaries in Scotland. Barclay’s deed of appointment in 1650 was witnessed by two fellow Scots who were resident in the capital, George Leith, principal of the Scots College, and Thomas Chambers, almoner to Cardinal Mazarin. This zealous cadre of Scottish priests soon attracted others and for the first time since the Reformation an integrated mission of secular priests (as opposed to the Jesuit and Franciscan missions) operated in Scotland with William Ballantine as their prefect.

Shortly after this initiative was started Leith resigned as principal of the Scots College and Barclay was appointed his successor around 1652. Having such a strong commitment to furthering missionary efforts, it was predictable that Barclay would dedicate the resources of the Scots College to providing as much support to the project as possible. Training missionary priests was the priority but a number of obstacles stood in the way. First, the college was too small to accommodate a significant expansion in numbers. Secondly, secular priests who returned from the mission had no means of supporting themselves. They were exiles from their homeland and forbidden to return under pain of death. A number of them had been broken in health due to imprisonment and harsh treatment in Scotland. Often their only recourse was to join one of the orders of regulars to obtain shelter and support.\textsuperscript{18} Secular priests who worked as missionaries needed reassurance that they would not

\begin{itemize}
\item[17] Prior to this only Jesuit missionaries operated in Scotland. By 1600, any pre-Reformation secular priests had converted to Calvinism, left the country or died. Irish Franciscan missionaries worked in the west of Scotland in the 1630s and 1640s.
\item[18] The \textit{Schottenklaster}, Scots Benedictine monasteries in southern Germany, accepted the greatest number.
\end{itemize}
be abandoned in sickness and old age. Thirdly, students who were ordained needed to commit themselves to working in Scotland rather than seeking benefices elsewhere in Europe. Barclay planned a course of action to address all of these problems. The plan included providing more accommodation, not only to house a greater number of students but also the missionary priests who were in need of rest and care. He also insisted that, within six months of their admission to the college, all students would sign the Mission Oath.\textsuperscript{19} Barclay decided on one further change. No Scottish priests other than the retired missionaries and college staff were to be given accommodation in the college. By this means, he hoped to discourage avoidance of missionary work.

The heightened activity of the secular missionaries caused resentment among the Jesuits. Theirs had been the only mission in much of Scotland for over fifty years and they felt that they should have control of all missionary activity.\textsuperscript{20} This view brought them into conflict with Propaganda Fide. They also believed that they should have responsibility for the running of all seminaries and Robert Barclay came under direct pressure to concede the management of the Paris College to the Scots Jesuits based in Claremont College.\textsuperscript{21} James Macbreck was the main Jesuit protagonist in this attempt to wrest control from the secular clergy. He had been a student at the Scots College in Douai before entering the Society. Most of his adult life had been spent on the mission in Scotland, based at the home of Lord Winton in East Lothian. While there, he was made Superior of the Jesuit mission before becoming a chaplain in the army of Montrose during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Afterwards he suffered imprisonment under Cromwell before his exile. Subsequently, he took up residence at Claremont College and was appointed Preceptor of the Jesuit mission in Scotland. Such a formidable opponent as Macbreck might have been able to succeed in his claims against the seculars if Barclay had not had a strong personality and powerful friends. The Gallicanism of the Church in France meant continued hostility to the Jesuits. Their inability to gain acceptance for Claremont College in the University of Paris also

\textsuperscript{19} The Mission Oath was a written commitment to work on the mission in Scotland for at least three years following ordination. This requirement had been in place for more than twenty years but had been largely ignored.

\textsuperscript{20} The Irish Franciscans had had to withdraw from the western highlands and islands in the late 1640s due to the practical problems caused for them by the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

\textsuperscript{21} The Jesuits had been allowed to return to Paris and reopen their college in 1620 but the Sorbonne continued to refuse it recognition by the university.
strengthened Barclay’s hand. His most powerful allies were, however, in Rome. Propaganda Fide’s worldwide role required submission from the Jesuits, which they were not inclined to concede. The representative of the Scottish secular mission to Propaganda Fide was William Leslie, a member of the household of the late pope’s nephew Cardinal Charles Barberini and close friend of Robert Barclay. Barclay was also good friends with Patrick Conn, who, as mentioned above, worked for Cardinal Francis Barberini. Macbrecq would have needed a strong case to overcome such opposition but his arguments were weak and the attempt failed, though not before considerable ill feeling had been generated between the two men – Barclay even going so far as to prohibit his students from associating with their fellow countrymen at Claremont College.

Barclay’s tussle with the Jesuits did not divert him from his plan of providing maximum support for the mission. The college Barclay had taken over from George Leith had a lacklustre record in producing priests, but it had prospered materially. The contributions of benefactors had included gifts of property and Barclay was able to house additional students as well as rent out unused property to increase the college income. He maximised income by ensuring that the students paid full fees. He also continued the practice of housing a number of convictors and, in addition, he negotiated payment from Propaganda Fide for accommodating retired missionaries. He was assiduous in cultivating a network of prominent Scots in the city and soliciting contributions from them. Among the benefactors was Patrick Conn, who stayed in the college from time to time, and Thomas Chambers who, as well as being almoner to Mazarin, was an old boy of the college. There were also a number of benefactors from the refugee Scottish community such as Colonel Sir Patrick Menteith of Salmonet and Margaret Maitland of Lethington and even an English exile, Alice Banks of Borlace. From this, it would appear that Barclay excelled as a fundraiser. In addition to improving the college’s income, he showed himself to be extremely prudent in managing expenses.

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22 Number 9 rue des Postes had been bequeathed by George Galloway, a canon of St Quentin’s, in 1636. At least one and possibly two other properties were owned prior to 1652 in addition to Archbishop Beaton’s house in rue des Amandiers and the farm at Grisy-Suines.

23 Archivio Storico Congregazione per l’Evangelizzazione dei Popoli (hereafter ASCEP), Collegii Varii 50, Fol. 568, ref. no. 1. Convictors were lodgers who paid generously for their lodgings.

24 In the necrology of the college there are at least nine listed as having contributed to the college during Barclay’s principalship. Brian M. Halloran, The Scots College Paris 1603–1792 (Edinburgh, 2003), 48.
Contemporary accounts of Barclay give the impression that he was careful with money to the point of being parsimonious. This was not personal meanness, however, since he contributed to the college from his own resources. The financial reserves that Barclay built up enabled him to buy property in Paris so that during his principalship the college owned six houses and a farm.

Barclay’s fiscal skill was not restricted to raising and investing money. One of his duties as the agent of the Scottish mission in Paris was to ensure the safe transmission of funds from Propaganda Fide to the missionaries in Scotland. This was difficult to achieve and he appears to have relied on the network of contacts built up by Patrick Conn. As well as gathering intelligence, Conn had developed a courier system to send messages and transport money to and from Paris, London and Rome, disguised by the purchase and transfer of books for the cardinal’s library. As an example he mentioned in a letter to his employer how his couriers travelled by canal from as far north as Lille to the Mediterranean coast and from there by sea to Italy, the couriers being paid on arrival in Rome. When he was temporarily recalled to Rome in 1654 Conn delegated his duties in the cardinal’s service to James Mowat, a Scots banker resident in Paris.25

As well as being financially competent, Barclay was also politically astute. He maintained close links with the authorities in Rome but he also kept well informed on the developing situation in Britain. His association with Patrick Conn and the exile community in Paris would have ensured this but he also had an important family contact. Prior to Robert coming to Paris his elder brother David had joined the army of Gustavus Adolphus, fought for the Protestant cause in the Thirty Years War and risen to the rank of colonel. At the outbreak of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms he had returned to fight on the royalist side. At the end of the war he was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, where he became a Quaker. After his release, he acted as one of the thirty Scottish representatives to the Cromwellian parliaments of 1554 and 1556. He appears to have remained in contact with Robert for much of this time, visiting him in Paris in 1559 shortly before the Restoration.26

26 Halloran, The Scots College Paris, 41 – 2. David would have been able to warn his brother of Cromwellian agents operating in Europe. Robert refused entry to one such agent, Alexander Gordon, in 1657. Records of the Scots College at Douai, Rome, Madrid, Valladolid and Ratisbon (Aberdeen, 1906), 116. The brothers illustrate the degree to which many families in Scotland were willing to cooperate through familial and royalist ties while maintaining confessional
The possibility of improvement in the conditions for Catholics in Scotland which the Restoration seemed to usher in was probably the driving force behind Barclay’s next major step in supporting the mission in Scotland. In 1662, he purchased a piece of land in rue des Fosse St Victor (now rue Cardinal Lemoine) at a cost of 27,000 livres and built a large new college on it. It was opened in 1665 and in 1672 an additional wing and a chapel were added. The building was four stories high, in the form of a quadrangle with a central courtyard containing a garden which, in keeping with Barclay’s financial prudence, also served as a poultry yard. On the first floor were two classrooms, a library, the refectory as well as the vaulted chapel.\(^\text{27}\) The basement accommodated the kitchen, laundry and servants’ quarters. The principal and college staff had their lodgings on the second floor while the students resided on the top floor of the college.\(^\text{28}\) When this substantial building was completed, Barclay was able to bring all the students and retired priests under one roof. It also allowed him to increase student numbers considerably.\(^\text{29}\)

Even allowing for this increase, the college had more space than was needed and Barclay took on the extra role of providing training for all ordained priests about to go on the Scottish mission.\(^\text{30}\) The training lasted for one or two years and consisted of giving practical advice in working on such a difficult mission. Again, Propaganda Fide provided funds for this. In the course of their training all Scottish missionaries, no matter where they had been educated and ordained, became part of the network of contacts centred on the Scots College in Paris. The concentration of so many Scots on this site meant that the new college building became an even more important centre for Scots in Paris. Visitors from Scotland and Scots from elsewhere in Europe made contact with the college upon arrival in Paris. However, Barclay held to his earlier decision to refuse college accommodation to visiting priests and limit the time that other guests would be welcome. As a result, visiting Scots rented apartments in the street adjacent to the college; hence this became known as rue d’Écosse, the name by which it is still known.\(^\text{31}\)

\(^\text{27}\) The students took most of their classes at the nearby College of Navarre, part of the University of Paris. Two classrooms were, therefore, adequate for their needs.


\(^\text{29}\) In the period of Barclay’s principalship enrolments to the colleges increased by 40 percent (from 73 in the 1660s to 102 in the 1680s). McInally, *Alumni of the Scots Colleges*, 75–7.

\(^\text{30}\) ASCEP, Collegii Varii 50, Fol. 568, ref. no. 2.

\(^\text{31}\) The college authorities later bought property in this street to rent out to fellow Scots.
An outcome of these developments was to extend considerably the scope of the networks of Scots centred on the college. Examination of the college records confirms this, and it is exemplified by the cases of Charles Whyteford and Thomas Fleming. Whyteford entered the college as a student in 1675. He was the son of Colonel Walter Whyteford and brother of Augustine who had been a student in the old college in 1658. Both Walter and Augustine were officers serving in the Imperial Russian army. Charles later became principal of the Scots College in Paris and through these close family ties would have been able to keep in contact with the many Scots serving in Russia. Thomas Fleming left the college in 1668 and became a Benedictine monk at the *Schottenkloster* in Regensburg. As abbot of the monastery for over forty years, he revitalised the Scots Benedictines in Germany, gaining control of their outposts in Würzburg and Erfurt as well as Regensburg. In Erfurt, he was able to have two chairs of philosophy endowed at the city’s university that were reserved specifically for Scots Benedictines. He built up close relationships with the duke of Bavaria and the Imperial Court in Vienna and used his influence to advance Scottish interests. His work was greatly enhanced by the support he received from James Leslie, count of the Holy Roman Empire. General Leslie became a significant benefactor of the Scots monastery in Regensburg during his lifetime and left a legacy on his death. This enabled the Benedictines to support the mission in Scotland. When Thomas Nicholson became Vicar Apostolic in Scotland (see below) Fleming was able to provide him with eight Benedictine priests for his mission. In enhancing Scottish interests in the German lands and Habsburg Empire Fleming was working to a pattern inspired by Barclay to further the aims of Catholics in Scotland.

**IV. Barclay’s Legacy**

Barclay built on networks of Scottish and Catholic contacts to support and strengthen his college. His principal success was to bequeath an enlarged college on a sound financial footing to his successors in support of missionary work in Scotland. The consequences of this success were impressive. Working

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32 The duke of Bavaria supported his submission to the pope to have the monastery in Regensburg designated as a seminary, which significantly enhanced the Scottish presence in Regensburg.

33 General Leslie had been ennobled and granted large estates in recognition of his services in extending imperial lands into Ottoman territory in Hungary and Croatia.
together, Barclay and Ballantine, the prefect of the secular mission, increased considerably the number of missionaries available. As well as increases in the number of secular priests they persuaded a group of Scots Dominicans led by Thomas Primrose to join Ballantine. The Dominicans were particularly valuable since they were Gaelic speakers and could work in remote areas undisturbed by the authorities in Edinburgh. Ballantine died in 1661 and his replacement as prefect, Alexander Winster, judged the circumstances to be sufficiently improved to justify the appointment of a bishop to the Scottish mission. With the support of Barclay in Paris and William Leslie in Rome Winster made a formal application to Propaganda Fide. In order to appraise this request Propaganda Fide commissioned a survey on the state of Catholicism in Scotland. Its findings, which were delivered in 1680, showed that there were twenty-five missionaries in Scotland of whom twenty-two were secular priests. More were needed. Nevertheless, the report demonstrated that all Catholic communities had access to a priest. The initiative of the young Scottish priests of thirty years earlier had been remarkably successful. Propaganda Fide acted on Winster’s request in 1695, appointing Thomas Nicholson as Scotland’s first Vicar Apostolic. Nicholson was able to make good use of the network of support in Paris and the supply of new priests that Barclay’s efforts had encouraged.

Robert Barclay did not live to see this. When he died in 1681 the expectations of Scottish Catholics were again rising with the hope of the future James VII and II, a Catholic, succeeding his brother, Charles II. Barclay may have believed that his hard work had placed the Scottish Catholic community in a strong position to take advantage of this change in fortune but he had also inadvertently prepared the ground for two major problems which in different ways undid much of the missionary effort. When James went into exile in France at St Germain-en-Laye he quickly recognised the potential help that the various British colleges could provide his cause through their networks of international contacts. This was particularly true of the Scots College in

34 They extended the area in the Western Highlands and Islands covered by a small group of Irish Franciscans.

35 The delay in the appointment was due in large part to the disruption to missionary effort by James VII/II’s loss of his thrones. Nicholson was a convert to Catholicism who had attended the Scots College in Paris and on ordination had returned to Scotland as a missionary. Like many of his fellow priests, he was arrested in 1689 in King William’s repression of Jacobite sympathisers. Nicholson was released when his younger brother, Sir George, a Lord of Session, stood bail for him – an example of family loyalty being stronger than any confessional differences.
Paris where support for the Stuarts reinforced confessional loyalties. James capitalised on this. He appointed Barclay’s successor, Lewis Innes, to his inner cabinet and despite his straitened circumstances became a college benefactor, promising even greater largesse on return to England. James benefited in two ways. First, students and alumni enrolled in his armies, with some even breaking off their studies to join his ill-fated expedition to Ireland. James was also able to use the college networks to communicate securely with almost all parts of Europe. This included access to courts such as the Habsburgs where he was viewed as a client of Louis XIV and, therefore, not supported. The outcome for the college in Paris was that during the period that James and his son held court in France more of its alumni served the Stuarts in military or diplomatic roles than were ordained. Momentum on the Scottish mission was lost and not regained until shortly before the Jansenist controversy overwhelmed the college.

By placing the new college in the Latin Quarter, Barclay inadvertently had made the Scots close neighbours to the principal supporters of Jansenism. It was surrounded by the Sorbonne, the Convent of Port Royale, the Church of St Jacques du Haut Pas and the Church of St Medard – all centres of this religious movement which was the object of papal criticism. During Barclay’s principalship students and staff were noted antagonists of the Jansenists but shortly after Barclay’s death Innes expressed concern about the movement’s influence in the college. The problem grew and forty years later, under Charles Whyteford’s principalship, it erupted into a full blown scandal. Antipathy had grown between the students of the Paris college and those of the other Scots Colleges. These were students who, after ordination, had come to Paris to undergo training in preparation for work on the mission. Their

36 Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (Great Britain), *Calendar of the Stuart Papers Belonging to His Majesty the King, Preserved at Windsor Castle*, vol. 1 (London, 1902), 124, 130.
38 ‘Memoires de Jacques Second, Roy de la Grande Bretagne, de Glorieuse Memoire’, British Library, Portland Papers, MS. 70522, ff. 15–29. James understood the strength of the colleges in this regard and advised his son that when he regained his father’s thrones he should close all of the Irish colleges abroad since they represented bases for treasonable activity should Irish loyalties transfer to a foreign power.
39 Cornelius Jansen had argued against some of the teachings of the Jesuits and much of the subsequent discord was based on the mutual hostility of the Jesuits and Jansenists. Succeeding popes took the side of the Jesuits and issued a series of bulls (especially *Unigenitus*, 1715) which were critical of Jansenism.
animosity emanated from their dislike of Jansenism, but – because Gaelic-speaking students preferred the College in Rome – there was also an element of Highlander versus Lowlander antagonism. The Highland Vicariate formally complained to Rome regarding Jansenism at the Paris college and in 1736, after a papal investigation, a number of the students and all of the college staff were dismissed. This action and its consequences were devastating to both the college in Paris and the mission. The college continued to function but, for the next forty years, it had few students and even fewer ordinations, an outcome which would have appalled Barclay.

In less than a quarter of a century after Robert Barclay’s death the Scots College in Paris had diminished in significance as the centre of Scottish networks in Europe. It remained part of the wider Scottish Catholic network, but Rome, as well as Regensburg and Vienna, had taken its place as centres where exiled Scots Catholics provided each other with support. One might consider Barclay’s work as wasted. To do so would, however, be to ignore the extent to which Scottish Catholics continued to profit from the networks he had helped create. Other leaders such as Fleming in Regensburg and Leslie in Rome were equally capable of maintaining these networks.

*University of Aberdeen*
In the summer of 1787 James St John, an Irish Protestant traveller, stopped off at the Irish Colleges in Paris. While he noticed the poor physical condition of the older college in the city, the Collège des Lombards, he commented that the ordained priests who formed the student body were ‘in a far more respectable light than they were in Paris half a century ago’. He was impressed by the new Collège des Irlandais, which had opened just over a decade earlier: ‘The house occupied by the Irish scholars, called the Irish Seminary or Community, and which was built by Abbé O’Kelly, is neat and convenient, and perhaps more so than any of the colleges in Paris’ and he praised the academic abilities and achievements of the younger unordained students who resided there. St John also offered criticism, writing of the Collège des Lombards: ‘it is in a very wretched a ruinous state, and the streets and houses about it are old and tattered.’ He disapproved of dictation of notes, corporal punishment, the ‘very spare diet’, the rigid daily timetable, the practice of retreats and the promotion of the Irish language. Moreover, he regretted that Irish Catholics were forced to go to France to be educated and he suggested that they should be educated in Ireland, ideally alongside Irish Protestants, to alleviate ‘the folly and absurdity of hating one another on account of religion’. St John’s extended commentary on the Irish Colleges, published on the eve of the French Revolution, was a sign of changing attitudes among liberal Irish Protestants to the higher education of their Catholic neighbours. He was clearly well informed and while his criticisms reflected something of his own cultural conditioning, he also drew on standard Enlightenment critiques of higher education. In this sense his comments reflected both the importance and the vulnerability of the Irish Colleges in Paris in the 1780s.
In 1789 the two Irish Colleges in Paris accommodated around 180 students, more than one third of the total number of students at continental Irish Colleges.\(^6\) The recently constructed building was a fitting testimony to the financial and ecclesiastical success of the Irish migrant community in Paris. Yet the French Revolution would have a profound impact on the educational structures of Irish Catholicism and this has ensured the attention of historians, notably Mary O’Riordan and Liam Swords. The basic narrative thread is therefore well established. Initially, the revolution posed little threat to the colleges, though there were signs even during the moderate early phase that problems were likely to emerge. The fissures opened by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and the gradual assault on university and religious structures, especially from 1791, impacted much more strongly on the colleges, whose administrators fought an impressive battle for survival until 1793 when both colleges were confiscated and closed and the recently constructed Collège des Irlandais was transformed into a prison. Yet this was not the end of the story. The prisoners were released in 1794 and both colleges were restored to Irish ownership in 1795, though over the next three decades a long and complex struggle ensued for their control and the revenues that pertained to them.\(^7\)

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Building on the work of earlier historians, the present article offers a reassessment of the impact of the revolution on the Irish Colleges. First, it emphasises that despite appearances to the contrary, the colleges were in difficulty before the outbreak of the revolution. Even James St John was not entirely oblivious to their financial problems, as his comments on the older Collège des Lombards, noted above, suggest. Second, it examines the adaptability of the Irish College authorities as they negotiated the problems thrown up by the revolution in the early 1790s. Binarist approaches have tended to assume that historical actors were either ‘for’ or ‘against’ the revolution. In fact, as the history of the Irish Colleges clearly demonstrates, the reality was far more convoluted as allegiances shifted in the course of the 1790s. Only the increasingly radical nature of events in France from 1792 threatened the existence of the colleges. Indeed, it was the mid-1790s rapprochement of the Irish bishops and the British government, a by-product of the revolution, which ensured that the Irish Colleges faced an uphill struggle for survival after they emerged from the Terror. Finally, this article argues that the impact of the revolution must be assessed within a long-term perspective, running from the 1750s to the late 1820s. This viewpoint underlines the argument that the revolution was undoubtedly damaging, but by no means fatal. While some historians have viewed the French Revolution as the great cataclysm which swept the entire continental college system away, this article suggests that the situation was less apocalyptic and more varied.

I.

From the 1750s, political, cultural and social changes across Europe affected the whole network (or more realistically the networks) of Irish Colleges. The suppression of the Jesuits, first in Portugal, then in Spain and France, closed the Irish Colleges which the order administered in Lisbon, Seville, Santiago de Compostella and Poitiers. The Irish College at Alcalá de Henares was shut down in 1785 and the Irish Franciscan College in Prague closed, a victim of

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Joseph II’s reforms, the following year. The Irish Colleges in Paris were particularly significant and influential during the second half of the eighteenth century, though they were not immune from changes taking place in France and Ireland. By the 1760s the endemic disputes which had dogged the Collège des Lombards in the early eighteenth century, especially in the 1730s and 1740s, had largely abated. The financial situation was improving throughout the 1760s and 1770s. A telling sign of a new financial era was the foundation established by the Paris-based Irish doctor, Bartholomew Murry, in 1761, which provided for sixteen bursaries of 500 livres each. In general, the number of new foundations rose steadily in the eighteenth century, reaching an apogee in the 1760s, before declining very slowly in the 1770s and 1780s.

The suppression of the Jesuits in France indirectly created a major crisis for the Irish Colleges in Paris. In 1762, the Jesuits were expelled from the Collège Louis-le-Grand, one of the largest of the colleges attached to the University of Paris. While ten of these were teaching colleges, the other thirty or so, including the Collège des Lombards, were essentially student hostels and by this stage some were very poorly managed. During 1762–3 it was decided to suppress the non-teaching colleges altogether and to gather all the bursaries and bursary students attached to them in the vacant Collège Louis-le-Grand. This threatened the autonomy, and indeed the very existence, of the Irish

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13 It should be noted, however, that the college also benefited following the transfer of bursaries from the Irish Jesuit College at Poitiers to Paris. See Swords, ‘Calendar’, 144–5.

Collège des Lombards and the administrators argued forcefully against amalgamation. Much of their case rested on their ‘distinctness’ from the other colleges and student bodies within the university:

Leur nombre, leur langage, leurs moeurs, leur façon de vivre et de se nourrir, le genre d’étude, qui est leur particulier, la nécessité de conserver des supérieurs tirés de leur nation, le peu de resource, enfin, que l’on trouveroit dans la location de leurs bâtimens pour améliorer leur condition sont des raisons dont chacune, en particulier, semble former un obstacle invincible à leur reunion avec les boursiers des autres collèges.15

In addition, the administrators drew heavily on the ‘extremely severe’ penal laws in Ireland to make their case.16 Their argument was successful and while the reform went ahead, the Collège des Lombards was exempted. But, as Michael Rapport has noted in relation to the Scots College in Paris, which made a similar case, the exemption created an institutional anomaly.17

In the short term, financial pressures on the colleges proved much more testing. The new Collège des Irlandais, which opened in 1775 or 1776, experienced at first hand the growing efforts of the French government to tap into the wealth of the first estate. In the early 1780s it fought an enormous demand for 150,000 livres (exactly half the value of the new building) as payment of droit d’amortissement (a form of construction tax). The college successfully resisted, but the case was ominous.18 Indeed, while the construction of the new college in the early 1770s and the growing number of foundations seemed to

15 ‘Mémoire pour le Collège des Lombards’, 24 novembre 1762, Archives nationales (France), Collège des Irlandais: Historique, lettres patentes, pièces diverses, 1623–xviiie siècle, H3 2561.18


herald a new era of financial security, increasing costs and the growing financial crisis of the 1780s created serious difficulties for the colleges.\textsuperscript{19} While more bursaries were available to students by the 1780s, competition for them was frequently intense, leading to a growing number of disputes.\textsuperscript{20} Charles Kearney, the administrator of the new college from 1785, later complained that the value of the bursaries was insufficient to cover the costs of the students and that fee-paying students frequently failed to pay their fees, forcing him to compensate from the revenue of the house.\textsuperscript{21} Meanwhile, the situation at the older Collège des Lombards was even worse. In 1783 Peter Flood, then the Leinster administrator, described the ‘wretched and distressed state of our poor Lombardians’, occasioned by the effects of inflation and the ‘sensible decay of piety and religion, in every order and description of the people’, which reduced the priests ability to earn money through mass stipends.\textsuperscript{22} In 1787 Antoine-Eléonore-Léon Le Clerc de Juigné, the archbishop of Paris, spearheaded an attempt to alleviate the financial problems by reducing the number of administrators from four to one. The new administrator, John Baptist Walsh, was the former administrator of the Irish College in Nantes, and he had connections to the powerful Franco-Irish Walsh-Serrant family.\textsuperscript{23} Walsh quickly convened a meeting in the college of ‘plusieurs personnes distinguées de leur nation’. It was revealed that the college was 30,000 livres in debt, with an annual income of 3,800 livres and an annual outgoing of 9,600 livres. As a result of the meeting Walsh penned a Mémoire to solicit extra funding for the college. Addressed to a French audience, it reveals the range of rhetorical strategies available to the Irish College authorities during the late ancien régime. In this case, Walsh stressed the attachment and value of the Collège des Lombards to France: supplying chaplains to Irish and other regiments in the French army, priests to the French church, and service to the French state.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{19} Charles Kearney to the Bureau d’Administration, 10 Brumaire an 10, Russell Library, National University of Ireland – Maynooth, Irish College Paris Papers, MS. 60.
\textsuperscript{20} A number of cases during the 1780s are documented in: ‘Pièces relatives à la Commission extraordinaire du Conseil établie en 1736 afin de juger toutes les contestations relative au Collège des Lombards (1736–1790)’, Archives nationales (France), Collège des Lombards, V\textsuperscript{e} 331, Dossier 5.
\textsuperscript{21} Kearney to Plunkett, 9 June 1788 in Cogan, \textit{Meath}, III, 124–7.
\textsuperscript{23} Amadou, ‘Saint-Ephrem des Syriens du Collège des Lombards à nos jours’, 39, 54.
\textsuperscript{24} Mémoire ([Paris], 1787), Archives nationales (France), Papiers séquestrés, Collège des
Service to the French army, church and state provided a pretext to seek financial assistance, but what about the relationship between the Irish Colleges and the Irish church, particularly as the Irish population rose in the second half of the eighteenth century? The financial difficulties faced by both Parisian colleges helps to explain why they failed to respond sufficiently to the need for an increased number of priests for the Irish mission. Despite the dramatic increase in the provision of bursaries in the eighteenth century and the construction of a brand new college, the administrators could only manage a modest increase in the number of students, from 165 in the early 1760s to 180 in the 1780s. As the Irish population increased and the priest to people ratio steadily worsened, it must have become clear to the Irish bishops that the system of foreign education was not coping and that domestic clerical formation was an obvious alternative. Indeed, some bursary foundations for Irish students created in the 1780s made specific provision for the possibility of domestic education.

Meanwhile, the Irish Colleges were developing much closer associations with Ireland than had previously existed. In 1772, Laurence Kelly, the main mover behind the construction of the new college, penned a revealing ‘Appeal … to the Catholics of Ireland’, the first such document of its kind, in which he noted that ‘Nothing can be obtained from strangers already tired of repeated importunities.’ The connections reached beyond the Irish Catholic community. When the Dublin Society established a Committee of Antiquarians in the same year, they contacted Kelly to seek the assistance of the Irish Colleges on the continent in the acquisition of Irish manuscripts. This resulted in ‘a General Assembly of all the Irish Gentlemen in Paris’ at the Collège des Lombards in February 1773 and the appointment of a Select Committee, chaired by Richard

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26 For recent discussion of this issue see Emmet Larkin, The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1750–1850 (Dublin, 2006), 9–60. It is possible that the decline in ordinations in France encouraged greater leakage of Irish priests. See Aston, Religion and Revolution, 25.
27 Swords, ‘Calendar’, 165, 167.
Arthur Dillon, archbishop of Narbonne, which in turn contacted other Irish institutions in Europe. Nothing substantial came of these contacts, but they suggest that the Parisian colleges were becoming more integrated into élite Irish society. It seems that they became stop-off points for Irish Protestant visitors to Paris, including Edmund Burke in 1773 and James St John in 1787. John Baptist Walsh had an eye on the employment opportunities occasioned by grand tourists when he commented in 1773 that ‘The Young Noblemen & Gentlemen of England and Ireland flock here [Paris] for education, and if properly directed cannot fail of acquiring not only the language but the other accomplishments that constitute the real Gent. and sweeten the remainder of his days.’ The point is that the closer associations with Ireland developed during the later eighteenth century prefigured the shift from foreign to domestic third-level Catholic education; the French Revolution was the catalyst not the cause.

II.

Michael Rapport has argued that the difficulties experienced by the Scots College in Paris in the later eighteenth century prepared it for the more serious challenges of the French Revolution. In particular, he has shown how the Scots re-cycled arguments first used when they were faced, like the Irish, with amalgamation and effective closure in the early 1760s. The Irish Colleges also drew on decades of experience and while they relied on similar rhetorical strategies to the Scots, they were uniquely positioned to develop other survival tactics. This was evident from an early date. When the Collège des Irlandais presented plate and silver vessels from their chapel to the revolutionary authorities in 1789, Tromphime Gérard Lally, marquis de Lally-Tollendal, marked the donation with a patriotic speech before the National 

30 For Burke’s visit see Paul Langford (ed.), The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke (9 vols, Oxford, 1991), IX, 571–2.
31 John [Baptist] Walsh to Vere Hunt [jun.], 30 August 1773, Limerick City and County Archive, De Vere Papers, P22/1/8. My thanks to Ursula Callaghan for bringing this letter to my attention.
Assembly in which he drew on the history of Irish migration to France and pledged the loyalty of the Irish in France to the new régime.\textsuperscript{33} This approach was more clearly articulated during the first important revolutionary test for the colleges: the nationalisation of ecclesiastical property. John Baptist Walsh appealed to the Ecclesiastical Committee of the National Assembly to exempt the Irish Colleges, on the basis of Irish ‘distinctness’, consciously echoing the case made by his predecessors in the 1760s.\textsuperscript{34} But Walsh went further. He amalgamated this ‘distinctness’ argument with that contained in his recent \textit{Mémoire} (1787) highlighting the service and attachment of the Irish Colleges to France. Putting the two together he appealed to a shared pro-revolutionary Franco-Irish anti-Britishness. Walsh argued that the Irish population could be divided into the two-thirds majority who were excluded from military and civil offices and the one third who were composed of ‘étrangers usurpateurs’.\textsuperscript{35} A clear comparison could be made between the revolutionary French and the Irish Catholics: ‘Ces deux tiers sentiront les droits et la dignité de l’homme et ils secourront le joug d’un pareil esclavage.’\textsuperscript{36} Ireland therefore presented an opportunity to weaken Britain: ‘N’en doutons pas, si cette isle devenoit indépendante de l’Angleterre, la France n’auroit plus rien a redoubter de sa rivale qui sera humiliée sans coup férir.’\textsuperscript{37} This provided the basis for conserving the colleges which suggests that Walsh had been paying close attention to the language and concerns of the early revolution:

\begin{quote}
Le gouvernement anglois déteste la Révolution que régénère la France et il fera tous ses efforts pour empêcher les étudiants irlandois et venire puiser dans nos écoles les principes qui feront tôt ou tard éclore le germe de la liberté si naturelle aux hommes.

La France est donc intéressée par humanité et par une saine politique à conserver les maisons étrangères, sans parler du lustre et de la gloire de devenir le centre et l’Athènes des sciences.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} M.J. Mavidal et E. Laurent (eds), \textit{Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860}, première série (1787–1799), vol. 9 (Paris, 1877), 385–6.
\item \textsuperscript{34} His first two \textit{mémoires} are reprinted in Daumet, ‘Notices’ (1912), 201–4. The original documents are in: Archives nationales (France), Comité ecclésiastique, D XIX 30, liasse 472.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Daumet, ‘Notices’ (1912), 201.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 202.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
In his second petition, Walsh emphasised the service of the Irish Colleges to France and stressed that, unlike the Scots College in Paris, the Irish Colleges had no need of the intervention of the British ambassador.\(^\text{39}\) On 14 September 1790 the Ecclesiastical Committee exempted the Irish Colleges, which encouraged Walsh to pen a third petition requesting confirmation in a decree of the National Assembly. Here he distanced the Irish Colleges even further from the Scots and English Colleges, underlined their military value and re-emphasised their revolutionary credentials:

Le supérieur a l’honneur d’observer que cette maison n’a rien de commun soit avec les religieux étrangers quelconques, soit avec MM. les Ecossois ou Anglois de Paris. Ceux-ci sollicitent la permission de vendre pour quitter la France. Au contraire, les Irlandois demandent à s’y attacher de plus en plus.

Le Comité est donc supplié de prendre en considération le nombre, l’utilité et le civisme des prêtres irlandois étudiants en France et de poser la base de leur tranquilité en faisant décréter promptement la conservation de leur maison principale dans le Collège des Lombards.\(^\text{40}\)

In October the National Assembly confirmed the decision of the Ecclesiastical Committee and exempted foreign institutions from nationalisation.\(^\text{41}\) It is significant that while the Scots College looked to Britain for support and even protection, the Irish Colleges chose a different, consciously anti-British, strategy. Walsh’s arguments are a reminder that pro-revolutionary and anti-British arguments by Irish figures were circulating in Paris long before the arrival in the city of much better known United Irish ambassadors. This does not mean that Walsh was a convinced revolutionary, rather it suggests that he viewed the events of 1789 and 1790 in a pragmatic fashion and realised that they offered plenty of room for manoeuvre.

Despite the exemption from the Ecclesiastical Committee the precarious position of an educational institution which was at once foreign and religious was thrown into sharp relief by an event which occurred on the Champ de Mars in 1790. On 6 December, the feast of St Nicolas – a patron saint of

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 204–5; Rapport, ‘A Community Apart?’, 85–8. Rapport notes that the British ambassador did in fact attempt to assist the Irish Colleges.

\(^{40}\) Daumet, ‘Notices’ (1912), 205. My italics.

\(^{41}\) Loi relative aux établissements d’études, d’enseignemens, ou simplement religieux, faits en France par des étrangers, & pour eux mêmes. Donné à Paris, le 7 November 1790 (Paris, 1790). The king sanctioned the law on 7 November 1790.
students and therefore a holiday – a group of Irish students left the Collège des Irlandais at two o’clock and walked to the Champ de Mars. This had been the site for the great Fête de la Fédération on 14 July 1790 and the Altar of the Fatherland, erected for the occasion, was still in place. Some of the Irish students climbed onto the altar to have a closer look during which escapade part of the altar paraphernalia was damaged, possibly the support for an urn. As a result, the sentinel on duty demanded that the Irish students descend. One of them, not understanding French, refused and when he was physically threatened by the soldier he defended himself. As some of the other students tried to intervene to explain the situation, it only became more serious and the Irish students suddenly found themselves confronted by an angry mob. Most of them fled, but six were cornered and later imprisoned.\(^4\)

During the evening and into the following day the incident grew out of all proportion as wild rumours circulated in parts of Paris. According to one pamphlet sixty ‘calotins’ had assassinated the sentinel.\(^4\) Another explained how the forty brigands, mainly dressed as abbés, had disarmed and attacked the sentinel and defaced the altar. Both pamphleteers blamed the attack on counter-revolutionary aristocrats and clergy. The second underlined the fact that the attackers were foreigners – noting that of the seven arrested (in fact, only six had been arrested) one spoke English, a second German and a third Italian. Neither pamphleteer realised that the ‘brigands’ were Irish.\(^4\) If the incident itself suggests the susceptibility of Irish students in Paris to attack, then the defence of the Irish students against the exaggerations circulating about them underlines the essential moderation of the revolution at this point and the means of defence throws up important issues. One pamphlet, signed by a member of the ‘Club de Cordeliers’ is particularly revealing. It argued that

\(^4\) This account draws on pro-Irish pamphlets published after the incident. See Adresse au peuple de la capital, sur l’événement du Champ de Mars, le lundi 6 décembre 1790 (Paris, 1790); Justification des écoliers irlandais, sur l’événement qui s’est passé au Champ de Mars, le lundi six du mois ([Paris], [1790]); Récit véritable de ce qui s’est passé au Champ de Mars ([Paris], [1790]). For anti-Irish accounts see Grand poème épi-civique ([Paris], [1790]); Détail de l’horrible assassinat commis hier au soir au Champ de la Fédération, sur la personne d’une sentinelle, Et insulte faite a l’Autel de la Patrie, par une troupe d’Aristocrates et d’Abbés ([Paris], [1790]); Fureur du Père Duchêne contre les soixante calotins qui ont saccagé et profané l’autel de la patrie, et assassiné la sentinelle du Champ-de-Mars, et désarmé le corps de garde ([Paris], [1790]). It also draws on papers relating to interrogations, witness statements and the trial: Archives nationales (France), Police générale, Comité de sûreté générale (1746–1820), F 4624 (plaq. 4), ff. 182–212. See also Swords, The Green Cockade, 31–6, which draws on the same source material.

\(^4\) Fureur du Père Duchêne, 1–2.

\(^4\) Détail de l’horrible assassinat, 3–8.
the Irish were, in fact, good patriots: ‘Français par reconnaissance, Français par attachement, Français par intérêt, comme propriétaires, comment pourroient-ils, ces Irlandois, chercher à être odieux à la nation Française.’\footnote{Adresse au peuple de la capitale, 3.} This was despite the fact that some of the students were unable to speak French, the root cause of the scuffle at the altar. A similar pamphlet drew on the heritage of Franco-Irish connections: ‘Ce sont des Irlandois qui se sont remarquer dans tous le pays par leur attachement pour la France; qui, de tout temps, ont chéri la France comme une seconde patrie.’\footnote{Justification des écoliers irlandais, 4. My italics.} After two weeks in prison, the students were tried for disfiguring the altar of the fatherland and attacking the sentinel and were acquitted. The judgement was applauded by those present and an order was made that the evidence in favour of the Irish should be printed. (It is notable that the students were referred to as ‘English’ not Irish in the judgement.)\footnote{Judgement, 20 December 1790, Archives nationales (France), Police générale, Comité de sûreté générale (1746–1820), F7 4624 (plaq. 4), f. 206.}

One could read the Champ de Mars incident in different ways. It can be taken as indicative of increasing xenophobia or anticlericalism (the more lurid pamphlets deliberately conflated the students with ordained priests). It also suggests that the Irish Colleges would be singled out sooner or later as bastions of counter-revolution. But perhaps the most significant point about the incident is the means of defence available to the Irish; their defence cast them as good French patriots and saw no contradiction in highlighting simultaneously their Irish and French identities. In this the rhetoric they used reflected the arguments developed by college administrators in 1789–90.

By December 1790 the impact of the most important religious reform of the revolution, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, was becoming clearer. The king reluctantly sanctioned a compulsory oath to the constitution on 26 December 1790. During 1791 the constitution and the oath divided French Catholicism into a state-sponsored constitutional church and an increasingly underground refractory church.\footnote{See Aston, Religion and Revolution, 140–243.} As Nigel Aston puts it: ‘oath-taking became, in effect, a referendum on whether one’s loyalties were to Catholicism or to the Revolution.’\footnote{Ibid., 167.} As a result the refractory clergy were increasing likely to be considered seditious as 1791 progressed and the hard-line opposition of Pius VI to the Civil Constitution and the revolution further ruptured French Catholicism.\footnote{See, for example, Burstin, Une révolution à l’oeuvre, 211–45.}
The administrators and students of the Irish Colleges were affected by the oath. Irish priests at the Collège des Lombards had traditionally earned small amounts of financial support by saying masses at the parishes around the college, which was made increasing difficult and eventually impossible.\(^{51}\) For Irish clergy embedded in French ecclesiastical and academic structures the situation was even more difficult, because they were forced to take a position on the oath.\(^{52}\) However, the Irish College administrators and students were not obliged to take a position on the constitution and could reasonably claim immunity from the sanctions levied on the nascent refractory church.

In Paris, a clandestine refractory church evolved slowly during 1791. The Irish Colleges were situated in the Faubourg Saint Marcel, one of the more violently pro-revolutionary Parisian regions. In the ten parish churches of the faubourg, six curés took the oath, often at well-attended ceremonies. At the same time a major reorganisation of parish structures was undertaken, which saw the old ten parishes reduced to just four, entailing the closure of churches from April 1791. Haim Burstin has argued that one of the consequences was that some of the faithful sought out alternatives to the four constitutional parish churches. The Faubourg Saint Marcel was packed with alternative locations for worship, chapels generally associated with educational institutions, which were still unaffected by religious reforms, including the Irish, English and Scots Colleges, as well as the houses of English male and female religious orders.\(^{53}\) On 19 March 1791 communal authorities surprised a refractory ordination ceremony in progress at the Collège des Anglais, on rue des Postes, just around the corner from the Irish College on rue du Cheval Vert.\(^{54}\) The Eudistes, on the same street, developed an important refractory network and priests from the house preached at the Collège des Irlandais.\(^{55}\)

While Walsh and others employed a pro-revolutionary rhetoric after 1789, the Irish Colleges also emerged during 1791 as important centres for


\(^{53}\) Burstin, *Une révolution à l’oeuvre*, 211–23.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 223.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 229.
the refractory clergy. Maintaining a good working relationship with the revolutionary authorities was important, but for Walsh and Kearney there were other audiences to think about: French Catholics opposed to the constitution, Catholic authorities in Rome, Irish and British officials, and, above all, the Irish bishops. Under Walsh’s leadership both Irish Colleges opened their doors to refractory clergy and to their congregations. Between October 1791 and March 1792 at least six secret retreats took place at the Collège des Lombards. They appear to have been organised by an élite and rather mysterious clerical organisation called the Aa, founded ‘to deepen commitment and religious devotion among the clergy’. Established in the early seventeenth century, though never on a proper ‘legal’ basis, Nigel Aston has argued that the Association ‘came into its own in the 1790s by helping to facilitate a clandestine priestly ministry’. This is important because it closely links Walsh, Kearney and the Irish Colleges with the networks of refractory clergy in Paris and beyond. The retreats were very serious affairs. At the fourth secret retreat, held at the end of January 1792, the participants drew up an address to Pius VI and held an elaborate ceremony, during which they promised conformity to his papal briefs, which had rejected the Civil Constitution. In addition to the retreats, up to seven secret ordination ceremonies took place during this period (including the ordination of Irish candidates). Moreover, the college was reportedly overflowing with anti-constitutional worshipers, with reports of masses said all morning in the chapel and at makeshift altars in the library and the refectory. The Irish College connection was well known to the Abbé de Salamon, the papal representative in Paris, who forwarded glowing reports on the situation to Rome. This level of activity could not have gone unnoticed and it is no accident that the retreats coincided with the eruption of serious violence outside the college. In other words, the colleges were targeted not

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56 Walsh protested strongly in a letter to John Thomas Troy, the archbishop of Dublin, on 14 July 1791 about reports circulating in Ireland that he had taken the oath to the Civil Constitution. See Cogan, Meath, III, 194–5.
57 John McManners, Church and Society in Eighteenth Century France, Volume 2, The Religion of the People and the Politics of Religion (Oxford, 1998), 182. The significance of the name is unclear, although it may have been an abbreviation of Associatio Amicorum. On the connection with the Irish College, though it should be noted that the author is overtly partisan, see Antoine Lesta, Le Père Coudrin: fondateur de Picpus (Paris, 1952), 70–97. My thanks to Fr Declan Hurley for bringing the latter to my attention.
58 Aston, Religion and Revolution, 234.
primarily because of xenophobia or simple anticlericalism, but because they had clearly identified themselves with the refractory clergy and, in the eyes of the attackers, with the forces of counter-revolution.

Engagement with the refractory network in the Faubourg Saint Marcel was particularly problematic. There was strong local support for the constitutional church, which David Garrioch has suggested was linked to the Jansenist tradition in parishes like St Medard. During 1791 the Irish Colleges slowly came under pressure from groups within the local population. In April the college chapels were, largely as a result of confusion about their status, sealed briefly by the Parisian authorities. Much more seriously, on 25 September a group of women attending mass at the Collège des Lombards was attacked. Further attacks followed, outside the Collège des Irlandais, on 9–11 October and again on 16 October. An account of the attacks on 9 October, the feast of Saint Denis, identified the college as a centre for refractory clergy from the rest of Paris. The same pamphlet described how a group of women attending mass at the college, ‘presque toutes gouvernantes des anciens curés refractaires’, were beaten in the middle of the street in a scene beginning at two o’clock and lasting four hours. The attacks of September and October posed a major threat to the colleges and mirrored other, clearly co-ordinated, attacks which occurred elsewhere in the neighbourhood. Walsh, however, was confident in his position and he responded forcefully in public to the events. In a letter to the Parisian municipal authorities, published in the Mercure de France, he rejected claims that the colleges were refractory and counter-revolutionary centres and argued that they should be afforded protection, citing the freedom of worship enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. In this case, Walsh also invoked the status of staff and students as British subjects. The strength of Walsh’s argument is illustrated

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63 Détail exact de la grande Révolution arrivée au séminaire irlandais rue du Cheval vert, à l’Estrapade, faubourg S. Marceau, où 27 bigotes contre-révolutionnaires ont été fouettées, par la sainte colère du peuple, ainsi, que le supérieur du séminaire avec la liste des noms et qualités de tous les culs fouettés ([Paris], [1791]). On the disturbances see also Swords, The Green Cockade, 40–8; Burstin, Une révolution à l’oeuvre, 232–8.
64 Burstin, Une révolution à l’oeuvre, 225–6, 231.
by the reaction of the departmental and municipal authorities, who acted to protect the Irish Colleges by confirming their right to freedom of worship in decrees dated 12, 14 and 19 October, in the process extending the possibility of toleration to other churches and groups.66 While further sporadic attacks occurred in December 1791 and February 1792, the incidents did not threaten to escalate into full-scale public disturbances.67

Meanwhile, Walsh and Kearney had already signalled their growing concerns about the viability of Irish clerical formation in Paris to the Irish bishops.68 Yet it is important to note that it was only towards the end of the academic year in May 1791 that the leading Irish archbishop, John Thomas Troy of Dublin, considered calling home sixth-year students at the Collège des Lombards.69 Some students had already left, for there were only sixty-two students and staff there in April, and the numbers continued to decrease during the academic year 1791–2.70 Students were also leaving the Collège des Irlandais, though boursiers who continued to receive payments seem to have been reluctant to abandon their bourses and students continued to arrive in 1792–3.71 As the revolution radicalised in the late summer and early autumn of 1792, so the position of the Irish Colleges became increasingly difficult. The collapse of the monarchy in August and the creation of a republic coincided with a crackdown on refractory clergy, further legislation against religious practice and, most starkly of all, the September massacres, which resulted in the murder of around 230 priests out of a total of 1,300 victims killed in just three days.72 Massacres occurred close to the two Irish Colleges and included victims from university colleges, seminaries, religious communities and parishes with strong connections to them.73 While the colleges were untouched, the revolutionary shift of August and September had a profound impact. On 2 September 1792, the day

67 Swords, The Green Cockade, 49.
68 See, for example, John Baptist Walsh to Patrick Plunkett, 18 April 1791 in Cogan, Meath, III, 190.
70 Swords, The Green Cockade, 38.
72 Aston, Religion and Revolution, 183.
73 Burstin, Une révolution à l’œuvre, 427.
on which the September massacres broke out, Charles Kearney, the superior of the Collège des Irlandais, wrote a thoroughly pessimistic letter to Patrick Plunkett, the bishop of Meath, noting in passing a report that ‘this day all the prisoners have been murdered.’ In the end, he suggested to Plunkett that ‘two or three houses might be established in Ireland for such as are intended for the church. Funds could be sent over yearly from France, whither it will be for many years improper to send persons for ecclesiastical education.’74 Kearney’s letter highlights the continuing importance to the Irish church of more than a century of investment in French education for Irish Catholics. Though he realised that the bishops could no longer send students to France, Kearney also realised that the investments could not simply be abandoned.

The ascendancy of the Paris commune following the events of August 1792 encouraged a group of radical students at the Collège des Irlandais, with links to the increasingly important radical Irish, Scots and English groups in Paris, to attempt a take-over of the college. The commune was keen to support them and oversaw the election on 29 October 1792 of William Duckett, a former student, to replace Charles Kearney as administrator. Even at this stage, however, Walsh and Kearney could muster sufficient official protection. The Girondin minister of foreign affairs, Pierre Lebrun-Tondu, was instrumental in overturning the student election and restoring the status quo within a few weeks.75 Such a significant level of protection related largely to the foreign status of the colleges, but Walsh and the less radical students who remained at the Collège des Irlandais also continued to express their revolutionary sympathies. Following petitions from Walsh and a number of Irish boursiers, on 14 February 1793 the National Convention authorised payment to the Irish, English and Scots Colleges of revenues for the first six months of the year.76 The beginning of the war with Great Britain two weeks earlier marked an important moment in the relationship between the Irish Colleges and the revolutionary authorities. Arrested later in the year, Walsh expressed his revolutionary credentials and tried to argue that Ireland was not at war with France: ‘Quand même le gouvernement d’Irlande entrerait dans la coalition par la suite, il serait

74 Charles Kearney to Patrick Plunkett, 2 September 1792 in Cogan, Meath, III, 196–7.
75 This incident is well covered by a number of authorities. See Swords, The Green Cockade, 55–69 and, for clarity on a number of points, Swords, ‘Irish Priests and Students in Revolutionary France’, 22–3; O’Riordan, ‘The Irish Colleges in Paris’, 274–83; Amadou, ‘Saint-Ephrem des Syriens du Collège des Lombards à nos jours’, 54–5. For a slightly different analysis see Burstin, Une révolution à l’œuvre, 503–4.
76 Documents relating to the Loi du 14 février 1793, Archives nationales (France), Établissements d’instruction publique, F17 2500.
injuste d’imputer cette coalition aux catholiques, parce qu’ils n’ont aucune part au gouvernement, ni voix au parlement. Following Kearney’s denunciation in the National Convention and his detention, on 6 September, the remaining students at the Collège des Irlandais petitioned the Convention to be allowed to continue their studies and protested their loyalty to France in a mixture of arguments used during the ancien régime and the revolution:

Si L’Irlande ne s’est pas ouvertement prononcée pour la revolution française, c’est qu’elle est subjuguée par une force supérieur …

Nous avons appris avec une profonde douleur que les Malveilleurs de notre pais ont voulu jetter des soupcons sur nos sentimens à l’égard de la République.

Nous protestons ici solemnellement contre ces infames colonnies, et nous déclarons en face de cette auguste assemblée que nous ne cédon en sentimens républicains à aucun citoyen quelconque.78

Despite the patriotic protestations of administrators and students, the war left Walsh and Kearney much more susceptible to denunciation by radical Irish students and others.79 Both men had already been arrested and released during 1792 and 1793. On 9 October 1793, the National Convention finally decreed the arrest of all British (including Irish) subjects in France and the confiscation of their property. Kearney was already in detention and Walsh was arrested on 15 October. By the end of the month both colleges had been closed and the Collège des Irlandais had been transformed into a prison.80 They had been the last remnants of the ancien régime structures of the University of Paris, which had finally been swept away, a month earlier, on 15 September 1793. Gone too were the religious establishments and ancien régime legal structures within which the Irish Colleges functioned: the ‘extraordinary commission’ (established in 1736 to resolve disputes which arose in the college), the Abbaye de Ste Geneviève and the Abbaye de St Victor. Meanwhile the structures of the Archdiocese of Paris were in turmoil and the archbishop, who had jurisdiction

78 Pétition des Etudiants Irlandois au Citoyen Président de la Convention, 7 octobre [1793], Archives nationales (France), Assemblées nationales, C 271, dossier 666, pièce 29.
79 Swords, The Green Cockade, 86.
Revolutionary and Refractory? The Irish Colleges in Paris and the French Revolution

over the colleges, had long joined the émigrés. In this context, it is remarkable that the Irish Colleges remained open for as long as they did.81

III.

Even more remarkably, the Irish Colleges emerged from the Terror. During the winter of 1794–5 the prisoners at the Collège des Irlandais were released, though the Colleges faced an uphill administrative struggle to benefit from the overturning of the confiscation of foreign property, decreed on 29 December 1794.82 Walsh petitioned the authorities for assistance, drawing as he had done early in the Revolution on a shared Franco-Irish anti-Britishness. On 4 April 1795 the remaining Irish staff and students were granted access to funding allocated to refugees.83 Crucially, some of the Irish students who remained in France joined the army, which provided clear proof of service to the republic.84 In September Walsh and Kearney were ‘reinstated … in possession of the Irish properties and revenues’.85 However, the financial situation was extremely precarious and while payments on public investments re-commenced in 1796, they were irregular for the rest of the decade. Moreover both colleges were in very poor condition and the only option in the immediate term was to rent them out.86 Only in the early nineteenth century were moves to re-structure and re-open the Irish Colleges successful. In 1801, the Irish Colleges were placed under the control of a government appointed bureau. Over the following two years what remained of the Irish, Scots and English Colleges in France were united into a single institution based in the Collège des Irlandais, which opened in 1805. There followed a lengthy and complex struggle for control involving various Irish, Irish migrant and French interest groups.87

From the mid-1790s the survival of the Irish Colleges in Paris was not sufficient to guarantee their future. That survival was, to a large extent, predicated

83 Loi de 15 germinal an 3, Archives nationales (France), Établissements d’instruction publique, F17 6237e; Liste des réfugiés … mandats payés, An II – An V, Archives nationales (France), Hospices et secours, F15 16.
84 [Réfugiés] Irlandais, Réfugiés de l’Ouest, États et correspondance, An II – An V, Archives nationales (France), Hospices et secours, F15 3508A.
85 Swords, The Green Cockade, 104.
86 Ibid., 104–5, 139–40; Riordan, ‘Irish Colleges in Paris’, 193.
87 Swords, The Green Cockade, 139–234. Swords takes the story to 1815.
from the start on the willingness of Walsh and others to accommodate themselves to the currents of revolutionary change, while exploiting the gap, which Michael Rapport has argued existed, between the increasingly difficult legal position of foreigners and the reality on the ground.\textsuperscript{88} Just as the Irish Colleges emerged from the Terror in the winter of 1794–5, the Irish bishops were negotiating with the British government with a view to the establishment of a new domestic institution for the education of Irish Catholics, the Royal College of St Patrick, which opened at Maynooth in 1795. As a result, the Irish Colleges’ accommodation to the French Revolution, however pragmatic or piecemeal, became not just unsavoury, but dangerous. The position of the bishops was all the more important because while the colleges survived, the old legal, religious and university structures within which they functioned did not (at least in the immediate term). The Irish bishops had had no direct or formal role in the administration of the colleges during the \textit{ancien régime}, but a vacuum now existed in relation to authority over the new college and the two main contenders to fill it were the Irish bishops and the French state.\textsuperscript{89} The bishops had provided Walsh and Kearney with an approbation in 1791, though they ignored Walsh’s suggestions that an episcopal representative should be sent to Paris.\textsuperscript{90} From 1795 they were unwilling to risk the ire of the British government. Troy summed up their position in 1802:

\begin{quote}
Were they [the Irish Colleges in France] restored to us in their former situation, which they will not be, we could not send students to them from hence without endangering their principles, & offending Government, which we are soliciting for funds to support two hundred additional students at Maynooth, as the like number at present there is totally inadequate to our wants. We daily witness an alarming decrease of clergy. The Almighty in his mercy may in his own good time, restore its ancient government to France, and thereby render our Colleges useful. It is, therefore, advisable to preserve our rights & titles to them,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{89} New educational institutions also eyed-up the Irish Colleges, initially the Prytanée français and, later, the Imperial University.
\textsuperscript{90} Deed of Archbishop Troy of Dublin appointing Walsh and Kearney superiors of the Irish Colleges in Paris, 24 February 1791, Russell Library, National University of Ireland – Maynooth, Irish College Paris Papers, MS. 71, registered in Paris on 7 March 1791 (see Archives nationales (France), \textit{Établissements d'instruction publique, Fondations irlandaises, Titres divers, 1719–1917}, F17 14764); Walsh to Troy, 18 April 1791 in Cogan, \textit{Meath}, III, 190.
which in the worst event, may enable us, perhaps, to dispose of them for a valuable consideration.91

Troy had other motives for his pessimism about re-establishing the Irish College network in France. He was well aware that the closure of the Irish Colleges marked a very definite watershed in the history of Irish Catholicism, one which ultimately had positive repercussions for the episcopacy. While Patrick Corish has pointed to the continuity between the Irish Colleges in France and Maynooth College, this should not be overstated.92 The Maynooth system was, in fact, profoundly different to the Irish College system. The weak influence of the bishops over the continental colleges stood in stark contrast to their much more direct involvement in Maynooth. One could even argue that the eclipse of the Irish Colleges abroad allowed the Irish bishops to exercise control over the system of clerical formation for the first time in the history of the Irish church.

Other voices within the Irish Catholic church were more positive concerning the role of a re-established Irish College network in France. Thomas Hussey, the first President of Maynooth College and a controversial bishop of Waterford, reflected on the benefits of the Irish Colleges in a letter written to John Baptist Walsh in September 1801:

The insular position of that country [Ireland], the little intercourse between it and the continent might endanger the Catholic faith as taught in that remote corner to dwindle into sectarian forms if not principles too, whereby it must cease to be a portion of the Catholic or Universal religion. Thus different colleges on the continent and the aid if practicable of the regular Orders sent as heretofore as Missionaries to Ireland would be the security against the national faith dwindling into a Sect.93

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93 Thomas Hussey to John Baptist Walsh, 6 September 1801 in Patrick Boyle, ‘Documents Relative to the Appointment of an archbishop to the See of Cashel in 1791, and a Coadjutor to the bishop of Waterford’, Archivium Hibernicum, 7 (1918–21), 18.
The tension between the opinions represented by Troy and Hussey reflected longstanding uncertainties and concerns relating to the role and function of the Irish Colleges.

This reminds us of the importance of considering a long-term perspective. The French Revolution did not decimate the Irish Colleges in Paris. They were resilient institutions whose administrators exploited the revolutionary ambiguities concerning foreigners to survive, if only just. In retrospect the revolution was a catalyst for change, rather than the cause of change. The Irish Colleges were part of a network of Irish migrant communities in Paris, France and continental Europe, which were already experiencing signs of decline (not necessarily terminal) in the second half of the eighteenth century. The revolution provided an opportunity for the Irish bishops to develop a system of domestic education which had become increasingly appealing during the second half of the eighteenth century. However, Troy and the other Irish bishops also recognised that the extensive finances invested in Paris could not simply be abandoned. The acute shortage of priests in Ireland and the lack of suitable university level outlets for lay Catholics also caused concern. When the Restoration Troy had prayed for finally arrived in 1814, the Irish bishops dispatched a Dublin priest, Paul Long, to administer the Collège des Irlandais. His tenure lasted five years and appeared to end in failure, but the increasingly conservative nature of French politics during the 1820s, and especially after 1824, ensured that the Irish bishops were able to recreate the Irish College as something it had never been during the *ancien régime*, an Irish seminary under the control of the increasingly powerful Irish episcopacy. The colleges could survive the French Revolution, even in the hyper-revolutionary Faubourg Saint-Marcel, but the political and ecclesiastical ramifications of events in France for Ireland ensured that they were fundamentally altered from *ancien régime* French colleges to a nineteenth-century Irish seminary.

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Loyal Catholics and Revolutionary Patriots: National Identity and the Scots in Revolutionary Paris

Michael Rapport

This article will look at two groups of Scots in revolutionary Paris: the clergy of the Scots College and the handful of radicals who sought refuge in the French capital. At the outset, it should be emphasised that these were two very small clusters, yet they were important because the individuals involved were forced to find ways of dealing with their Scottish and British identities in the starkest of circumstances, giving rise to a variety of telling responses. Since the clerics and radicals were under some considerable strain during the 1790s, they sometimes expressed their sense of identity in extreme ways. In so doing, they threw into bold relief the tensions inherent in the layered Scottish-British identity with which their compatriots had grappled since the Union of 1707. While the two groups were in obvious ways at the opposite ends of the political spectrum, both found their Britishness problematic.

Yet because the Catholic clergy were at the receiving end of more than one French revolutionary missile, in the end they were willing to play on their status as British subjects, since government support could help them restore the College and get compensation from the French. By contrast, the radicals – at least those who made the hazardous journey to France in the later 1790s – were in France precisely because they had fallen foul of the British government. Isolated – even among the Scottish reform movement back home, which stressed its essential loyalty to the union and to the crown – these Scots had nothing to lose and everything to gain from the French government by expressing their Scottish identity in an anti-British sense. The contrast is striking and it is precisely these differences that make it possible to explore the complexities of the relationships between Scottish and British identities. To further complicate matters, the Scottish expatriates in Paris had fraught relations with their Irish counterparts, and this, too, was reflected in their sense

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of identity. To understand how this small handful of Scots grappled with these problems, their role in the stormy waters of revolutionary politics in Paris in the late 1790s will be examined.

I.

The Scottish clergy in Paris engaged in French politics in two ways. First, they were involved in defending the College against legislation levelled against the Catholic Church, particularly as regards its property (since the Constituent Assembly – for some compelling reasons – could not resist the rich pickings of ecclesiastical real estate, which was nationalised by decree on 2 November 1789). Secondly, the Scots lodged protests against the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (12 July 1790) and the clerical oath which followed on 27 November. In doing so, the Scots secured the weighty support not only of the British government, through the good offices of the British chargé d'affaires, but also of an impressive figure from the French clergy, Abbé Seignelay Colbert of Castlehill, who in February 1792 attended a crucial meeting of what these days would be called the College’s 'senior management'.

Colbert was a Scot by origin (he was born in Moray of Scottish parents in 1736), who graduated from the Scots College on his ordination and was elevated to the see of Rodez in 1781. Before the Revolution, he had reformist credentials and was one of the upper clergy elected to the Estates-General, where he was amongst the first of the bishops to defect to the Third Estate, soon to style itself the National Assembly. Although he opposed the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and refused to take the clerical oath, he otherwise obeyed the law and implemented the new ecclesiastical order in his diocese. Moreover, he was no reactionary, but rather one of the ‘Impartials’, a group of right-wing deputies who agreed in principle with a constitutional monarchy, but not the type which took shape under the Constitution of 1791, which was far too radical for their taste. The choice of Colbert as a friend for the College would not, as it turned out, help once the monarchists became equated with outright counter-revolution in the summer of the 1792, but earlier that year

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his political connections would still have been worth exploring. Moreover, the choice of ally provides a heavy hint as to the Scots clergy’s own position in revolutionary politics: they were certainly conservative, but not reactionary. They supported a strong monarchy, but one which would be restrained by legal guarantees for its citizens and by a parliamentary body – albeit one with fewer powers than those arrogated by the existing National Assembly.

This impression is reinforced by the interesting connection that existed between the College Principal, Alexander Gordon, and the Genevan political journalist, Jacques Mallet du Pan, perhaps one of the most intelligent of the counter-revolutionary writers. Mallet du Pan was editor of the political section of the official government newspaper, the *Mercure de France*, at the outbreak of the Revolution, but he was critical of the absolute monarchy for being despotic and weak at the same time: the ancien régime, he had argued prophetically, was heading for disaster unless it reformed itself.4 Mallet’s conservative reformism seems to have attracted the attention of Principal Gordon, who submitted writings of his own to the *Mercure* on the very eve of the Revolution. Mallet du Pan was forced to pull them, as he explained to Gordon on 5 July 1789:

> The pieces which I am returning to you, Monsieur, should have appeared in the *Mercure* last Saturday, but political circumstances have come to such a state that the censor did not dare approve publication without referring them to the Keeper of the Seals. On Thursday evening, that Minister intimated the most positive prohibition on having that article appear in the *Mercure*; this was communicated to me yesterday morning and in the evening I pulled the manuscript out of the printers. You should not be astonished, Monsieur, by the government’s conduct: it has no more authority, it fears everyone, its defenders as much as its enemies. That article would inevitably have stirred up the Estates-General against the Minister who had approved it and against us.5

This letter is particularly intriguing for its direct evidence of an attempt by a Scottish expatriate to engage in political journalism in the crucial month of July 1789. The article does not seem to be in the Scots Catholic Archives in Edinburgh, but Mallet du Pan’s letter shows that Gordon stood behind

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the monarchy in the political crisis. Gordon and Mallet du Pan kept up their correspondence until the latter’s death in 1800, which suggests that the two men respected each other’s opinions.

During the Constituent Assembly, Mallet du Pan had political connections with the right-wing constitutional monarchists, the Monarchiens, like Pierre-Victor Malouet and Jean-Joseph Mounier. Indeed, he tended to promote their arguments in his commentaries in the *Mercure* on the debates of the National Assembly: they were opposed to ‘despotism’, but supported a stronger monarchy (such as an absolute rather than a merely suspensive veto) as against the ‘anarchy’ represented by their more radical opponents. Significantly for the clergy, Mallet du Pan opposed the clerical oath and lent his journalistic support to the non-jurors, but he also argued that some reform of the Church was necessary. For this most clear-sighted of conservative intellectuals, the *ancien régime* was not something to be lamented, as Edmund Burke appeared to do in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). There was no point in trying to put the clock back – and for this reason, he was denounced by hard-line reactionaries as no better than the Jacobins. When the war between France and Austria broke out in April 1792, Mallet du Pan was sent on a mission by the leading Monarchien politicians, including Malouet, to act as special emissary for the king. He was instructed to seek Austrian and Prussian assurances that their war aims did not involve territorial conquest at French expense, that their struggle was against the revolutionary ‘faction’ and not the people as a whole and that the conflict was being waged in the interest of all European sovereigns and their peoples. Mallet du Pan accepted the mission and left France – for good, as it turned out.⁶

During the exile of the last eight years of his life, Mallet du Pan periodically wrote to Gordon, who fled France for London in the blood-curdling days of September 1792. In his correspondence, he repeated – almost verbatim – many of the thoughts which he shared with his other European correspondents, including such well-placed figures as the British envoy to the Portuguese court. Gordon therefore had direct contacts with the more moderate wing of the counter-revolution: as Mallet du Pan at one point confided to the Scottish clergyman (through his son, Jean-Louis) in 1797, François Montlosier, who was cut from similar political cloth to the journalist, had been threatened with uncertain – but undoubtedly nasty – retribution from the ultra-royalist activist, the Comte d’Antraigues.⁷

⁷ ‘In December he told one of my friends in Venice: Montlosier frets over my thirst for
The close connection between the College and Seignelay Colbert, as well as the private correspondence between Gordon and Mallet du Pan, suggests that the Scots Catholic clergy in Paris leaned heavily towards the French monarchists rather than the royalists and would have gone along with some moderate reform of church and state. This tallies with the notion of a Catholic clergy engaging with the mainstream of the political and intellectual life of the Scottish Enlightenment, otherwise traditionally regarded as a predominantly Presbyterian movement.\footnote{Michael Lynch, \textit{Scotland: A New History} (London, 1992), 352; M. Goldie, ‘The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment’, \textit{Journal of British Studies}, 30 (1991), 40–62.} It also suggests a Catholic clergy which could live at peace with the British political system not only for pragmatic reasons of necessity (since their French hosts were no longer as hospitable as they had been before 1789), but also out of conviction.

II.

This conviction was not shared by the Catholic clergy’s fellow Scots among the radical exiles, chief of whom – primarily for symbolic reasons – was Thomas Muir. Significantly, one of his letters to the Directory prior his arrival in France, dated 20 May 1797, does not deal directly with politics at all. Instead – privately, at least – he appeared to be talking about living in modest retirement, writing his memoirs. He announced that he would arrive in France ‘without being of any use to the Republic – if my physical strength matched my inclinations, I would have asked for the honour of fighting your enemies on the frontiers – but, alas! That is impossible.’ He then wrote at length of how his modest wealth was left in Scotland, asking the French government for a two-year loan of 150,000 francs to buy a \textit{domaine nationale} so that he could subsist until he had written a two-volume account of his exile and travels. This, he claimed ‘is awaited in England with the greatest impatience’ and would earn him £3000.\footnote{Muir to the Directory, 1 Prairial V (20 May 1797), Archives du ministère des Affaires}
He returned to this theme in a later letter, dated 29 December 1797, almost a month after his arrival in France, but with more explicitly political content. He asked for money on which to live, promising optimistically that it would be repaid ‘by Scotland with interest and with enthusiasm’. He also pinned his republican colours firmly to his frail mast:

Other nations offered me asylum. Frigates were sent out to rescue me, as the Minister of Foreign Relations well knows. But my heart is entirely French. I have sacrificed everything for the sacred cause of the Republic. I have very little blood left in my veins, but the little which remains will be spilled once again.¹⁰

Despite the final protestation, these two letters to the foreign ministry read more like appeals for assistance in securing a modest retirement than an active appeal, à la Wolfe Tone, for French intervention in his homeland. Yet in 1798, Muir would certainly make political waves, less with the French than with the United Irish exiles.

The United Irishmen in Paris at the beginning of 1798 were experiencing considerable internal turmoil caused by personality clashes and political differences – and Muir, not innocently, stepped right into the dispute. One of the problems was that the revolutionary underground – in Ireland, England or Scotland – could usually only communicate with the French government through those rare agents who actually made the trip to Paris, or through exiles, many of whom had actually been out of their homeland for years and who were out of touch with the actual situation there. It often transpired that a messenger from one part of the British Isles was charged with delivering information on behalf of revolutionaries from another part, but Muir went beyond this and presumptuously claimed to be able to speak for an entire nation which was not his own. In a letter published in the Moniteur about a month after his arrival in Paris, he wrote bluntly: ‘I am a United Irishman, I am a Scot, I can speak in the name of both Nations.’ In a final flourish, he responded to a toast from the Minister of the Police générale (Sotin, a neo-Jacobin), which had been published in the Ami des Lois, by declaring: ‘I reply to you, in the name of the Irish and the Scots, that we will break our chains over

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the heads of our tyrants.'\textsuperscript{11} For Wolfe Tone, who read these and other articles which Muir contributed to the French newspapers, this was not only barefaced cheek, but it challenged his own authority with the Directory in Paris.

Now Muir was, technically, a member of the United Irishmen, having joined the organisation when he was briefly in Dublin in July 1793, just prior to his arrest on his return to Scotland, but quite why he thought that he could speak on behalf of that organisation is unclear. He had certainly presented the address of the United Irishmen to the Edinburgh Convention on 12 December 1792. This had been strenuously opposed by some of the delegates on the grounds that ‘it contained treason, or at least misprision of treason’.\textsuperscript{12} Muir had persuaded the delegates to hear the address and during the tumultuous debate that followed, he had pointedly claimed that Ireland, like Scotland, was a separate nation: ‘we cannot consider ourselves as mowed and melted down into another country … The people of Ireland \textit{will} a reform, the Scotch \textit{will} a reform. Is the Irish nation to be considered as a Scape Goat in this business?’\textsuperscript{13} Muir almost certainly felt that he had earned his Irish stripes.

Muir had also struck up a friendship with William Drennan, who had fallen out with Tone in the summer of 1793, not least because he resented Tone’s influence within the United Irishmen.\textsuperscript{14} This was not only the time when the society was under a great deal of pressure because of the outbreak of war with France, but when Muir had briefly stepped ashore in Belfast and Dublin and was closely associated with Tone’s bête noire, James Napper Tandy. Tandy had arrived in France in June 1797 and had tried to wrest the leadership of the United Irishmen from Tone. Muir’s biographer, Christina Bewley, suspects that the Scotsman gravitated towards Tandy because he felt able to dominate the Irishman.\textsuperscript{15} Tone’s crushing judgment on Muir was set down in a famous diary entry of 1 February 1798, after Tone had endured a stormy meeting with the Scot, Tandy and other United Irish exiles:

\ldots of all the vain, obstinate blockheads that ever I met, I never saw his equal. I could scarcely conceive such a degree of self-sufficiency

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\textsuperscript{12} Quoted in Henry W. Meikle, \textit{Scotland and the French Revolution} (Edinburgh, 1912), 245.

\textsuperscript{13} Quoted in Meikle, \textit{Scotland and the French Revolution}, 246–7.


to exist. He told us roundly that he knew as much of our country as we did, and would venture to say he had as much the confidence of the United Irishmen as we had; that he had no doubt we were very respectable individuals, but could only know us as such, having shown him no powers or written authority to prove that we had any mission.  

As Elaine McFarland has shown, the United Scotsmen – of whom Muir, owing to his long exile and global odyssey, could not have been a sworn-in member – were heavily influenced by the United Irishmen in terms of structure, ideology and diffusion, so it was understandable that revolutionaries of the one nationality ended up claiming to speak for those of the other. Sometimes, it seems that they were actually asked to do so, and this may have been the case when the Irish expatriate William Duckett submitted a memorandum on Scotland to the Consulate in 1800, urging a French landing in Scotland. In it, he emphasised the Irish backbone of the United Scotsmen: ‘Scotland is organised on the same lines as Ireland. Societies of United Scotsmen are being organised everywhere. Irish refugees are very active in this organisation. They are very numerous in Paisley and in Glasgow.’

Muir himself seems to have urged a French invasion of Scotland rather belatedly, when he appears to have been stung into action, possibly by his bruising encounter with Tone in February 1798. In an undated letter and memorandum which were finally submitted to the foreign ministry on 29 October 1800 (long after his death in January 1799 – so the actual timing of the two documents is unclear) – Muir sketched out a plan of action for Scotland, asking for one or two messengers whom he could meet outside of Paris, to whom he ‘could give instructions and arrange the plan of operation’. The Scots, he said, unlike the Irish, would not ‘represent the ridiculous and fatal comedy of O’Quoigley and O’Connor’, a reference to the arrests of the two Irishmen in Margate in February 1798 and the execution of James Coigley in June. Since there is no mention of the Irish insurrection itself, this places the aforementioned letter and memorandum at some point

between February and May 1798. In the document, Muir suggested using a James Kennedy as the agent in Scotland. Muir’s mention of Kennedy implied that he still had some hope of making direct political contacts with Scottish radicals back home – and perhaps independently of the United Irishmen. Until then, much of the communication had been through the conduit of Irish revolutionaries. In a memoir to the Directory dated 4 October 1797, the ill-fated Catholic priest Coigley and the Presbyterian minister Arthur McMahon explained that they had fled Ireland and taken refuge in London the previous June, where they met members of the ‘chief revolutionary committee of England’, as well as:

a Delegate from the United Scotch, sent expressly to London to know how far the English Patriots were willing to assist their Brethren in Scotland and Ireland in the great work of overthrowing Tyranny – he gave to understand, that the Scotch Patriots were very powerful and ready to act in concert with those of England & Ireland at any moment – the subscribers are ready to attend when & where it may be judg’d necessary to answer any question that may arise from the foregoing or to perform any thing that may be in their Power. For their conduct [and] veracity they appeal to their countrymen now in Paris engaged in the same cause of Liberty.20

This document is intriguing, since it implies that there was a network of Scottish radicals working in France prior to Muir’s arrival. Was this last appeal from the United Scotsmen a final flurry of activism? Which Scots – if there were any at all – did the unnamed Scottish delegate actually know in France? The Scots could not boast of the same revolutionary network exploited by the Irish, whose student body at the Irish College alone seems to have been such a fertile ground for nationalism and republicanism. Yet there was a small number of Scots who either made the hazardous trip to France, or who pursued rather erratic communications with the French government through intermediaries such as Coigley. Some Scottish names, including those of Thomas Graham, Robert Watson and James Smith, do appear in the correspondence of the French foreign ministry, linking them directly to revolutionary activity. In addition, in the memorandum which reached the foreign ministry in 1800, Muir remarked on two other Scots ‘whom I most earnestly desire to see in

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Paris’, James Kennedy – already mentioned – and ‘Neil’ (possibly Angus) Cameron.21

It is also known that Muir made contact with his former university friends, the merchants John and Benjamin Sword, who were noted for their republican principles and who were in France in the hope of making a huge profit from the purchase and resale of British goods seized by French privateers. Revolution and Mammon could conveniently go together. In fact, the Sword brothers and Thomas Graham seem to have been important sources of more recent, if unreliably optimistic, information on Scotland for Muir.22 ‘Neil’ Cameron, Muir claimed, ‘has organised the Highlanders of Scotland’. This is almost certainly a reference to Angus Cameron, who was a dynamic leader of the United Scotsmen, who hailed from Lochaber and who had tried to turn the Militia Riots of 1797 into a revolutionary movement. He was arrested shortly thereafter, but released, possibly because he provided information to the government, although this is not proven. Muir noted that Cameron had been outlawed and was now hiding in London, adding (in a rather peculiar contradiction) that ‘he could easily be found’. In any case, Cameron’s reputation with Muir and the French was enough to make him a candidate for the ‘Scottish Directory’ proposed in the event of a French-backed revolution in Scotland. James Kennedy, Muir wrote, ‘is equally well-informed of the state of the low country of Scotland and of England’.23 Kennedy was a Paisley weaver with strong Paineite and republican leanings and a political poet, who was implicated in Robert Watt’s ‘Pike Plot’ to seize Edinburgh Castle in 1794. He fled to London where he worked among the militants of the London Corresponding Society, after which he seems to have sailed for the safety of North America, although his precise fate is unknown.24 If Muir hoped that Kennedy would soon join him in Paris, then he had been deceived.

Robert Watson was president of the London Corresponding Society. In October 1799, Watson and another expatriate Scot, James Smith, had

approached the French foreign minister, asking to be charged with the management of the property of the English and Scottish Catholic colleges in France. They also asked for permission to use some of the revenue for the benefit of ‘the Patriots of Great Britain’, which incidentally also implied that, although they were Scottish – and quite consciously so, as will be shown – their role in the London Corresponding Society gave them a British perspective, too. This request was denied by the finance minister, on the grounds that the sale of the property had already been ordered by a law passed by the Council of Five Hundred on 24 July that year. Undeterred, three days later (19 October) Watson submitted a further memorandum asking for money to form a coalition amongst all the ‘partisans of liberty’ in London and to send a secret agent to the English capital to secure help for those patriots imprisoned in ‘English Bastilles’ thereby fomenting ‘a general insurrection’. The man for the job, Watson claimed, was his associate James Smith, himself known amongst the leadership of the ‘democratic parties’. Smith had been a member of the Edinburgh Convention and was, according to Watson, a close friend of Thomas Muir ‘no less attached than he to the interests of France’.25

This supports the idea that there existed a small network of contacts between the Scottish expatriates in France and the leadership of the revolutionary underground in Scotland. It may have centred on Muir or, possibly, Robert Watson, but its small size and poor communication lines meant that it was very frail and tentative, if it existed at all. Certainly, it never managed to slip out of the shadow of the United Irishmen. It is perhaps of little surprise, then, that the last trace of Muir in the Paris archives – his memorandum sketching out a plan for a French invasion of Scotland – appears to have been misplaced and forgotten, only to resurface amongst the folios dated more than a year after his death.

III.

The intriguing immersion of a small number of Scots in French revolutionary politics sheds light on the tensions that could develop between Scottish and British identities. As the Scots Catholic clergy and the expatriate revolutionaries navigated their respective ways through their political entanglements, they

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expressed themselves in ways which grappled with this sense of layered or dual identity. And here comparisons between the reactions of the clergy and those of the radicals are useful. In his article on the radical poets of Paisley in the 1790s, Andrew Noble suggests that writers like James Kennedy and Alexander Wilson saw themselves ‘as both Scottish and (not or) British poets, albeit not Hanoverian Britain’. Indeed, it made strategic sense for Scottish radicals to think in terms of a wider British context. While an Irish republic might conceivably have survived – separated as it was by a body of sea from monarchist England – an independent, revolutionary Scotland would probably not have lasted long against its more powerful southern neighbour, with whom it shared a rather porous border. Noble also suggests that in the exchanges between the English and Scottish radical movements, there were inherent nationalist tensions.26

Muir certainly gave vent to such tensions. On 3 March 1798 (13 Ventôse VI), he submitted a ‘picture of the situation of the three nations of England, Scotland, and Ireland’ to the Directory. He dismissed the claims of British expatriates, which he had heard when he was in Paris in 1793, that the English were only waiting for a French invasion to rise up and overthrow their government. Instead, most English people did not support the French Republic because:

there is not a more ignorant or barbaric people in all Europe. They do not educate themselves, they do not read (it is in the government's interest to perpetuate their ignorance: give that populace meat and beer, and they would slit the throats of their fathers). They are a people without character: today they will cry ‘Long live the King’, tomorrow they will shout ‘Long live the Republic’.27

When she quotes this same passage, Christina Bewley chastises Muir for his blinkered Anglophobia, but this outburst is also notable because of its timing. After his first two letters of 1797, this memorandum was the first in which Muir offered the French government anything resembling a concrete analysis of the state of the radical opposition in Britain. Perhaps – after three months in France – he was at last trying to prove his practical use to the French government, beyond being a mere propaganda symbol. If so, then he was actually tapping

into the uncompromising spirit of the Directorial government which emerged after the Fructidor coup (September 1797) which had purged monarchists or crypto-monarchists from the legislature and the executive, repudiated the peace talks with the British and prosecuted the war more aggressively. If Muir’s anti-English tirade was calculated to ensure a sympathetic response to his earlier calls for financial assistance, it was well directed.

Muir had by this stage directly engaged in the political scrapping among the expatriate revolutionaries in Paris, putting Tone’s nose out of joint. Was this Muir changing tack and setting course away from a modest, memoir-writing retirement, towards an attempt to imitate Tone and persuade the French government to turn their attention away from England and look elsewhere – even to Scotland? Here, too, the timing is significant, since Napoleon Bonaparte’s armée de l’Angleterre was preparing for a descent on the British Isles. In the atmosphere of Anglophobia this created, the Directory had ordered, on 26 February 1798, the expulsion of all English-speaking people from the northern maritime cities. With Anglophone foreigners under pressure, this was an opportune moment for Muir to join in the chorus of anti-English disapproval and to remind the French authorities that Scotland was different from England.

Muir would not be alone in doing so. On 29 October 1799, Robert Watson made his call to the Directory’s foreign minister, Reinhard, for help in fomenting insurrection in the British capital. Watson took the opportunity to imagine a future which shows that, while thinking in British terms, he also had a strong sense of his own Scottish identity. Come the long-awaited revolution in the British Isles, he envisaged that Scotland would be a separate republic:

There is in Paris a library belonging to the Scots College, which contains many precious works, both printed and in manuscript. This library is the last monument to the political independence of Scotland. I ask that it be placed in our care. Its sale could only yield a modest amount, and its conservation, other than that it would be of eminent use for us, would be still more a great source of satisfaction for our compatriots.

One wonders what Alexander Innes, the College’s intrepid Procurator, would have said, had he known of this request. In any case, it went unheeded: Watson

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repeated it on 3 December 1799 to Talleyrand, Bonaparte’s first foreign minister.\textsuperscript{30} One suspects that with the Directory on its last legs in October 1799 and the new Consular régime trying to find its footing both ministers had far more pressing matters to deal with.

Muir also tried to distinguish the Scots from the Irish – and since the United Irish exiles were far more numerous and organised in Paris, he had good cause to do so. While Duckett had emphasised that the revolutionary underground in Scotland had been organised primarily along Irish lines and by Irish agents, Muir insisted that the Scots would act differently from the Irish: ‘I never cease to repeat to the French Government, that Scotland never will be precipitated like Ireland into premature and ill combined insurrection’. It is, however, against the English that Muir’s views of the Scots were defined. Suggesting subversion amongst the British armed forces, he said that Scottish soldiers ‘are deeply tinctured with revolutionary principles’, while Scottish sailors ‘are unlike the English. As brave in the combat, they are better educated, better informed, more attached to their National Independency and more determined to throw off the yoke’. There could be a decisive uprising in London, but it would only be by virtue of ‘that immense ignorant and debauched populace, fermented by Misery into Insurrection’. For revolution to occur in London, one needed leaders who were men of courage and honesty whose habits had brought them into direct contact with the people who followed ‘common occupations’. Having sketched out his own prejudices in such stark terms already, Muir need hardly have added that it was difficult to find a sufficient number of such men in England. ‘In that country, there exists hardly a middle class. Information is almost entirely confined to the highest ranks of life and literature’. In other words, one would look in vain for a social layer of educated, politicised artisans who could lead a proper revolution and not just a riot born of social distress. There were some in London, but ‘they too are mostly Scotchmen’, Muir said, citing Thomas Hardy, George Ross and William Ross. For good measure he added, ‘In Scotland, there is not the same difficulty. The lower orders in general are the best informed’\textsuperscript{31}

The Scottish clergy, by contrast, could not be so strident in their expressions of Scottish identity – and they certainly could not cast it in anti-English or anti-British terms. There may have been a confessional and/or Christian


sense of identity which for them overarched national divisions: confessional because the Irish, the Scots and the English Catholic expatriate communities periodically worked together in their efforts to safeguard their institutions in France; Christian because more broadly the French Revolution, particularly during the whirlwind of ‘dechristianisation’ in the autumn of 1793, appeared to be an attack on all religious belief, not just Catholicism. It seemed that Catholics and Protestants had more in common with each other when faced with the alleged ‘atheism’ of French republicanism. Indeed, the influx of fleeing Catholic clergy – French, Scottish, Irish and English – into the British Isles during the emigration of the 1790s ultimately helped to erode the more ‘Protestant’ prejudices associated with ‘Britishness’. While the Scots Catholics could feel part of this more open definition of ‘Britishness’, their Irish brethren were more wary, and this was reflected in their language. Father Walsh of the Irish College in Paris, writing to the Comité des secours publics on 16 December 1794 to ask that the institution’s property be restored, could bluntly state that the French ‘had taken under its protection the Irish chased from their country by British despotism’.

Neither the Scots nor the English Catholic clergy felt able to express themselves in such colourful political rhetoric, even when addressing officials of the French government.

The result of all this was not only that the Scots, English and Irish expressed their own sense of identity differently, but also that French perceptions of these three nationalities seem to have varied. A report to the Committee of Public Assistance, dated 12 Ventôse III (2 March 1795) and sent on to the Committee of Public Safety, spoke of ‘former refugees chased from an enemy country in which, since time immemorial, they have not been admitted to any civil or military office’. This could have applied equally to the Scots and English Catholics, but the report was speaking about the Irish College and its property in Paris. Although it was not stated explicitly, the Irish clergy in Paris were in a more difficult position, because of the political choices which they had made. The clergy and students of the Irish Colleges could not return home ‘without danger, since the appeal for them to do so was made, and with

33 John Baptist Walsh to Citizen Jubé, 26 Frimaire III (16 December 1794), AMAE, Fonds Ancien, Affaires Diverses Politiques, France, Carton 10, dossier 233.
which they refused to comply. The Irish also seem to have been perceived as more ‘republican’ than their Scottish or English counterparts. When, for example, the students of the Irish College attempted to regain access to their funds, which had been either frozen or confiscated during the Terror, the list included two former students who were now serving with the French army. One was a surgeon with the Army of the Rhine, while the other, James O’Maloney, was fighting in the Vendée with the Army of the West. While the list was compiled by the staff of the Irish College, a member of the Comité des secours publics scribbled in the margin next to O’Maloney’s name that he had also fought two campaigns on the Rhine and had taken ‘2 balles dans le corps’.

The impact of French perceptions of Scotland in these circumstances was important, since the French Romantic ‘discovery’ of Scotland in the pages of Sir Walter Scott and the travel writing of the first decades of the nineteenth century naturally built on the prior, eighteenth-century French awareness of Scotland, which involved, amongst other influences, the widespread popularity of Ossian. Napoleon himself was an avid reader and had an ‘Ossianic’ temple built in the grounds of Malmaison, the home of Joséphine. The activities of Scottish expatriates in France did raise some awareness among French revolutionary officialdom and even amongst the public of a distinct Scottish identity. Watson, as we have seen, stressed the importance of the Scots College library as a repository of evidence to Scotland’s past independence. The revolutionaries themselves seem to have understood that there was some propaganda value in the Scottish radicals – which might explain the Committee of Public Safety’s order of 18 February 1794 for ‘all necessary measures to deliver Muir, Palmer and Margarot and intercept the vessel which is carrying them into exile’.

When, after his epic circumnavigation of the globe, Muir set foot on the dockside at Bordeaux on 28 November 1797, he received a tumultuous reception. One of the nine toasts drunk included one raised to the Army of England which, led by Bonaparte, would soon ‘unite the Thames with the Seine, and have resound on their free river banks, and on the rocks of

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34 Report to Comité des Secours Publics, 12 Ventôse III (2 March 1795), AMAE, Fonds Ancien, Affaires Diverses Politiques, France, Carton 10, dossier 233.
Scotland and Ireland, the cherished airs of glory and liberty! The toast explicitly recognised the separateness of the three nations, and though one can imagine some Scots and Irish bristling at having their verdant landscapes reduced to the status of rocks, it is quite possible that Ossianic influences were at play in the choice of words, giving rise to the image of a bard perched on a rocky outcrop. The political significance of Scottish distinctiveness was made explicit in Paris by Pierre David, a poet, diplomat and orientalist, who announced Muir’s imminent arrival in the capital in the Moniteur on 2 December. After lauding Muir as an example for all ‘martyrs of liberty’, David outlined the history of Scotland’s turbulent relations with England:

The Scots had not forgotten their ancient independence, the massacre of their ancestors, the tragic death of their last queen, the expulsion of the Stuarts from the throne of Great Britain: those memories, the sentiment of their poverty, the shocking contrast which it offers alongside English opulence, and perhaps, finally, the example of our revolution, became the causes of the insurrectionary movements which arose in Scotland in 1792, and in which Thomas Muir played one of the leading roles.

Scottish radicalism, for David, was a logical outgrowth of Scotland’s past and its grievances with England. Yet the presence of Muir also informed the self-image of revolutionary France. Paris, David claimed, was ‘that capital of the republican world, that meeting place of all victims escaped from despotism’. Muir, David wrote, had arrived in ‘the land of independence and hospitality; he enters France at the moment that the Grande Nation threatens England, and is preparing to realise the project which he had conceived.’

IV.

This article has focused on a numerically small group of people, but the attention given to them by historians of the French Revolution, of Scottish radicalism and of Scottish Catholicism raises the question of how exiles

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37 Moniteur, no. 105, 15 Nivôse VI.
38 I thank Professor Cairns Craig for this observation.
39 Bewley, Muir of Huntershill, 161.
40 Moniteur, no. 72, 12 Frimaire VI.
can fit into ‘mainstream’ histories. This is not an easy question to answer, since the tiny numbers of Scots clerics and radical exiles are not particularly representative of Scottish society in general, nor do they lend themselves to fruitful sociological analysis in the way that the larger waves of migration do.\textsuperscript{41} The answer is therefore to be found in their cultural or symbolic importance, in three ways. First, the expatriates examined here were vocal and had direct contact with the French government, so they had an influence on official French perceptions of the Scots. ‘Le fameux Thomas Muir’ and ‘l’infortuné Wolfe Tone’ may have been exceptional and far from representative of most Scots and Irish, but they made an important contribution to the shaping of their own country’s image abroad. Sometimes in quite peculiar ways, they raised official and public awareness of the differences between the different parts of the British Isles. For a quite different purpose, the exiled Scots, Irish and English clergy played a similar role. In this sense, these expatriates presented different images of Scotland to the wider world: they might well have been \textit{distorted} images, but they were still influential, particularly in France in a period when French intellectuals and travellers were ‘discovering’ the country.\textsuperscript{42}

Secondly, the very experience of exile or expatriation tends to make problems of identity more acute for the expatriate than it might be for his or her fellow-citizens in the original country. The very fact of exile, emigration or diaspora creates an immediate common link between the expatriates, since their own nationality is what distinguishes them from the host community. The predicament of Scottish radical exiles and the Scots Catholic clergy in Paris therefore gave rise to expressions of national identity, Scottish and British, sometimes in the strongest of terms. Above all, it cast up two radically different views of Scottishness: the one republican, nationalist and anti-British; the other, politically moderate and reconciling itself to ‘Britishness’. These represent the two poles between which most Scots fell as they sought to reconcile the tension between their Scottish and British identities.

While the more radical of the Scots political exiles tended to throw their Scottish identities into greater relief, thinking in British terms primarily out of strategic concerns, the clergy played a much more cautious and in a sense a more complex game, stressing their Britishness while never losing sight of their

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\item See, amongst others, Peter France and John Renwick, ‘France and Scotland in the Eighteenth Century’ in James Laidlaw (ed.), \textit{The Auld Alliance: France and Scotland over Seven Hundred Years} (Edinburgh, 1999), 89–104.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Scottishness. This was especially evident when, under the restored Bourbon monarchy, the opportunity arrived to claim compensation for the loss of property during the Revolution. During the negotiations between the British and French governments in 1823 – six years prior to Catholic Emancipation – the question arose as to whether British Catholic property should be included, since it had been acquired originally as part of a movement of opposition to earlier Protestant governments in Britain and because it could be defined as ecclesiastical property, whose sale was recognised by the French Constitutional Charter of 1814. The Scottish Roman Catholic prelate Alexander Paterson was provoked into a furious defence of his congregation in a letter to one of the British commissioners involved, in which he emphasised their loyalty as British subjects. ‘We were surely British subjects, holders of British property, in 1793 … we suffered in the day of punishment as British subjects; are we not to be awarded as such in the day of retribution?’ Paterson demanded. It was immaterial that the former owners of the Scots College property ‘might have been called Jesuits or Jansenists, or as the adherents to the old cause of the Stuarts were called in Scotland, they were perhaps staunch Jacobites’, since ‘the sins of these fathers’ ought not to be ‘visited upon the children of Scotch Catholics in the reign of George the Fourth’. He finished with a flourish in which he laid an optimistic claim on behalf of the Scots Catholic clergy to the civil liberties promised by Britishness:

In this happy land of civil and religious liberty, equal justice will be administered to all. As British subjects, who suffered as such in 1793, we will be awarded as such in 1823, and allowed to settle in our native land, where religious wars are at an end: where we live with our Protestant and Scotch countrymen as friends and brothers. No man in Scotland quarrels with his fellow-brother for what was done by those before them … No man in Scotland thinks it unlawful to allow us to abide by the dictates of our conscience, and to teach our people, both by word and example, to fear God and to honour the king.43

Paterson was reiterating what many people had come to believe in the years immediately before Emancipation: that Britishness and Scottishness could

43 Alexander Paterson, ‘To --- McKenzie, Esq., one of the Honorable British Commissioners appointed to liquidate the Claims of British Subjects on the French Government’, SCA, ad CA2/11. I thank Dr Christine Johnson, former Keeper of the Scots Catholic Archives, for a copy of this memorandum.
overarch the confessional divide, while the former could also accommodate a separate sense of Scottish identity. There is none the less in Paterson’s language an implicit threat that if the British state were to fail in its duty of securing justice for its subjects, then the Scots Catholics might very well take refuge in their Scottishness, leaving only a loose dynastic loyalty to the king in the place of a deeper sense of Britishness.

Paterson’s rhetoric points to the third way in which the responses of expatriates to their changing circumstances might fit into broader historical narratives. In his article on the Scots Catholic mission, Jim McMillan suggests that ‘minorities need to be studied as well as majorities, to ensure that history is genuinely inclusive and not merely the propaganda of the victors’. The role of such minorities is rarely passive and, although exiles in particular have a tendency to wallow from time to time in their status as victims, this should not distract from their often active efforts to shape the political and social developments of their original country. In the case of the Scots Catholic clergy, their response to the French Revolution was not only ‘negative’ in that they were pushed away from their French hosts towards the only viable alternative protector, the British government. They also played a positive role in shaping a sense of Scottish Catholic identity that could reconcile itself to Britishness and a Protestant state. This could be a means of staking their claim to the freedoms Britain was supposed to offer its loyal subjects. In this sense, the small network of Scottish Catholic clergy represented by the mission and its institutions in Europe, and in France in particular, played a small but influential role in preparing Scottish and perhaps British Catholics for emancipation, which finally came in 1829.

At one level, therefore, the study of expatriates is a way of setting national histories into a wider international context. At another level, since expatriates can be victims of persecution or people who have in some way lost out, it shows how the underdogs might still have an influence on the ‘victors’. To return to the case at hand, while it is important not to overstate the role of the relatively small network of Scots Catholic clergy, the response of those in France to the challenges of the 1790s suggests that the wider Catholic community played an important role in its own emancipation by 1829. The study of exiles, of expatriate communities and of larger diasporas is not, therefore, only a question of making history inclusive (an admirable goal in

itself), but it also provides an opportunity to examine the ways in which wider, trans-national networks can have an impact on domestic developments. This is particularly germane to current trends in writing on Scottish history, which has all-too-often (and usually quite unfairly) been accused of ‘parochialism’. There may well be, as T.C. Smout has recently suggested, some way to go before this criticism is fully addressed.\(^{45}\) Yet there is no doubt that scholars of Scottish history are enmeshing their subject ever deeper into the contexts of European, Atlantic and imperial history. This means that small groups of expatriates and larger migrant communities are no longer just colourful footnotes, but are – or will become – integral to Scottish historical narratives.

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A Scottish Literati in Paris: The Case of Sir James Hall

Michael Brown

When the political earthquake destroyed France in the summer of 1789, how far north were the tremors and aftershocks felt? The question is worth asking because, according to what amounts to a historiographical orthodoxy, Scotland escaped the upheaval. Indeed, Bruce Lenman has pithily surmised that Scotland was ‘the most undemanding and subservient of Britain’s provinces’.1 Certainly only slight shifts were registered on the ground, virtually no political houses fell, few lives were destroyed and the architecture of church and state retained their pre-eminence on the skyline. T.M. Devine, in a summation of this view has provocatively turned the enquiry on its head, asking not how far Scotland was shaken by the Revolution, but, rather, why it was not.

The failure of radical reform in Scotland was, in this rendition, comprehensible because of ‘the social and economic context’, by which Devine implies ‘the power of the greater Scottish nobility’.2 This came about through the extension of ancient legal powers and ‘an ideological commitment to agricultural improvement’. This symbiotically ensured that ‘the “unreformed” political system was entirely capable of accommodating and implementing legislation crucial to the advance of capitalism’.3 In contrast to the ‘resilience of the Scottish state’ the reformers could only muster an ‘ephemeral outbreak of radical unrest’, in part because ‘for much of the period the evidence suggests a modest rise in living standards for the majority of the people’.4 So too, he recognises, particular local circumstances conspired against the conspirators. These included the war with France from 1793, the proliferation of places within the state and colonial systems, and the emigration which lay open to the truly disaffected.

1 Bruce Lenman, Integration, Enlightenment and Industrialisation: Scotland, 1746–1832 (Toronto, 1981), 58.
3 Ibid., 58.
4 Ibid., 54, 55 and 60.
The terms utilised here are of interest. The economic base is understood to be driving the political and intellectual superstructure, and the real revolution is one of industrial development, capitalism and, implicitly, of class relations. In that, Devine seems wedded to an analysis of the Revolutionary age as shaped by traditional Marxist-inspired models of transformative epochs in the mode of production culminating in political upheaval. This is despite the fact that in the particular case, that of Scotland, Devine highlights how industrial change did not lead inexorably to revolution. That conservative trajectory, he concludes ‘depended ultimately on the role and responses of the landed class itself.’

Coming close to contradicting his statement about the capacity of Scottish society to accommodate capitalism, Devine also avers that ‘there is considerable evidence that before 1800 the Scottish landed classes were still committed to a broadly paternalistic role which was not entirely eroded by the new principles of commercial management.’ Scotland it seems struck an ideal balance between innovation and conservation, between economic development and social stability.

Historians are now, however, revising that rather static, stable view of Scottish society in the 1790s, and indeed, throughout the century. In recent years increasingly acute seismographs have learned to register the echoes of the Revolution that reached the far-off reaches of North Britain. E.W. McFarland has capably documented the parallels and connections between the radical sediment in Scotland and the more volcanic variant found in Ireland while the contributors to *Scotland in the Age of the French Revolution* have begun to rethink the configuration of the political geography and geology of the 1790s. Bob Harris’ monograph on *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* has helped to quantify and categorise the nature of the Scottish radical movement. Emma Vincent Macleod has helpfully situated Scottish developments within the broader *War of Ideas* she sees occurring in Britain as a whole, while the essays in *These Fissured Isles* have provided a broader narrative of upheaval and

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5 Ibid., 61.  
6 Ibid., 61.  
dislocation for developments across the Three Kingdoms. Yet, despite the expertise that has been applied to the search for revolutionary damage, the picture Devine offers of a society stratified by social and economic concerns has, intriguingly, been substantially upheld.

This is partly because much of the Scottish historiography concerning the 1790s shares Devine’s semi-Marxist analytical frame, resulting in the hunt for a nascent working-class sensibility. John Brims, for instance, uses the analytical categories of class to conclude that, in the case of the 1792 riots at least, the conjunction between political radicalism and popular economic unrest had not yet emerged. Indeed, ‘there was little or nothing in these disturbances, or in any of the others that broke out in the summer of 1792, to suggest that the “lower orders” had adopted the revolutionary republican ideology of Thomas Paine’. Indeed, ‘the available evidence pointed to the conclusion that the radical societies sincerely deplored the activities of the mobs’. Elaine McFarland, while working outside of the Marxian rubric, concurs, writing of how:

It would be simplistic to view these [riots of 1792] as the Scottish people suddenly shuffling on to the historical stage, given that riots and popular protest had been recurrent features of the urban scene earlier in the century. It also seems the case that some of the unrest still stemmed from localised economic grievances … What was novel about the riots in the larger Scottish towns – Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh – was the linking of more general economic grievances, notably the tax burden and the new Corn Law of 1791, with explicit ‘political’ overtones. Despite the fears of the authorities, these owed less to Painite ideologies than the perception that the governing classes were showing an ill-judged and arrogant disregard for popular feeling … What the demonstrations underlined was the contrast already developing between the vigour and immediacy of popular action and the restraint of middle-class reformers.

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12 Ibid., 44.
McFarland’s own sentiments are made clear when she writes of ‘the privileged and petulant world of middle-class reformers’. 14 Gordon Pentland uses the almost equally damning phrase ‘Foxite worthies’. 15 These are not the stuff revolutions are made of, clearly.

The general impression of stable, complacent conservatism is, if anything, exacerbated when we look towards the intellectual avant garde of Scottish society – the enlightened literati. Devine, again, states the consensus: ‘much of the corpus of published work of the Scottish Enlightenment helped to give a new intellectual credibility to a system of government dominated by a tiny propertied oligarchy. The great men of the Enlightenment … were all intellectually innovative but politically conservative. Whereas the philosophes in France stimulated revolutionary fervour, the literati in Scotland legitimised the existing political order’. 16 This inclination was justified for, in line with his benign assessment of Scottish society in the 1790s, Devine remarks on how Montesquieu ‘was revolutionary in the French context. But Scotland had already achieved the “ideal” government on which he bestowed so much praise a century before’. 17

Nor is Devine alone in taking this position. The Scottish Enlightenment is commonly depicted as characterised by the Moderate party, which in the 1790s was led by the counter-revolutionary figure of George Hill; they constituted what Ian D.L. Clark has called ‘the Dundas party at prayer’. 18 Indeed, Devine’s view is echoed by Richard Teichgraeber, who deemed the movement ‘epistemologically radical and socially conservative’. 19 The Scottish Enlightenment is politically loyal, socially well-placed and theologically settled. There is little room for radical idealism left.

14 Ibid., 81.
16 Devine, ‘The Failure of Radical Reform’, 56.
17 Ibid., 56–7. This echoes his assertion that ‘a revolution on the French model could not have occurred in Scotland in the 1790s because a century before the decisive shift between monarchy and aristocracy had already taken place’ which itself belies his acknowledgement that ‘the country was ripe for political reform.’ Ibid., 54 and 52.
I want to revise this view by proposing that the Scottish Enlightenment, that apparent bastion of right-minded trenchant unionist loyalism, actually fractured under the seismic pressures of the French Revolution, and that the homogenous picture of the Enlightenment as a single, undiscriminating and unified movement imposes an unexamined political agenda onto what was always a fissiparous and fluid formation. In so doing, I may be understood as making a contribution to delineating the ‘War of Ideas’ not as it happened within Britain, although this is a necessary context, but within Scotland itself, marking out the contours and peaks of a culture war which occurred within Scottish élite culture in the revolutionary decade. And, I want to support this contention by dwelling here on the rather unprepossessing figure of Sir James Hall.

Hall was, in many ways, a characteristic Scottish literati of the second rank – which makes him all the more significant for my purposes, where plodding typicality not idiosyncratic genius is more illuminating. Born on 17 January 1761 at Dunglass, East Lothian, Hall was educated at Christ’s College Cambridge and the University of Edinburgh, where he attended lectures by John Robison and Joseph Black. He also went on the Grand Tour, from 1783 to 1786, travelling through France, Switzerland, Germany and Italy. It was while in Rome that he sat for Angelica Kaufmann, having already sat for her paramour, Sir Joshua Reynolds, before his departure. It was during this tour that Hall first evinced a serious interest in the natural philosophy that would associate him with the Enlightenment. He began observing rock formations and exploring sites of unusual geological interest. While in Italy he climbed Vesuvius at least five times, while also exploring Mount Etna and Stomboli. In documenting and dwelling on what he had seen, Hall makes an entry in the lists of geological scholarship, as a pioneer of field work. Thus, for instance, Stuart Hartley has concluded that the diary Hall kept of his tour was ‘also more’ than a Grand Tour narrative, revealing ‘a concern with understanding nature’s works in the field to explain and to verify theories arrived at a priori’. Hall was to twin this interest in geology with his training under Black in developing a series of experiments, often using devices of his own construction, that verified the thesis of Sir James Hutton that heat acted on rocks to liquefy them (not, as previously thought, that heat was a by-product of rock formation).

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In the typical polymathic character of a dilettante, Hall also sustained a theoretical and practical interest in Gothicism, a concern which culminated in his 1813 tract, *An Essay on the Origin, History and Principles of Gothic Architecture*, in which he contended that the form derived from primitive construction techniques in wattle. Like Uncle Toby in Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, Hall’s determination to prove his thesis led him to build a miniature wattle cathedral on the grounds of his estate at Dunglass, East Lothian. He was elected a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, that élite Enlightenment club, in 1784 (a year after its foundation) and served as its president from 1812 to 1820. He also entered the lists of the Royal Society itself, being elected a fellow in 1806.

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So far, so standard; so safe. And in many ways, the travelogue that Hall kept while in France in 1791 is in keeping with that impression, expressing some of the standard concerns and characteristics of such documents. But that is not all that it contains. It is also a remarkable account of a traveller’s encounter with the country in a period of political turmoil and social change.²¹

It should be noted that, unlike Wolfe Tone’s evident anxieties about language, Hall’s ability in French seems to have been excellent, for he follows a range of conversations, political debates, public lectures and arguments in crowded and noisy locations with evident capacity.²² For example, on 17 July, Hall was in conversation with M. de la Place, who was expatiating on his objections to a paper by Sir John Playfair which Hall had sent him. Hall noted these ‘were taken down literally’, being transcribed in French into the diary.²³ Only occasionally did his French fail him, as when attending a particularly boisterous session at the National Assembly, when he lamented ‘on this occasion there was a great deal of altercation that I did not clearly follow.’²⁴ In Limoges, he also found himself struggling to comprehend some of the conversations he overheard, excusing himself by saying ‘their language when they talk together is a patois that I can make nothing of. They say it contains

²¹ Hall’s travelogue is contained in four diaries kept over the period 3 April to 7 August 1791. National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), MSS. 6329–6332.  
²² On Tone, see Sylvie Kleinman’s essay in this volume.  
²³ 17 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 149. This is probably the mathematician and astronomer, Pierre Simon, marquis de Laplace (1749–1827)  
²⁴ 19 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 64.
Latin, Italian, English.’25 Otherwise his previous experience in France, in 1785, and the lessons his education must have granted him, proved entirely adequate, giving him access to French culture.

Hall’s interest in French culture was partially due to the scientific developments which were occurring there. He reacquainted himself with Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, whom he had met on his previous expedition, and took the chance to examine equipment, going for instance: ‘with [Lord] Daer to the furnace at M. Seguir’.26 So too, he occasionally took advantage of events which were pertinent to his concerns taking place in the capital. Thus he ‘went to a lecture by M. Charles on electricity.’27 Arts as well as science drew him. He had already seen Haydn play in London – thinking him rather overrated – and regularly went to the Opera in Paris. The journal is dotted with pithy remarks on the spectacles he witnessed, calling ‘Le Vendemie, an Italian Opera, rather dull’, for instance.28 So too, on occasion, the visual arts distracted him. He quickly noted how on 13 May he ‘saw the rape of the Sabines by Rubens.’29 He also recorded how he

went with T[homas Douglas] and D[aer] to see M. David’s pictures. His sketch of the Tennis Court oath has much genius in it. A beautiful picture of the elder Brutus in his family at the moment his son is being brought in dead after the execution. The expression both of the father and of the women is just and grand. Owing I think to a fault in the light and shade, Brutus himself is not sufficiently conspicuous. You look for him before you find him.30

In particular, Hall used the diary to remark on the architecture he encountered. Primarily his interest was piqued by Gothic constructions, notably churches. One notable building brought him to digress from his route in order to see it: the palace at Versailles. Yet, of it he rather prosaically complained of the damp – it was built on reclaimed swampland – and of how ‘the palace is no longer warmed by crowds and courtiers’, understandable as the monarch was by now

25 19 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 141.
26 5 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 49.
27 17 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 49. This is probably the physicist Charles Augustin de Coulomb (1736–1806).
28 1 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 137. Possibly by Giuseppe Gazzaniga (1743–1818).
29 13 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 22.
30 1 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 135–6.
under house arrest in the Louvre.\textsuperscript{31} Also chiming with his enlightened curiosity, Hall regularly took time from his travels to examine the agricultural practice of the region he was travelling through. In particular, the diary is peppered with discussion of plough technology – Hall regularly supplied lengthy descriptions of the various tools he encountered, and often even supplied a brief sketch of the equipment on the facing page.

It was not just the physical landscape and its management that concerned Hall, however. He also took cognisance of the physical attributes of the people, particularly the women who caught his eye. He reports of how on 14 July 1791, he spent the evening celebrating the Revolution at the Jacobin club, where there was ‘a good lively party and the women looking better than any set I have seen in Paris’; while those in Evreux, he called ‘a more handsome breed of women than I think I have seen in this quarter’.\textsuperscript{32} Of those living west of Paris, he ungallantly remarked: ‘the women are very much sunburnt and not handsome.’ Yet the manners of these provincials did meet with his approval, for he described them as ‘good humoured and free. They are most vigorous … they show great industry in cultivating every little spot.’\textsuperscript{33} He was less complementary about the people of Limoges: ‘I never in my life saw such a collection of wild animals. Pale faces, long black hair hanging quite loose, blue coats and garters tied under the knee.’\textsuperscript{34}

Yet, the diaries Hall habitually kept when travelling were indeed ‘more than’ an account of his exploits and experiences on the Grand Tour.\textsuperscript{35} And, when documenting the trip taken in the summer of 1791, they begin to create a subtle subsidence in the concept of the Scottish Enlightenment Hall seems to so ably occupy. Indeed, the diary itself is far from being a standard journal kept by a traveller. We can begin to uncover the cause of these tremors by looking at how Hall’s concern with manners intersects with the political circumstances in which he found himself. This might be illustrated through reference to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{31} 29 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 129.
  \item \textsuperscript{32} 14 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 120; 27 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 116.
  \item \textsuperscript{33} 23 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 84, 82–3.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} 19 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 141.
\end{itemize}
two events. One occurs early on in Hall’s sojourn. On 15 May 1791 he noted how ‘Abbé Gordon says that gambling never ran so high as it does just now in Paris. Now since we have been here we have not seen a card. The fact is that our acquaintance is among the democrats and his among the aristocrats.’\(^{36}\) Thus manners, rank and politics combined to generate modes of amusement as well as means of activism. Later, and in a scene that could be drawn from a political melodrama, Hall recorded how on the night of 17 July he attended a soiree at the home of the British ambassador, Earl Gower.\(^{37}\) Nearby, however, something sinister was occurring.

During dinner all seemed quiet, so much so that dancing was begun. Afterwards however it began again with greater intensity. A great and confused noise was heard towards the Champ de Mars; drums beating the *generale*, cannons hurling, shouts and screams of people. This increased to an alarming pitch till at last we heard a great number of discharges of small arms which lasted with many interruptions for about a quarter of an hour … It was remarkable however to see how differently people took it. Some were running in terror. Others were walking quite coolly as if nothing had happened.\(^{38}\)

This was the massacre at the Champ de Mars. In the wake of the monarch’s flight to Varennes, the National Assembly had determined upon blaming the ministers, notably the marquis de Bouillé, the commander chief of the army, and declared the king suspended on 15 July. The public was not convinced by such unseemly manoeuvres however, and public protest escalated, with the signing of mass petitions. One such gathering turned ugly when two men were killed by an angry mob at the Hôtel de Ville. The result was the declaration of martial law. When a crowd gathered at the Champ de Mars, and stones were thrown, the National Guard panicked and let loose a volley of shots. In the pandemonium that ensued around fifty people were killed and numerous others wounded.\(^{39}\) We shall return to Hall’s rendition of this event.

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\(^{36}\) 15 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, facing 35.

\(^{37}\) George Granville Leveson-Gower, the first duke of Sutherland, was recalled in 1792. He was later notorious for his role in the Clearances. His papers concerning his sojourn in Paris were published as Oscar Browning (ed.), *The Despatches of Earl Gower* (Cambridge, 1885).

\(^{38}\) 17 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 155–6.

\(^{39}\) The details of this event are drawn from D.M.G. Sutherland, *France 1789–1815: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (London, 1985), 129.
The question of the diary’s idiosyncrasy comes further into focus when one examines its composition. The diary amounts to 800 octavo pages, written into four bound volumes, and covers a journey which took Hall from Scotland, through London, and from there to Paris. Arriving in the French city on 19 April 1791, Hall was accompanied by Lord Daer, his brother Thomas Douglas (who later became the 5th Earl of Selkirk) and a third Douglas sibling, John. The visit in the French capital was punctuated by two trips into the provinces – the first lasting from 21 to 29 May took Hall to La Roche-Guyon north west of Paris; the second lasted from 12 to 26 June, during which time he ventured south as far as Clermont, in Auvergne. While Daer left Paris on 8 July, Hall eventually decamped back to Britain on 20 July, arriving at his estate, Dunglass, on 7 August. Each day is accounted for by an often lengthy entry.

However, what begins to intrigue is the way in which Hall carefully categorised and inventoried his entries. Alongside each paragraph a line is drawn, and each is carefully annotated with a letter. At the front of the first volume a code is given, deciphering these. Thus M means manners, H is husbandry and P is for politics. Furthermore, Hall took the trouble to generate a contents page at the back of each of the four volumes, with the events of each day briefly described, and again the category under which his observations fell carefully noted. Without wanting to make too much of this habit, it is worth observing that this implies that Hall was clearly desirous of navigating his way around the diary – and was therefore thinking it probable he would refer to the text again in future years, or perhaps even publish his account.

This concern for revisiting the text is further evinced where Hall reconsiders what he has written, coming back to excise comments and reformulate impressions. And one such revision provides an entry point into the debate concerning his political experience in France. On 23 June, while at the Pont de Chateau outside Clermont, Hall received the following dramatic news: ‘After dinner we heard the news of the king being fled from Paris and we set out instantly for Clermont. The news was confirmed when we came there and we resolved to set out by daylight tomorrow for Paris.’ Yet Hall clearly decided that this interjection was too prompt, and might overshadow some more mundane observations he wished to make concerning husbandry. Thus he crossed out these two sentences, and continued with a discussion of ploughing...
technology, even taking the time to sketch the object that had captured his attention on the facing page. Only after some further remarks on geology and with an eye to narrative and plot, did he come back to the events unfolding in the capital:

Crossing the bridge we met the lady and her family in great consternation at some news they had just received from Clermont, that the king and all the royal family were fled from Paris, that all was in an uproar, that the gates of Clermont were shut against everybody, and that some dreadful calamity was every minute to be expected.41

The first excised entry finds Hall off-guard, having just received the news and feeling overwhelmed by its implications. The second finds him thinking of the diary’s dramatic structure and hints at the possibility of having readers other than Hall himself.

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This might in part make sense of Hall’s determination to be close to the hub of political action, wherever he might be. Certainly, having left the quiet cranny of Dunglass in Haddingtonshire, East Lothian, he availed of the opportunity to act as a political observer. When passing through London on his way to France he was waylaid by the chance to see the House of Commons in session, noting how he ‘Saw [the] debate on Grey’s motion on state of the nation and potential war with France. Liked Sheridan, thought Dundas spoke in a good manner, better than I expected from him.’42 Once in Paris, he successfully sought out a permanent ticket to the visitors’ box in the National Assembly, observing:

The room is long with benches all round. The president’s chair is on one side and in the middle of the length. There are three desks called Tribunes, one opposite to the president and one at each end of the room, at which the members stand when they make a speech of any length. In the common course and little is to be said, a man stands up and speaks in his place, as they do in the House of Commons. The left

41 Ibid., 209. See also Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* (Cambridge, 2003).
42 12 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 17.
hand half (of the president) is occupied by the democratic party and the other half by their opponents. This last was very thinly peopled indeed. As we sat at the extremity of the left end we heard only when a particular silence was held.  

Once there he took copious notes on the various debates and speakers, and even compared his sense of the occasion with that he had witnessed in London, writing of how M. Charles Lameth’s ‘speaking is more in the style of the English parliament than any of them I have heard as he dealt much in attacks on the other side and levelled some pretty severe things against [Pierre Samuel?] Dupont [de Nemours]. His figure is good. I was more pleased with the figure of M. [Jean-Paul] Rabaut de St Etienne than with any of them I have yet heard.’ Although Hall frequented the National Assembly with an astonishing regularity, he also made his way to the gallery of the Jacobin Club, to which his travelling companion Lord Daer had already made recourse. On 29 April he observed there was ‘a very numerous company of them, say 7 or 800 people. They have the form of an Assembly and many of the members were present. They have correspondents all over the kingdom with societies connecting with them by what they call filiation. Their influence must be immense.’

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As well as being a discrete observer of French national affairs, Hall made it his business to seek out and converse with the leading actors in the drama. Something of an intellectual groupie of politicians, he was even willing to travel some distance to consort with figures of repute or notoriety. On his way back from the estate of the marquis de Lafayette he records how when near Versailles, Hall and Daer ‘called on Mr Payne (sic.), author of the answer to Burke and of Common Sense. He dined with us, he considers himself as having made the Revolution in America and seems to think he will make one in England.’ So too, he diverted from his planned trip when he heard that the

43 21 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 46–7.
44 26 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 81. St Etienne was a member of the National Assembly from 1790, rising to the office of President in 1793, although he was guillotined in the same year.
45 29 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 103.
46 29 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 129.
duke of Bouillon was at his Chateau in Navarre. Having met, Hall adjudged him to be ‘a lively, clever old man and a mind of high broad fashion.’ Caution however, prevailed during this encounter for Hall lamented that,

the Duke, as it may well be supposed, is no friend to the Revolution, but he keeps this to himself, and during a long party the conversation never once turned on the subject while he was present. I understand he is suspicious of having spies about him. He offended the people absurdly by not accepting the command of their national guards.47

Not that Hall was wanting for someone to discuss the Revolution with; there was no end of debate and argument within the circles in which he moved in Paris. Of the Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, Hall provided the following assessment:

[He] consults nobody but M. Condorcet. On his ideas of government he forms his ideas complete and round in his own mind and brings them out in the Assembly without preparation and consequently under disadvantage. It is a pity he is not a more pliant temper as his genius and sentiments are of the noblest kind. He seems, I have observed, to have a mortal aversion at being questioned. Some points about him are, I think, like Dr [Joseph] Black in point of character and temper.48

Pithier was his assessment of Jacques-Pierre Brissot, who ‘talks and shows himself much. He is clever but I think rash about the characters of men.’49

Rather more detail was provided about an encounter at dinner with Robespierre, whom Hall had already damned with faint praise as a poor speaker, remarking that ‘Robespierre went to the Tribune and spoke better than I have heard him towards the end of his speech. For in the first part I rather think he lost himself in the definitions of republic and royalty.’50 Nor did Hall take to him privately, describing him as ‘a man of morose patriotism. He has a tendency

47 27 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 118–9. This was Godefroy-Charles Henry, sixth duc de Bouillion (1728–92).
50 13 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 111–2.
to see things on their black side. He considers all the old officers, and all the old nobles, with hardly any exception, as aristocrats’ – something which the sympathetic Sir James Hall found awkward. This antipathy was furthered when Robespierre proceeded to opine about a ‘letter from the English Revolution Society announcing the fete to take place in London on the 14th.’ To the news that this transaction would restrict ‘the business of the day … to the affairs of France without any notice being taken of those of England’ Robespierre took umbrage. Hall recorded how the following altercation ensued:

He [Robespierre] swore that the government of Spain was preferable to that of England. When I made him explain this however he allowed that ours would be the best to live under if no change could happen in either but that Spain was in a situation much more calculated for receiving good government than England as our aristocracy is strongly rooted and maintained by the actual comfort of the people in the present circumstances.\(^51\)

Not that Hall took to Robespierre’s rival, either. He derided Danton as ‘a man with a thundering voice, even stronger than Mirabeau’s. He is not respected and under the mark of much frankness is suspected of being very cunning at bottom.’\(^52\) The next day Hall reiterated his negative assessment, scathingly opining that ‘Danton’s voice is most astonishingly full and grand, and if his talents corresponded to it, the effect would be prodigious.’\(^53\)

Hall also fell in with British visitors to the French city, although he rarely found himself at ease in their company. One such evening left him slightly disconsolate: ‘Dined with Lord Gower as the king’s birthday. Met a great party of English. Lady Sutherland very good humoured. Mr and Mrs Balfour, Mr and Mrs Dempster, Lord Mountmorris, Mr Perregaeus, Mr Sykes, young Buchan of Kelly, Mr Hashingdon. Vague general conversation; not tiresome but nothing interesting.’\(^54\) Equally unfulfilling was his encounter with John Paul Jones, with Hall being distinctly unimpressed by his fellow countryman: ‘After breakfast

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51 5 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 64–5.
52 12 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 99.
53 13 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 114.
54 4 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 148–9. Lady Sutherland was Earl Gower’s wife. Lord Mountmorris is possibly Matthew Robinson Morris, later second Baron Rokeby (1713–1800). Mr Perragaeus is probably Jean-Fredrick Perregaux, treasurer to the Committee of Public Safety, Mr Hasingson is probably William Huskisson (1770–1830) an intimate of Earl Gower. The others are as yet unidentified.
the famous Paul Jones called. He had met with Daer before; I was with him for the first time. Nothing extraordinary in his figure. He talked much of Russia and the Turks and what he said confirmed the idea I had of them; but I could not bring him to speak of his adventures in Great Britain. This reticence on the part of the American patriot is understandable when it is recalled that part of his British exploits included an attempt to capture and hold to ransom a peer of the realm, the chosen target for his unsuccessful venture being the earl of Selkirk, father of Thomas Douglas and Lord Daer.

Obviously under-whelmed by Jones, Hall reserved his praise for someone he had not met – perhaps preserving his second-hand impressions in aspic. This hero figure was Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, and Hall spent a great deal of time seeking out anecdotes about him. The death of his idol just before he left for France left him bereft, as he recorded on 9 April:

Read in the *Moniteur* the paper on wills that Mirabeau on his death had sent to the National Assembly. It strikes me as the first composition I have read in every point of view. I had heard of his death the day before from Daer. [Note that Lord Daer is if anything better informed than Hall; this is a recurring theme.] In reading this paper and in thinking of what the world has lost and what I have lost in not seeing him I was more affected than I ever remember to have been at any thing of the kind.

Later, of the National Assembly members, Hall noted ‘Mirabeau’s death has made a sad blank among them. They feel themselves now unhinged and at a loss how to go on. They had no idea (as some of them acknowledged to Daer) till he was gone how much they were led by him.’

The identification with Mirabeau makes some sense if you take into account the assessment of François Furet, who in writing of his status within the Revolutionary pantheon, argued:

Many of the leaders of 1789 were nobles – Lafayette, the Lameths, Talleyrand – yet a liberal noble was not a déclassé noble but quite the

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55 7 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 166.
57 9 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 12.
58 2 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 119.
opposite: liberty was the common property of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy … In 1789, amid the chaos of events, France was still groping toward the formation of an ‘English-style’ élite, combining the liberal nobility with the enlightened bourgeoisie of the Third Estate … Who could speak for the new élite before the still young ‘nation’? Who was both enough of a democrat and enough of an aristocrat to lower the flag of tradition before the flag of Revolution? Mirabeau was the only noble sufficiently déclassé, and the only déclassé sufficiently noble, to join the past with what was happening now.59

To what extent Hall saw himself in his hero is arguable, but it certainly chimes with his later open attraction to French republican proposals, and accords with his anxiety when meeting Robespierre that all the titled might not be standing against the tide of history.

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This passion for frequenting the political actors of the day led Hall inexorably into the game of political analysis. For this, he needed reliable sources of news, and the diary gives a strong sense of a city in turmoil, with people constantly enquiring from each other how things were proceeding. The exposition of the 17 July massacre highlights the complex role of gossip and rumour in disseminating news. It also stands as evidence as to how Hall composed the diary in the quiet time between social engagements. Thus, on the day itself, he was told by Champagne ‘that he had seen the Curé of Gros Callonx, with some guards who told him that the people had cut off the heads of two invalids who were going to blow up the Autel de la Patrie. This story looks quite absurd, but I’m afraid it has some foundation.’ After writing this entry, later in the evening, Hall ‘dined with Lord Gower. His house stands in the Gros Callonx in which the hanging of the two men was said to have happened. [Note how the mode of death has changed.] We found that the story was true and that the people had been killed very near to Lord Gower’s.60

News was even harder to get in the provinces. Thus, when the king fled the capital, it took a number of days for the news to reach Hall who was staying in

60 17 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 152–3.
Clermont. And as he made his way through the region, ‘every person we met told us the story with new circumstances. That the king had made his escape out of a window …’. Of the authorities in Limoges he remarked ‘It was curious to see how little this company, certainly among the best informed in the place, know of the various parties in the National Assembly. They know in the Assembly only two parties and make no distinction between M. Barnave, M. Robespierre &c.’

Yet, given Hall’s proximity to power, he was often well-informed and soon became a competent if rather partisan political analyst. As early as 22 April he remarked on how ‘there certainly is a spirit now rising in the country which may end in the establishment of a pure republic’, self-evidently for him a good thing. So too he was given to critiquing the position of the various parties in the Assembly. With regard to the debate on the citizenship rights to be granted to the colonial natives of the French empire he was trenchantly on the side of those arguing to grant them the status of active citizenship. As he stoutly stated on 12 May, ‘all I heard [in the Assembly] tended to convince me more and more that the committee were to blame for not having decided at once that the gens de couleur who were proprietors were as good active citizens as any others and that it was disgraceful that there should be two minds in the Assembly on such a topic.’ By 14 May his patience was being tested by those opposed to the reform: ‘nothing new was stated, only the continuation of the same abominable style of reasoning that had been used on the other day by the colonists and their friends and the same unanswerable replies on the part of the friends of the gens de couleur’. To his annoyance he then had to record that the vote went ‘against the gens de couleur’ by a majority of 130. The resulting legislation merely ensured that those born of two free parents were recognised as citizens; a measure that effected about a thousand or so people. The principle that colour was not a bar to citizenship was enacted, however; a fact that prompted sufficient resistance in the colonies that the matter was revisited and the law revoked in September 1791.

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62 18 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 130.
63 22 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 60.
64 12 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 9.
65 14 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 29.
66 Ibid., 31.
The one occasion on which Hall toppled over from biased observation into active participation in the Revolution occurred during the second trip out of Paris, in Limoges. On 18 June Hall ‘passed by the Place Dauphine’ where he ‘noticed a fountain set up in the worst taste imaginable in honour of the birth of the Dauphin. On this inscriptions or monuments they told us were put up for the Intendants of Limoges. They told us they were taken down yesterday as anti-patriotic by the municipality’. Hall’s revolutionary ardour was raised and later that day, when he found himself attending a session of the Société des Amis de la Constitution, he acted:

The room was full and held they said about 150 men. One of the members and the president read addresses to us as strangers and we made our bows. I was tempted at that time to get up and propose to them to erect a monument to [Anne-Robert-Jacques] Turgot in place of that of the other intendants that were pulled down yesterday. I had not courage or was not prepared enough at that time and let the opportunity pass and the business of the meeting went on. At the end, as they were beginning to disperse, and part were gone, I whispered to the president that the thing should be proposed. He immediately resumed the séance and told them what I had proposed. It was received rather dryly; however it was not opposed and they decreed that the two marbles on which the names of the intendants were written should be set up and that on the one should be written the droit de l’homme and on the other the names of the great men who had deserved well of the country, with M. Turgot at their head.

It was a small venture, and met with moderate success, but it is illustrative of a broader trend in Hall’s progress through France, from distanced observer, to private commentator, engaging in behind the scenes debate, through to public avowal and limited activism. And, it paralleled his increasing commitment to a republican agenda for the Revolution as a whole.

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69 18 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 128.

70 18 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 132–4.
Despite his evident biases, Hall’s politics were reasonably fluid and were regularly reshaped while in France. Thus for example, we can find him struggling to determine his views on whether a member of the National Assembly should be disqualified from re-election. His jotted musings of 19 May admit:

The question is one of the most difficult I have ever met with and I am by no means satisfied how it should have gone. The question I think should be studied thus – shall a man be re-electable indefinitely or shall a man be allowed to sit but once in his life. The first is no doubt most conformable to the freedom of election and is most likely to produce an assembly of clever men and the fittest on all accounts for business. On the other hand, the second would be most conformable to the spirit of universal equality that is the basis of the French constitution and would tend to bring the legislative body as nearly as possible to coincide with the actual body of the nation.  

When Hall arrived in Paris, he was broadly in favour of the Revolution, but was supportive of its constitutional limitations. Thus he could report on Easter Sunday, 24 April, that

M. du Chatelet called on us before dinner. He is a relation of M. de la Rochfoucauld. He is a zealous republican and not only thinks that the country would be better without a king at all but he even approves of the present business and considers it a proper interference of the people. I suspect there is some levity in this view of the matter and that those who are of that opinion do not see the danger of the law being overruled by the fancy of any set of men not acting by the authority of the nation. This habit of disobedience seems to be an unhappy consequence of that famous disobedience of the Garde Française at the beginning of the Revolution. The conduct of the king in receiving the enemies of the Revolution has been in the highest degree absurd, but this absurdity should have been counteracted in a constitutional manner.

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72 24 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 68–9.
But by the end of his stay Hall was freely expressing republican sympathies. As early as 15 May he was remarking on the monarchy in distinctly unflattering terms (note that Daer’s presence may have helped shape the response jotted here):

Walked with Daer in the Tulleries. Saw the king pass going to Mass. A great crowd of people of various classes from the rank of the bourgeois to the lowest blackguard. No observations made that I could hear. The king looked if possible more vacant and stupid than formerly and his countenance showed perhaps some degree of dejection, tho’ this might be imagination. What made me less sure about his face was that when they passed I was not sure which was he and which was his brother. I likewise saw the queen. She was so much harangued and her countenance set to a book of etiquette that I could make nothing of her appearance.73

Note here also how, although his identification of the king is unclear, Hall still directed an insult based on the monarch’s appearance.

Similarly Hall’s attitude to the Jacobin club metamorphosed during his stay. On 29 April he remarked on how ‘The society seems to be an asylum for all the discontented people, who are sure to find commiseration at least.’74 Yet he soon found himself chiding the Jacobins for their reticence in forwarding a republican agenda, only finally commending them on 10 July, when the idea of deposing the king was mooted: ‘this is the first time the Jacobins have fairly spoken out.’75 The National Assembly, as was the case across Paris, fell commensurately in his esteem. Leaving one debate on the fate of the king, he saw ‘the president Charles de la Meth, Barnave and the rest of their junto pretty smartly attacked by the mob ... This is new to them who were the first to move the people and ruled long by their means. They seemed not to like the business at all.’76 Indeed, in an extraordinary moment that shows how far Hall had moved from his concern for legal propriety, he declared on 14 July, ‘it is in the highest degree probable that some great commotion will take place and nothing can save the Assembly but a good fight by which it may be driven into a nearer approach to the

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73 15 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 35–6.
74 29 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 103.
75 10 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 96.
76 13 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 110–1.
public opinion’.\textsuperscript{77} Violence was now acceptable. Three days later martial law was declared.

Hall was subsequently to become rather more cautious, in all likelihood when back in Britain. We can see this shift in mood evidenced through an excision made to the journal which recounts that 10 July debate. Hall recorded how ‘M. Brissot de Warville rose next and spoke one of the most elegant and certainly the most effectual speech I ever heard. He turned the inviolability [of the king to punishment for his actions] into ridicule. \textit{He said it was a convenient doctrine set on foot by Charles the second in order to save himself from having his head} [illegible] \textit{and he showed clearly that in justice and common sense he ought to be tried’.}\textsuperscript{78} The passage marked here in italics was judiciously crossed out, perhaps at a later date, and was clearly deemed by Hall to be a dangerous expression, even if attributed to someone else.

The same political caution seems to lie behind Hall’s decision to mark out the name of Thomas Paine in his entry for 3 June. We know it was Paine because Hall forgot that his detailed index identified him, with the entry stating how ‘Mr Payne dined with us’.\textsuperscript{79} Thus, we find out how Paine observed the republican spirit now in the act of rising. That he valued this observation more than any particular act, as we notice the barometer with a convex surface in the act of rising. We asked M. Payne what he thought of M. du Chatellet’s affiche. He said that he understood French so imperfectly that he could not judge properly of it but that as far as he knew it was good. He said that tho’ M. La Fayette could not at present declare, he was certainly a decided republican. M. Payne told us that on the day of the king’s arrival [in Paris after the flight] he was in the midst of the crowd; that he lost the cockade out of his hat. In order to conceal the loss he kept his hat in his hand, but the king passing he was obliged to put it on and then he was obliged to hold up his hat under some pretence or other to hide the place where the cockade should have been. Luckily nobody perceived his situation or he might have been in a scrape with his ignorance of the language. It would have been a matter of no small triumph to the enemies of the rights of man if Payne had been carried to the lanterne.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77} 14 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 121.
\textsuperscript{78} 10 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 93–4.
\textsuperscript{79} ‘Index’, NLS, MS. 6332, 5.
\textsuperscript{80} 3 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 49–50.
This passage captures in a microcosm many of the cross-currents Hall’s diary explores – linguistic difference, manners, etiquette and radical politics. It also hints at the republican destination longed for by Paine, and indeed by Hall. And, it gestures towards the violence that emanated from the revolutionary process, and which finally drove Hall physically, if not intellectually away from Paris. Perhaps even more significantly, Hall’s decision to mark out Paine’s name chimes with Gordon Pentland’s observation that, by 1793 at least, ‘Painite radicalism had become too dangerous to espouse in a climate where radical ideas were proscribed and were presented as unpatriotic and foreign.’

The limit to Hall’s endurance came with the mayhem at the Champ de Mars on 17 July. The morning of 18 July saw him go ‘with Lord Selkirk and Thomas [Douglas] to the committee of the section of the Palais Royal to have a certificate made out which is a necessary first step towards getting a passport.’ He left Paris two days later.

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This sudden retreat in the wake of public disorder raises the issue of how radical Hall really was, and concomitantly, how far Hall’s radicalism in France related to his understanding of Scotland. What of Scotland? How did Hall accord his political sympathies with his national identity? While at no point in the diary does he diagnose the condition of Scotland, it is perhaps worth teasing out some of the implications of his varied commitments. First of all, it is clear that Hall did think of himself as a Scot. The entry on 10 July for instance reads: ‘Called on M. de la Place … I spoke to him of what we were doing in Scotland about the theory of the earth.’ While this observation was in the context of a scientific discussion, it accords with his description, in the debate with Robespierre cited above, of the government being English, and

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81 Pentland, ‘Patriotism, Universalism and the Scottish Conventions’, 351.
82 18 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 159.
83 It might be worth noting in this context that he was later to sit in parliament, for Mitchell, in Cornwall, from 1807 to 1812. Hall’s entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* by Jean Jones states that ‘he was at first a conscientious and independent-minded member but his activities were curtailed by an illness in December 1810’, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11965?docPos=3, accessed 23 October 2008.
84 10 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, facing 92.
with his discomfort in English company. Hall was seemingly conscious of the difference between English and Scottish identity.

Moreover, Hall took the time to visit that epicentre of Scottish exile in Paris, the Scots College, taking with him a number of interested associates. He recorded how he ‘Went with Madame de la Rochefoucald, Madame d’Auburgne, and Mr Short to the Scots College to see the picture of Mary Queen of Scots and her letter stained with her tears.’85 This double interest, in the College and its memorabilia concerning Mary Stuart was furthered when visiting Douai on his way back to Britain. Hall again took the chance ‘to see the Scots College. Saw a picture of Mary Queen of Scots done after her death; her rosary, the beads consisting of a set of heads curiously wrought. A little table clock belonging to her. A prayer book said to be used by her on the scaffold.’86 This romantic passion for such relics may seem unenlightened to modern eyes, but fits with Hall’s antiquarian interests, and reinforces the impression that he retained a sense that Scotland was not culturally subsumed within the broader British political identity.

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What then does Hall’s case tell us of Scottish radicalism? Were his sympathies anything more than the empty ‘posturing’ John Brims argues constituted Scottish flirtations with French republicanism?87 Even after the events of 17 July 1791 Hall seemed to be radicalised and republican in attitude. On 18 July, even as he was preparing to leave, he was still committed to the view that: ‘the king had better been away and that a little war would be of service to France in order to unite the parties and that the country would be so strong as to have nothing to fear from without.’88 And when news of the Church and King riots reached him as he was journeying back to and then through Britain, he recorded his antipathy to the ‘terrible riot at Birmingham in which the house of Dr [Joseph] Priestley and other dissenters has been burnt’ and dwelled with sorrow on ‘the revival of high church mobs’.89 Nor did he keep his sympathies quiet. He jotted on 29 July ‘At dinner. Mr and Mrs Barbould. Disputed much

85 7 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 74–5.
88 18 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 167.
89 23 and 25 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 207 and 216.
about French politics. They view the Assembly in the same romantic light that I did before I saw them. But this was not the voice of a reformed radical, now appalled by the turn of events in Paris. Rather Hall had radicalised alongside those events, and was now determined to see the project of creating a republic in France – and perhaps Scotland or Britain – through.

So too his travel companions seem to have been shaped by their experience. Lord Selkirk, his father-in-law, was described to him as ‘a violent friend of liberty since … he did not approve of the decree of the assembly’ in not deposing the king. Hall replied pithily that ‘I thought their conduct was not so prudent as it might have been; that though they had got the better of Paris [by declaring martial law] yet that they would not be able to manage the provinces as easily.’ Nor did Selkirk relinquish this affiliation upon his return to Britain, instead being ‘deserted and avoided by most of his acquaintances and friends’ on political grounds.

This same commitment to the republican experiment could also be found in the shadowy figure of Lord Daer, whose return to Britain predated the events on the Champs de Mars. As Hall noted on 8 July, ‘Lord Daer set out for England, along with Mr Payne (sic.) and Mr Dumont.’ Lord Daer went on to play a key role in the London-based Friends of the People, launching a brief if active radical career. Daer attended meetings of the Society for Constitutional Information, and joined the Friends of the Liberty of the Press. He was one of the Scots canvassed by Thomas Hardy for information on radical opinion in Scotland for the London Corresponding Society in a letter aptly dated 14 July 1792. He had already joined the organisation in May of that year and he went on to attend the first and third National Conventions of the Scottish Friends of the People in Edinburgh.

90 29 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6322, 226. Mr and Mrs Barbould had run the academy that Lord Daer and Thomas Douglas had attended as children. See Bumsted (ed.), Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, 7–8.
91 This point is also made in Bumsted (ed.), Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, 17–8.
92 8 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 164–5
93 Bumstead (ed.), Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, 18, citing James Lord Dunfermline, Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercornby KB 1793–1801 (Edinburgh, 1861), 36.
94 8 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 79. This later was Etienne Dumont, a member of what Furet described as Mirabeau’s ‘workshop’, writing speeches for Hall’s hero. See Furet, ‘Mirabeau’, 268. For a full treatment of Dumont’s extraordinary career, culminating as an advocate of Jeremy Bentham see Cyprian Blamires, The French Revolution and the Creation of Benthamism (Houndsmills, 2008).
95 The details of Daer’s radical affiliations are drawn from Bob Harris, ‘Scottish-English Connections in British Radicalism in the 1790s’ in T.C. Smout (ed.), Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900 (Oxford, 2005), 196.
Later connections are equally suggestive. Hall was a friend and colleague of Alexander Nasmyth, who illustrated the *Essay ... on Gothic Architecture* for him in 1813. It was for Hall that Nasmyth designed the house at Dunglass, described as ‘a vast and splendid Italianate castle which literally cascaded down the hillside’. Nasmyth had been active as a portrait painter in the 1780s but as the 1790s progressed his commissions dried up. As J.B. Cooksey suggests, this was partially because ‘His liberal politics and outspokenness on the perceived abuses of the Tory government embarrassed some of his aristocratic patrons; but, despite warnings that commissions would cease, he persisted with his beliefs.’ Nasmyth also knew Robert Burns and painted his portrait. Burns in turn wrote a tribute to Daer upon his untimely death in 1794. Another line of enquiry runs between Hall and the founder of the Society of Antiquaries, David Steuart Erskine, the earl of Buchan. Buchan knew Burns and was a signatory to the London Friends of the People. Heavily invested in the Scottish off-shoot, Buchan may thus have known Daer. Buchan corresponded with Christopher Wyvill over franchise reform, as did John Millar who was also a signatory to the London Friends of the People. Buchan also corresponded with Dugald Stewart and Stewart was Hall’s teacher. There is also the possibility that Nasmyth designed a monument to Wallace for Buchan in the 1780s. The complex network of enlightened radicalism in 1790s Scotland continues to expand.

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So, finally, we turn back to the most general question raised here, the assumption of a connection between the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. In the case of Hall, it is reasonably clear that he had a strong sense of the intellectual movement, both as a local and as an international phenomenon. That was the import of many of his questions to those who had once met Adam Smith during his own sojourn in Paris. As Hall noted when he met Dr Richard Gem, the physician to the British Embassy:

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97 Ibid.

Adam Smith was here in the winter 1766–7. The Duke of Buccleugh took the whole of the Palais Royal . . . Helvetius and Baron d’Holbach . . . kept open house for all the philosophers. These houses were frequented by Dr Gem and Adam Smith. The conversation in these parties turned very frequently on the freedom of trade . . . I pressed Dr Gem to tell me whether Mr Smith had these notions before or whether he got them in this place but I could not bring him to say anything positive on the subject. I think it looks as if he got his ideas here since he is right in those parts which were fully discussed and made out in his time and fails when the subject was in a state of obscurity. \[99\]

The question of Smith’s originality was vexing contemporaries, often anxious to assert the Scottish quality to his thought. In particular, Hall chimed with his mentor, Dugald Stewart, who addressed the question at some length in his *Life of Adam Smith* of 1793, albeit concluding that ‘the limits of this memoir make it impossible for me to examine particularly the merit of Mr Smith’s work in point of originality’, while opining that ‘the merit of such a work as Mr Smith’s is to be estimated less from the novelty of the principles it maintains than from the reasonings employed to support those principles.’ \[100\]

Stewart’s presence was also to be felt when Hall fell into conversation with the Abbé Sieyès, in a way that sheds light on Hall’s view of the connection between the Enlightenment and the Revolution.

The conversation happened to fall in the projects that had been conceived of a universal language. He [Sièyes] said that he had thought much on it and could take it up when the Revolution was over. He spoke rather lightly of the Abbé Condillac tho’ he allowed that he had begun. He said that a very great perfection might be expected from the lower classes when they got a proper education. That all the people who now make disturbances do it with a good intention – even those who now are disturbing universal toleration are, all but a few, men acting upon sincere and honest motives. When I mentioned what I had from Mr [Dugald] Stewart that since false ideas take such hold of the mind, the reign of truth were it once known, may be expected to be of universal

\[99\] 9 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 27–8.

duration, he seemed to feel and approve of the idea highly as coinciding with his views.  

The assumption of progress and the sense of democratic politicisation are clear here, expanding the Enlightenment out from a select coterie of thinkers towards a more Kantian ideal of progress and educational liberation. Not that Hall was averse to celebrating the achievements of past luminaries of the movement. He reported on 30 May that he had heard ‘there is to be a festival on the 15th of June on the introduction of Voltaire’s bones to Paris.’ It actually occurred four days earlier, on 11 July, and Hall was unexpectedly drawn into the proceedings:

Called on Lavoisier … who was just going out to join the procession as an academician. He made us [Hall, Thomas Douglas and the Earl of Selkirk] follow him and he took us into the procession and walked with it from near the Bastille to the Place Louis XV. The show was pretty as we went along the windows of all the houses being full of people and the sides of the streets scaffold &c. all covered with spectators. We grew very tired of the ceremony and left it at the Place de Louis XV. People flocked to the show as they would have done to any other, but it was a matter of doubt whether Voltaire would have been an aristocrat.

Again, here, the democratic edge to the tone of Hall’s remarks is clear.

The ambiguity here surrounds the rather uncomfortable quality in Voltaire’s personality that made him desire the company of social superiors. His flirtation with Fredrick of Prussia and his overt claims to rank and recognition left Hall slightly wary of connecting the Enlightenment’s greatest voice with the Revolution which followed. But the causal relationship was more explicit elsewhere in Hall’s text, as in the entry for 9 June:

General reflections on the French Revolution. Tendency to simplify. Dr Gem said that he observed that many of the steps taken by the National Assembly originated in the writings of Helvetius. That all the actions of a body of men might be traced to books and that there was
no book of eminence that in time did not find its way to the mind of the public.\textsuperscript{104}

Ultimately, Hall agreed that the Enlightenment and the Revolution were a binary formation and sympathy for the one implied support for the other. Hence he could cite with approval an idea mooted by Sieyès, and which Hall encountered in a newspaper. He noted on 1 June how

a plan was set on foot for drawing up an address from the \textit{gens des lettres} who before the revolution had written in favour of liberty and who still keep up to their principles to show that they have not recanted like the Abbé Raynal. Abbé Sieyès proposed that as Abbé Raynal is thus dead to liberty, the Assembly should wear a three-day mourning for him.\textsuperscript{105}

The Enlightenment was, in other words, a necessary precursor to the Revolution in France. As to whether that same causal connection might emerge in Scotland was, in 1791, unclear. Many reasons can be offered to explain the failure of Scottish reform, but one thing is clear. The Enlightenment was neither as homogenous, nor as politically or socially conservative as the historiography has made out. That Scotland resisted Revolution was not due to a lack of radical sympathy on the part of all the Scottish literati, or at least on the part of Sir James Hall.

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\textsuperscript{104} 9 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 29–30.

\textsuperscript{105} 1 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 137–8.
Tone is a keen, sensible man [who] writes with perspicuity and elegance.\textsuperscript{2}

Il n’y a pas d’aventures, sinon celles de tous les jours.\textsuperscript{3}

I. A Compulsive Writer and Romantic Adventurer

If the age of the French Revolution is most remembered for the turmoil and bloodshed which violently shook the foundations of the old order, the Enlightenment can equally be defined by the intellectual discoveries which resulted from the increase in human mobility, and voluntary or enforced travel. Influenced by the confessional writing of the eighteenth century, travellers of all kinds recorded their observations and sensations, some responding to the need to justify their actions. These narratives, whether factual, semi-romanticised or a combination of both, became firmly established as one of the most enduring of literary genres, travel writing, and in the next century were to influence memoir writing and campaign narratives. But as this golden age of tourism was also one of great political upheavals, foreigners often witnessed and even became swept up in momentous events. Posterity can be grateful to those who recorded their experiences in letters and journals. Written with the emotional immediacy of a generation imbued with ideas of sentimentality, these narratives often

\textsuperscript{1} Versions of this paper were delivered at the University of Aberdeen, Trinity College Dublin, and Hertford College Oxford. I am grateful to Michael Brown, Liam Chambers, Cairns Craig, Roy Foster, Patrick Geoghegan and Michael Rapport for their insightful comments.

\textsuperscript{2} From a report by Leonard MacNally, a government informer, to Thomas Pelham, 17 September 1795, National Archives of Ireland, Rebellion Papers, NAI/620/10/121/29.

became chronicles of historical change and national self-exploration.

Nothing better illustrates the confrontation of the old and new orders, as well as eighteenth-century ideas of conviviality, than the visit to the Panthéon, in the heart of Paris, of a ci-devant French aristocrat and an American merchant one crisp day in March 1796. The Terror had ended and order had been re-established under the weak but stable régime of the first Directory. Though forever ‘revolutionised’, France had become a somewhat less obnoxious country, to paraphrase an earlier comment of British Prime Minister William Pitt. Aristide Aubert du Petit Thouars was a well-travelled naval officer who had served in the American Revolution and could finally return from exile to serve his country. During the transatlantic crossing, the only passenger who was not French, an American merchant called James Smith, had befriended him and then insisted on lending him one louis to ward off their fleecing innkeeper in the seaport of Le Havre. To settle this debt, they had met up again in Paris and embarked on a lengthy tour of the capital, the Frenchman adjusting to the new street names and administrative or military use of churches, while his ‘bon Américain Smith’ simply marvelled at discovering the French capital.

The Panthéon itself embodied the dynamic clash between their two worlds. In 1791, the Constituent Assembly had decreed that the former Church of Ste Geneviève would become a republican resting place for the ashes of the great men of the era of French liberty, a monumental, but atheist, tribute from a grateful nation to their ‘Mighty Dead’. Du Petit Thouars’ correspondence reveals he had been a reverent Catholic as a youth, but remains silent on what reactions to this new civic Temple he may have shared with his American companion. On the other hand, Smith, a committed republican, confessed to his diary that night an emotional response to this institutional effort to unite all men. ‘Certainly nothing’, he declared, ‘can be imagined more likely to create a great spirit in a nation than a repository of this kind, sacred to everything that is sublime and illustrious and patriotic.’ He is unlikely to have shared such views with his tour guide. Smith went on to express regret that his aristocratic companion belonged to a social order he vehemently despised and detested. Yet the Frenchman was such a practical philosopher, and had

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known so many adventures and reverses of fortune, that Smith could not help but like him. With du Petit Thouars, he had enjoyed climbing ‘to the top of the Panthéon, from whence we could see all Paris, as in a ground plan, together with the country for several leagues round… there being a foot of snow on the ground… It was the most singular spectacle I had ever seen.’

Some ten months later, fate would throw the two men together once again. In the most extraordinary of chance encounters, du Petit Thouars learned that Smith was neither an American nor a merchant. While the purpose of Smith’s visit to France did indeed entail negotiations with the French authorities, the sale of American grain was not on his agenda. Going about his duties in the naval port of Brest in January 1797, as a chef de division compiling reports from ship logs of the ill-fated French expedition to Bantry Bay in Ireland, du Petit Thouars confessed to his sister what he had been stunned to discover:

Une singulière rencontre vient de me faire beaucoup de réflexions et j’étais oppressé quand je me suis retiré chez moi. Je t’ai parlé d’un Smith en compagnie duquel je traversai l’Atlantique l’année dernière: je viens de le retrouver sur les vaisseaux qui reviennent de l’expédition d’Irlande, revêtu de l’uniforme de chef de brigade. Il m’a dit qu’il était Irlandais, et… qu’il retournait pour tâcher de délivrer son pays qui était tout prêt de briser le joug; s’il était pris, il serait pendu.

The American merchant and purposeful chef de brigade was in fact the leading United Irishman Theobald Wolfe Tone, who – despite the relatively modest achievements of his short life – was to become after his death in 1798 one of the most loved and venerated of Irish nationalist heroes. Of the decisive episodes in Ireland’s struggle for nationhood, surely one of the most cherished in Irish collective memory is the perilous and clandestine mission he undertook to France in 1796. Since the first publication of his journals in 1826, generations of Irish nationalists have admired and praised his courage and determination in leaving his peaceful exile and his young family in America, and sailing to France on a false American passport. While the authorities in London and Dublin presumed he was tending to his farm in New Jersey, in Paris he took on the French political and military élite, overcame major

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6 Ibid.
7 Bergasse du Petit Thouars (ed.), Aristide Aubert Du Petit Thouars, 454. From a letter dated 3 January 1797.
obstacles such as his inability to communicate competently in the language of his hosts, and brought about the ill-fated, but formidable, French naval expedition to Bantry Bay later that year. With France and Britain at war, and Tone still officially a British subject, his actions in France were nothing short of treasonable. An abundance of French archival material corroborates his own testimony: he had initially to lie low and remain *incognito* in Paris, which was swarming with English spies and adventurers, many of them posing as Americans. For a gregarious and curious individual who thrived in convivial settings, the subterfuge and solitude must have been personally difficult. If this introduction seems protracted, it is because scholars have only recently discovered the references to Tone in *du Petit Thouars*’ correspondence. His letters confirm the clandestine nature of Tone’s mission as he lived it, while reinforcing it as a genuinely romantic and heroic adventure.

If Tone is one of the most loved among nationalist heroes, it is, as his biographer Marianne Elliott points out, because his substantial written legacy makes him seem one of the most familiar. His polemical writings aside, he left behind a detailed diary and correspondence which combine keen observation and utter candour. In exile in France, he responded to his enforced idleness with a creative impulse to write, composing a brief autobiography that became part of the canon of Irish nationalism. Yet most studies of Tone have concentrated on the political dimension of his legacy, overlooking other vibrant dimensions of the diary in particular. Elliott has argued that the image of a well-read and cultivated man comes out most forcefully in his journal after his arrival in France. Indeed, Tone was one of those individuals the French historian Marc Bloch so cherished, a ‘témoin de l’histoire malgré lui’, as a witness and chronicler of French history. This is an essential dimension of his writings during the period 1796 – 8, as Thomas Bartlett has emphasised. With the recent publication of the third and final volume of the scholarly edition of Tone’s *Writings*, painstakingly footnoted and indexed by a dedicated team of editors, it is timely to examine the overlooked cultural aspects of Tone’s three years in Europe. Such efforts can enrich our growing understanding of the Irish diaspora throughout the centuries, and of Irish identity within.

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8 Tone, *Writings*, II, 162, 192.
Europe. This article will discuss Tone’s communicative strategies as Ireland’s first ‘ambassador incognito’ to France, and his insightful chronicle of the French Directory. By highlighting the cultural wealth of his diary, it will then go on to demonstrate how his mission turned him into an accidental tourist, before concluding with a discussion of the contribution made by Tone’s written legacy to our understanding of the Irish diaspora.12

II. Ambassador *incognito*, or ‘minister plenipotentiary planning a revolution’13

Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Tone mocked himself as the Irish ‘minister plenipotentiary planning a revolution’, yet he immediately undertook his mission with seriousness of purpose and dogged determination, and would within weeks be among the few foreigners privileged to be granted permission to stay in the capital.14 The Directory had been briefed by the French envoy in Philadelphia about his arrival and was aware of his real identity. His mission led to the massive French expedition to Bantry Bay in December 1797, an abject military failure and thus the subject of much scrutiny and retrospective analysis. Successive anatomies of this lost opportunity have distracted attention from the intercultural processes without which it would not have come about.

First to be considered is an essential element of the legend surrounding Tone, one which emerged from his diary from the time he set foot on French soil. For months after his arrival, he peppered his journal entries with self-deprecating comments suggesting that he had embarked on his perilous and clandestine mission as a United Irish envoy unable to speak French. Indeed almost two years after his arrival, in December 1797, sporting the uniform of a French adjutant general, Tone met the rising star of the French army, General Napoleon Bonaparte. His record of the end of their interview boldly formulates his lack of competence, and it is no wonder confusion has surrounded the vexed

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13 Tone, *Writings*, II, 60.

14 Ibid.
question of his knowledge of French. Generations of readers have taken the ‘evidence’ Tone provided at face value: ‘Buonaparte … then asked me where I had learned to speak French? To which I replied that I had learned the little that I knew since my arrival in France, about twenty months ago.’ Napoleon was not himself a native speaker of the language, but his curiosity at Tone’s French – evidently competent by that stage – serves our purpose by contradicting the Irishman’s self-assessment. However, Tone’s distress during the early days must have been genuine, and he relates with humour his experience of that most intimidating dimension of cultural difference, the language barrier. In February 1796, attending to basic ‘tourist-host’ encounters in Le Havre, he experienced what modern commentators would describe as ‘culture shock’. His frustration at being reliant on a French travelling companion he did not like is palpable: ‘Damn it, rot it, and sin it for me, that I cannot speak French!’ To embellish his dilemma he then misquoted Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night: ‘Oh, that I had given that time to the tongues that I have spent in fencing and bear baiting.’ At an inn on the way to Paris, he particularly resented being ripped off for his first bad meal: ‘A most blistering bill for our supper … poor wine … execrable ragout … In great indignation and the more so because I could not scold in French.’

Tone was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, had practised as a barrister, and was very well read. It is therefore difficult to believe that he had not learned French as a young man, particularly in light of the French Enlightenment’s impact on intellectual life. Yet we have too readily confused the Francophilia of the age with Francophonia, by which is meant a functional communicative competence in the French language. Though French was undeniably the lingua franca of the intelligentsia, the most widely read titles, be they polemical, philosophical or literary, were widely available in English translations. Many members of the urban middle class admitted not speaking French, though they possibly could read it with the help of a dictionary. Even if Tone had a smattering of conversational French, the language of polite salons

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16 Tone, Writings, II, 43.
17 Ibid., 46.
18 This is demonstrated by the abundance of literary references quoted by Tone, many of which were identified by the editors of the Oxford edition of his Writings before searchable electronic databases entered the scholar’s life. See Tone, Writings, III, 539–44.
and erudite debate, this would not have equipped him to uphold consumer rights in a coaching inn. As late as 1796, the French language as written by Voltaire and Rousseau was by no means universally spoken, especially outside Paris. Patois and regional dialects were still the norm. Therefore, when faced with ‘execrable ragout’ and an innkeeper who had not been educated as a lawyer in a capital city, Tone philosophically concluded, ‘Passion is eloquent but all my figures of speech were lost on the landlord.’

Yet, within weeks he was to undertake successful negotiations with French politicians and military leaders, and – while a range of strategic factors influenced France’s military policy – Tone’s ability to convince the most senior figures in power was instrumental. In her discussion of the Irish-English language barrier during the Tudor Conquest, Patricia Palmer pointed to a self-evident issue in international relations, namely that persuasion presupposes a common language. This aspect of communication is often occluded in various narratives and chronicles, but is highly relevant to the flurry of lobbying and petitioning which the United Irishmen engaged in with the French Directory. In fact, Tone’s command of French during the 1796 negotiations could not have been as pitiable as he claims. Were his encounters effective only through ‘fumbling … pidgin phrases … mispronunciations and mistakes’, that is, the stereotypical depiction of intercultural encounters? Tone’s first official contact (that we know of) was with Pierre Adet, the French minister in Philadelphia, and – as in subsequent interviews – he is clear about the dynamics of communication across language barriers. He had only been in Philadelphia about one week when they met: ‘He [Adet] spoke English very imperfectly, and I French a great deal worse; however, we made a shift to understand one another’. Yet Adet’s official dispatches to his government do not portray a fumbling Irishman, but an eloquent patriot, well worthy of their attention.

Tone’s next challenge arose during the transatlantic crossing from New York to Le Havre, as his nine fellow passengers were all Frenchmen. Though

19 Tone, Writings, II, 46.
21 This issue is discussed in greater detail in Kleinman, Translation, the French Language and the United Irishmen.
23 Tone, Writings, II, 337.
24 Pierre Adet to the Comité de Salut Public, 1 October 1795, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (Paris), Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, 589, 23v–23r.
he says virtually nothing of the crossing in his diary, du Petit Thouars recorded his vivid impressions of the rough winter sea and generally dull atmosphere. With nothing to do on board, ennui set in among the small group huddled in close quarters, and below deck it would have been difficult to avoid conversation. Though his companions probably spoke some English, Tone must have felt singled out as the only non-native speaker of French. In the twentieth century, applied linguists would formulate such ‘total immersion’ settings as the ideal way (for adults in particular) to learn a language. We can be grateful however to du Petit Thouars for casually commenting on the books being passed around. One was the narrative of Viscount George Macartney’s embassy to China in 1792, which epitomised East-West cultural collision, as he alone of the delegation was able to avoid the ceremonial kowtow to the emperor Quianlong. Of particular relevance was the fact that Macartney was from Lissanoure, County Antrim. If the book belonged to Tone, it would be intriguing that the narrative of an Irish-born envoy describing the challenges of cultural contact and diplomatic ritual was on board the same ship as the Irish ‘minister plenipotentiary planning a revolution’.

Tone’s first official contact in Paris was the American ambassador James Monroe, with whom he discussed which members of the Directory to approach. Tone surprisingly did not prioritise their likely support of the cause of Ireland, preferring to maintain his political ambiguity. He mentioned Lazare Carnot, who was admired in Irish radical circles and was also know by Tone to speak English. Monroe replied that there was nobody fitter, and that Louis-Marie de La Révellière-Lépeaux also spoke English. We then get a revealing insight into the realities of Tone’s existence in Paris. As he retrieved his (false) American passport from Monroe’s secretary, the latter immediately detected he was an Irishman, presumably because his speech was marked by a perceptible Hiberno-English lilt. The authorities in France had issued warnings about the swarms of English spies posing as Americans, and therefore speaking French was much safer than English, as a brogue does not transfer into French. Tone was a keen observer of language and communication. One diary entry records the interrogation of the American captain of a Liverpool vessel taken by the French, at which General Lazare Hoche had asked for Tone’s assistance (to interpret, though that term is not used). He concluded that the captain was a liar, ‘for he was a Scotchman, with a broad accent.’

The first book Tone purchased was a copy of the French Constitution, predictable reading given the radical reformer that he was, but hardly a leisurely way to improve one’s conversational French. He did not comment on its contents, but recalled the engaging conversation he had with the charming wife of the bookseller. This occasion may have sparked his comment that the French language was ‘so adapted for conversation’ that the women ‘all appear to have wit’. Tone recorded his lengthy interviews with French dignitaries such as Carnot, Charles Delacroix (the Minister for External Relations), General Hoche and Napoleon from both the perspective of participant and chronicler. As the former, this would make his journalising somewhat subjective, yet his accounts shed much light on the mechanics of parleys across the language divide as an essential dimension of crucial contacts in history.

Tone recounts his first meeting with Carnot in an almost melodramatic fashion, which begins with him ‘conning his speeches in execrable French all the way’ to the Luxembourg Palace. After several stages of frustrating progress past clerks (one of whom he boldly addressed in English), Tone finally found himself alone, face to face with Citizen Carnot, the great Organiser of Victory. He mischievously juggled with status and power relations, exploiting the language issue. Henry Kissinger once remarked that the way one entered negotiations was as important as what followed, a strategy Tone was familiar with: ‘I began the discourse by saying, in horrible French, that I had been informed he spoke English. [Carnot] answered, “A little, Sir, but I perceive you speak French, and if you please we will converse in that language.”’ This was 24 February 1796, and Tone had landed on French soil only twenty-two days earlier, not ‘speaking’ French, as he would later tell Napoleon. Leaving aside this issue, he also recorded the dynamics of the interview. Psycholinguistics informs us that in conversations between people of different status, the more powerful person can ‘treat conventions in a cavalier way’, and allow ‘varying degrees of latitude’ to the less powerful speaker. Tone handed Carnot this opportunity: ‘I answered, still in my jargon, that if he could have the patience to endure me I would endeavour, and I prayed him to stop me [if] I did not make myself understood.’ We take the liberty of speculating that Carnot (‘enduring’ his interviewee’s posing) reacted with a characteristic Gallic shrug

27 Ibid., 60, 182.
28 Ibid., 75, and following 75–80.
29 Ibid., 76. The emphasis is my own.
30 Norman Fairclough, Language and Power (Harlow, 1989), 47.
31 Tone, Writings, II, 76.
of the shoulders, replying ‘Mais non, je vous comprenez parfaitement’. Tone recorded conversations a bit like a court transcript, punctuating his narrative with verbs which signal each participant’s turn to speak, such as ‘I told him’, ‘he stopped me’, ‘I answered’ or ‘to which he replied’. This ‘feedback’ leaves the reader with the impression that the conversation flowed relatively easily between the two men. At one stage, however, Tone was at a loss for a French word, and asked for assistance. Carnot, ‘seeing my embarrassment’, supplied it. Just as Tone had strategically entered negotiations, he likewise signalled the end of the interview, as he had taken enough of Carnot’s time. He flattered the Director that he was ‘the very man of whom [the United Irishmen] had spoken’, and then drew further attention to Carnot’s reputation in Ireland by mentioning that his ability to speak English was well known, a comment ‘at which he [Carnot] did not seem displeased’. While bilingualism may not have been as important an asset as a pro-Irish war strategy, Tone nevertheless emphasised its importance.

Tone’s account of his lengthy conversations with Delacroix repeats this pattern, and one specific passage has attracted some attention from scholars. In editing his father’s writings for the first (1826) edition, William Tone deleted a short phrase which he appears to have misinterpreted as an admission by his father that he only understood the drift of Delacroix’s words (one of the many passages restored by Thomas Bartlett in the 1998 edition of the Life). William had consistently corrected and ‘gentrified’ his father’s French, preferring – for example – the image of his father ‘strolling’ through the bookstalls of Paris to that of him ‘lounging about’ in them.

In dealing with Delacroix, Tone again resorted to the stratagem which had worked so well on Carnot, and humoured the minister. He set the mood of an exchange between unequal figures by opening with an (un-necessary) apology: ‘I began with telling the Minister that tho’ I spoke execrable French, I would, with his permission, put his patience to a short trial.’ Intriguingly, William did not censor the following testimony to his father’s unashamedly crafty side:

The Minister then asked me… what quantity of … arms ammunition and money… would I think sufficient [for a French invasion of

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32 Ibid., 78.
33 Other entertaining anecdotes of filial censorship which also signal how these numerous omissions had distorted Tone’s history are provided in Bartlett (ed.), Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone, xli–xlvi.
34 Tone, Writings, II, 83. The emphasis is my own.
Ireland]? … I therefore took advantage of my bad French and mentioned that I doubted my being able sufficiently to explain myself in conversation, but that he would find my opinions … in the two [written] memorials I had prepared.\textsuperscript{35}

In contrast with the aforementioned encounter of Macartney with the Emperor of China, Tone shared with his French counterparts the same Western European cultural customs and educational background, and most importantly Latin, Greek and disputation. Well-to-do students received instruction in rhetoric from a young age in order to develop the art of persuasion in public oratory, and its mechanics, honed through hours of student and political debating, was easy to transfer from one language to another. As a trained lawyer, Tone was also skilled at the parry and thrust of courtroom exchanges. Leonard MacNally, a government informer and fellow barrister, admired Tone’s ability to argue ‘with plausibility and cunning’.\textsuperscript{36}

Apart from his occasional posing, there is no indication in the record of these conversations that Tone’s French was a hindrance. In delving through French administrative and military archives, and the astonishing amount of material linked to the Irish question throughout the 1790s, there are sufficient traces of Tone’s written French to demolish the pose he himself had adopted, as they are totally at odds with what he called his ‘execrable jargon’.\textsuperscript{37} Yet he would not be the first traveller to discover that speaking and writing a foreign language are distinct skills presenting different challenges. Initially random and minor grammatical errors, typical of an English speaker, prove that he did not always ask a native speaker for assistance, yet rapidly his written French became quite eloquent. The first known letter by him closes, unnecessarily, with an affected apology, ‘Ayez la bonté d’excuser mon détestable françois’ (please pardon my detestable French).\textsuperscript{38} Internal French memos demonstrate that the wily Tone was well thought of, and we are not surprised that Carnot

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 85. The emphasis is my own.
\textsuperscript{36} Leonard MacNally to Thomas Pelham, 17 September 1795, National Archives of Ireland, Rebellion Papers, NAI/620/10/121/29.
\textsuperscript{37} Inter alia, those reprinted in Tone’s \textit{Writings}, II & III; his military file at Service historique de la Défense (Vincennes), Archives de la Défense, Fonds de l’armée de Terre, 17 Yd 14; misc. items in the Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (Paris), Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, 589, 592; Archives nationales (France), Archives du pouvoir exécutif (1789–1815), AF/III and AF/IV; and Archives nationales (France), Police générale, F7.
\textsuperscript{38} Tone, \textit{Writings}, II, 180.
commented to Delacroix that the Directory intended making good use in their war strategy against Britain of ‘cet irlandois qui a beaucoup d’esprit.’

When the French expedition to Ireland became reality, Tone enlisted in the army but was somewhat self-conscious about his lack of military experience. He had once suggested to Nicholas Madgett, the Irish-born head of Delacroix’s translation bureau and an ad hoc advisor on Irish affairs, that ‘speaking a little French’, he could ‘be of use after the French landing in Ireland … [to] interpret between him and the natives.’ Like many lesser-known Irish officers in the French army, Tone did indeed make good use of his command of the English language by translating documents and acting as a liaison interpreter. His papers, scattered in various archives, demonstrate that his bilingualism was a useful skill, and after his enlistment the histrionic quips about his poor French became scarce.

III. A Chronicler of French History

Tone’s powers of observation and his frank transcription of his impressions give a certain quality to his narrative which distinguishes it from others of the revolutionary decade. Significantly, he was aware that he had become a chronicler of French history: ‘I am now a little used to see great men, and great statesmen, and great generals … Yet, after all, it is a droll thing that I should become acquainted with Buonaparte … the greatest man in Europe.’ Despite being written before the age of communication technology, the immediacy of Tone’s diary entries makes them as effortless to read as a well-crafted blog. Here we look at his experience of republican secular ceremonies, inspired by Ancient Greco-Roman pomp. With time, he would learn that the French public had become apathetic to these displays, but as a sympathiser just arrived in his country of asylum, his reactions were understandably intense. He attended a civic Fête de la Jeunesse in the Church of St Roch (where Denis Diderot’s remains lie), and one must picture the former house of worship as he saw it, stripped of its religious works of art and with its Catholic iconography supplanted by republican imagery. The male youths of the district who had reached the age of sixteen were presented to the Municipal officials to receive their arms,

39 Carnot to Delacroix, 28 May 1796, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères (Paris), Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, 589, 260r–261r, 260v.
40 Tone, Writings, II, 142.
41 Tone, Writings, III, 186.
and their twenty-one year old counterparts were enrolled as citizens and thus registered to vote:

The church was decorated with the national colours and a statue of liberty with an altar blazing before her... the procession... consisted of the... National Guard under arms... officers and the young men to be presented... there was a great pile of musquets and sabres before the Municipality.42

Following speeches on the citizen’s duty and the honour of bearing arms in the defence of France, the arms were distributed by the officials, and the young men congratulated by their loved ones. Tone confessed: 'I was in an enthusiasm. I do not at all wonder at the miracles which the French army has wrought in the contest for their liberties.'43

On 22 September 1797 (the anniversary of the establishment of the French republic), he was in Bonn with the French Armée de Sambre et Meuse and marched in the procession to celebrate the proclamation of the République cis-Rhénane, that is, the part of Germany between the Meuse and the Rhine annexed by France. A tree of liberty was planted, then he dined in state with the Municipality and ‘drank sundry and loyal toasts’, but ‘not too many’, as he proudly recorded in his journal that night.44 The French administration had put on hold plans for another invasion of Ireland, and he must have wondered if he would ever witness the planting of a Tree of Liberty on Irish soil.

The theatre was a nightly refuge for Tone, and from Le Havre to Paris, from Rennes to Brest and from Cologne to The Hague, he attended plays, opera and ballet, and commented on stage sets, costume, character, plot, performance and music. Once again, this is typical of an eighteenth-century narrative, but Tone consciously contextualised the performing arts under the Directory as a state-subsidised propaganda exercise. In Le Havre, he commented on the characters and dénouement of *Les Rigueurs du cloître* (1790), a play with a romanticised political message. The plot revolves around the storming of a convent by the National Guards, leading to the liberation of the young ladies by the valiant soldiers and the requisitioning of the property for the nation.45 In his second night in Paris, he attended a ballet called *L’offrande*...
à la liberté, which like the secular ritual in St Roch adopted the symbolism of Antiquity. A statue of Liberty, centre-stage, was surrounded by characters in beautiful Grecian habits. The audience received the civic air, Veillons au salut de l’Empire, ‘with transport’, and:

Whenever the word esclavage [slavery] was uttered, it operated like an electric shock. The Marseilles Hymn was next sung and produced still greater enthusiasm; at the words aux armes Citoyens! all the performers drew their swords and the females turned to them, encouraging them. Then children lay baskets of flowers before the altar of the goddess Liberty, females with torches lit tripods…chanting Liberté, Liberté chérie… all this executed… with a grace beyond description… at once pathetic and sublime… it affected me most powerfully.46

Managers were compelled to play patriotic songs and all performances closed with the Marseillaise, the National Guards often parading on stage. Tone also recorded the reaction of the audience, following reports of the ‘esprit public’ just as the police were monitoring the public mood.47 French historians have still to acknowledge Tone’s insights into the mentalités of the period.

Since boyhood, Tone had nurtured an untameable desire to become a soldier, and each day in Paris he walked down to watch the changing of the guards in the Tuileries gardens. He frequently commented on the various ways in which militarism, including these staged displays, had captured the French public imagination. But the soldier had been a stock character in European entertainment throughout the eighteenth century, and when Tone saw a performance of Le Déserteur (1781), it is clear he had already seen the play performed in English and that he was familiar with the famous character of Montauciel, the drunken brigadier who stumbles around the stage singing ‘Je ne désertera jamais’. Tone was not impressed with the actor, who could not act drunk. This failing was understandable, he said, because the French never ‘drink hard’ and so had no archetype on which to model the character of a drunk. Tone maintained that had the actor been given the opportunity of spending ‘two or three afternoons with P.P. [i.e. Thomas Russell, his closest friend and a leading United Irishman], and another person who shall be namelesss [himself]’, he would have been able to ‘enlarge and improve’ his

46 Ibid., 50.
manner of acting Montauciel. Tone was candid about his intake of alcohol, at times ‘confessing’ to his diary that he must retrench his intake. However, there are many indications that he overindulged at times, such as the evening when he ‘drank rather enough’ and watched soldiers dancing under the trees with their wives and mistresses on the Champs Élysées:

with near two bottles of Burgundy in my head… judge… whether I did not enjoy the spectacle… Returned to the cabaret and indeed drank another bottle of wine, which made three, and walked home in a state of considerable elevation, having several delightful visions before my eyes. Well ‘Wine does wonders, does wonders every day, makes the heavy light and gay.’

He often regretted the absence of Thomas Russell, as he would have welcomed his valued advice on how to go about his mission. They could even have enjoyed a bottle or two of ‘diplomatic burgundy’. Yet despite his inner doubts, exaggerated because of the journalising exercise, he ultimately succeeded in his undertaking.

IV. The Accidental Tourist

During his initial stay in Paris, and then as a French officer travelling through France, Germany and French-occupied Holland, Tone was conscious that his mission had turned him into an accidental tourist. Born into the golden age of travel writing, in the very decade in which Tobias Smollett and Laurence Sterne published their seminal works, he had also become enthralled as a youth by tales of buccaneering and James Cook’s voyages. He once commented that his family possessed an inexplicable spirit of adventure, and his mission to France allowed him to confront it. On the road from Cologne to Amsterdam he observed that by the time his voyaging was over, he would have made ‘a pretty handsome tour of it.’

Tone’s animated retelling of his first hours in the seaport of Le Havre owes more to picaresque adventures and stage farces than to typical narratives of the grand tour. Note the staccato pace, as if the protagonist were whispering to the reader:

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49 Ibid., 158.
50 Tone, *Writings*, III, 54.
A swindler in the Hotel; wishes to take me in; wants to travel with me to Paris; says he is an American and calls me Captain; is sure he has seen me somewhere; tell him perhaps it was Spain… He tries his wily arts on an old Frenchman and to my great surprise tricks him of about a guinea… this was the first adventure!51

Tone’s description of his journey to Paris reads more like classic travel literature, tempered as it is by the pace of the horse-drawn vehicle, which allowed him to savour the countryside.52 He thus admired some of France’s celebrated beauty spots: ‘A hill immediately over Rouen of immense height and so steep that the road is cut in traverses. When at the top, a most magnificent prospect to look back over Normandie, with Rouen at your feet, and the Seine winding beautifully thro’ the landscape.’ All his subsequent trips to Brittany, Germany, Holland, Normandie and Brittany would be as a privileged French officer, seeing parts of Western Europe closed to the grand tourist, but involved virtually no genuine combat. He regularly commented on landscape, agriculture, roads, and in cities always took in some of the local sites.

Several decades before Baudelaire coined the seminal concept, Tone embarked on what can only be described as Parisian flâneries. Having spent two years in London studying law, he had already experienced urban life in an idle and luxurious capital and – despite bouts of loneliness and homesickness – he appeared comfortable in Paris. ‘Walked about Paris diverting myself innocently… I wish I could once more see the green sod of Ireland! Yet Paris is delightful!’54 His first hotel was very near the infamous Palais Royal (renamed Palais Egalité) where prostitutes and money speculators plied their trade, and its numerous bookstalls became a favourite haunt. Many of his idle wanderings doubled as tourism, and with du Petit Thouars he had spent an entire day visiting the sites of the capital. They saw the Jardin des Plantes and its ‘vast collection of curious exotics’, the place where the Bastille once stood, and the Temple where Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette had been imprisoned. Its gloomy appearance made him melancholy.55

Though raised as an Anglican, and paradoxically for one assumed by posterity to be agnostic (and possibly atheist), Catholic churches were a

51 Tone, Writings, II, 41.
53 Tone, Writings, II, 45.
54 Ibid., 158.
55 Ibid., 102–3.
favourite haunt. Though he appears to have found them a peaceful retreat, he also admired the paintings and statuary, deeming himself competent to air opinions on such matters. Despite having seen Notre Dame, he preferred the inside of Rouen cathedral, but this entertaining vignette on architecture perfectly illustrates Tone’s self-mockery:

The cathedral is a beautiful relic of Gothic architecture … It is a magnificent coup d’œil. But, what is provoking, between the body of the church and the choir, some pious archbishop, who had more money than taste, has thrown a very spruce colonnade of pure Corinthian architecture, which totally destroys the harmony of the building … This little specimen of Grecian architecture is more truly Gothic than all the rest of the edifice.\(^{56}\)

Tone returned two days later, as something was troubling him. On his second inspection of the cathedral, he found that ‘the Corinthian colonnade, described in terms of such just indignation in yesterday’s journal, turns out to be Ionic’. But Tone laid the blame for his aesthetic error elsewhere. ‘The archbishop I still hold to be a blockhead in all the dialects of Greece, and orders of architecture, and moreover, he is a fellow of no taste.’\(^{57}\)

Typical of the emotional meanderings of the diary, this anecdote leads us to an episode that is both comic and tragically revealing of Tone’s emotional turmoil. The day after the ‘lesson’ in architecture, he attended Easter Mass in Rouen cathedral, noting there were very few men, but being surrounded by women may have been a welcome occurrence, particularly as he was in his dashing French officer’s uniform.

Heard part of a sermon, this being Easter Sunday. Sad trash! A long parallel which I thought would never end, between Jesus and Joseph, followed by a second, equally edifying, comparing him with the prophet Jonas, showing how one lays three nights in the tomb, and the other three nights in the belly of a great fish, etc., etc. … I wonder how people can listen to such abominable nonsense.\(^{58}\)

Despite the caustic tone of Tone’s mockery of religious ritual, this episode

\(^{56}\) Tone, *Writings*, III, 229.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 229.
\(^{58}\) Ibid.
merits further consideration as in effect he had visited the cathedral on the most important days of the Christian calendar. The discovery of the ‘truly gothic’ colonnade was on Good Friday, and he returned (ostensibly to confirm the archbishop’s poor taste) on Easter Sunday, 8 April 1798. An earlier journal entry for 26 March indicates, however, that he may have been experiencing a genuine crisis, having realised (correctly, as fate would have it) that this could well be his last Easter. From the English papers he had learned ‘news of the most disastrous and afflicting kind’, namely that a fatal swoop by government forces on Oliver Bond’s house had led to the arrest of almost every man he knew and esteemed in Dublin. This dealt a crushing blow to the United Irish organisation, with disastrous implications for both him and his cause.59 As the government had now ‘drawn the sword’, his mind was ‘growing every hour more and more savage’, and violent revolutionary measures, which he would have regarded with horror six months ago, now seemed justified by necessity.

On a less sombre note, Tone’s exploration of Irishness in exile allows us to draw a comparison with another witty Irish writer, George Bernard Shaw, who shared Tone’s love of the arts and theatre, as well as his tendency to ponder the complexities of birth on John Bull’s other island. Shaw once commented that the peaceful rooms of the National Gallery of Ireland in Merrion Square had become his ‘cherished asylum’, and Tone much enjoyed his visits to the Louvre, then known as the Muséum central des Arts. Opened in 1793 to make the royal collections accessible to the public, its galleries quickly filled with works seized from the Church and fleeing émigrés, as well as war trophies brought home by the Republic’s triumphant armies. The Museum was closed when Tone first visited it, but he was nevertheless allowed in after stating that he was a foreigner, to whom admission was free. While there, he admired paintings by Guido Reni, Rembrandt, Raphael and Van Dyck. He seemed familiar with their work, having presumably already encountered it in London and in private collections in Ireland. Some of the works he saw may have been part of the 1794 booty ‘appropriated’ for the French people by the armies of the North and Sambre et Meuse. Later, while acting as a French officer in Cologne, he confirmed an awareness of plunder in a casual comment after attending Easter Mass in the cathedral: ‘I fancy they have concealed their plate and ornaments for fear of us, and they are much right in that.’60 The Mona Lisa was still in Versailles where he may well have seen it, but the small canvas had not yet achieved its current iconic status, and he did not comment on it.

59 Ibid., 220–1. The ‘fatal swoop’ took place on 12 March 1798.
60 Ibid., 52.
Tone was drawn to one painting in particular, and though Frank MacDermot found his preference ‘perplexing to modern taste’, it is likely there was some hidden personal significance in the Irish revolutionary’s rapture in front of a full-length portrait of *The Penitent Magdalen* by the great Baroque painter, Charles le Brun.\(^61\) An opulent testimony to Counter-Reformation art, painted around 1655, its almost theatrical intensity would have appealed to late eighteenth-century tastes for sentimentalist depictions. She dramatically looks to heaven, her ill-begotten jewels strewn at her feet:

> The *Magdalen* of LeBrun is in my mind, worth the whole collection. I never saw anything in the way of painting which came near it. I am no artist, but it requires no previous instruction to be struck with the numberless beauties of this most enchanting piece. It is a production of consummate genius.\(^62\)

Tone returned a second time to admire this work, and claimed he spent close to an hour staring at it. Black and white reproductions only tell part of the story, as the Magdalene is draped in luscious silks of blue, white and red, an incongruous reflection of the French tricolour.\(^63\)

**V. Tone’s Place in the Irish Pantheon**

It seems likely that the Young Irelanders and Fenians who found themselves organising and agitating for Irish freedom in Paris during the course of the nineteenth century would have read Tone’s European diary and empathised with his isolation. So too would the celebrated literary exiles of the next century such as Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, though Tone has never been associated with them. If Tone experienced panic during his first weeks in France, he masked it with humour in his diary by emulating the adventures of protagonists in the rollicking but realistic novels of Tobias Smollett, which he frequently quoted. It is not impossible that Anthony Cronin had Tone’s own adventures in the back of his mind when he embarked on his ‘road

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\(^{61}\) Frank MacDermot, *Theobald Wolfe Tone* (London, 1939), 195. Inventaire du Louvre no. 2890. This work had been commissioned for the church of the Carmelite convent in Paris, from which it had been seized.

\(^{62}\) Tone, *Writings*, II, 100.

\(^{63}\) MacDermot, *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, facing 196.
trip’ through France with Brendan Behan, recounted with humour and self-deprecation in *Dead as Doornails*. Yet Tone’s experience was also a typical eighteenth-century narrative of happiness and misfortune, and circumstances meant that he could easily cast himself as a victim. His anonymity in Paris was compounded by the fact that his wife and children were still in America, and this led to many bouts of loneliness and the ‘blue devils’. Idleness, the uncertainty of his fate and weariness from ‘floating about at the mercy of events’, meant that he frequently despaired – despite admitting the absurdity of this state of mind in such a beautiful environment as Paris. One July day he scaled the heights of Montmartre, ‘all alone’ he emphasised, ‘and had a magnificent view of Paris at my feet; but it is terrible to have nobody to speak to, or to communicate the million of observations which “rise and shine, evaporate and fall” in my mind.’ The literary merits of Tone’s journal have been praised by Declan Kiberd, who astutely remarks that readers feel ‘the poignant vulnerability of the writer in every line’, knowing how the tale will end. Tone’s humanity has a universal appeal, but – for the Irish reader in particular – the sustained and sorrowful exploration of Irishness in exile had a major impact on the collective imagination. The contrast with other cultures led to a reinforcement of Tone’s own identity, and repeatedly he wrote with affection of ‘this little island of our own… a country worth struggling for, whose value I never knew until I had lost it.’

As a result, generations of Irish readers, from the well-intended armchair patriot to the inveterate republican militant seeking to justify the armed struggle in Tone’s ‘gospel’, have been drawn into a virtual journey by his skilful eighteenth-century pen, enriched and enlightened by the adventures they have experienced vicariously through reading. In looking to this legacy for inspiration, they also found solace in his inimitable fusion of light-hearted wit and determination never to despair. A recent testimony to his grip on the Irish imagination surfaced in a diary kept by a female prisoner in Kilmainham gaol in 1916. On Sunday, 7 May, Madeleine ffrench-Mullen noted the silence as no volleys signalled executions, her outrage at not being able to attend Mass, and indignation at being fobbed off with a ‘tea’ which consisted of stirabout and dry bread. However, she added, “tis in vain for soldiers to complain” as a

65 Tone, *Writings*, II, 190.
66 Ibid, 229. Tone is quoting Samuel Johnson’s *Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749).
68 Tone, *Writings*, III, 17.
good Irishman has already said. The ditty was Tone’s favourite refrain from a drinking song.

There was nothing paradoxical about the friendship that grew between Tone and du Petit Thouars, both of whom shared a common thirst for adventure. Admiral Bergasse du Petit Thouars, du Petit Thouars’ descendent and editor of his letters, described his ancestor as a quintessential man of the last decades of the eighteenth century, an engaging figure infused with the sensibility, enthusiasm and anxiety of his times, possessing an incessant imagination and a mind broadened by a combination of reading and travel. Nothing better captures the essence of Theobald Wolfe Tone, who as a commoner was able to become a French officer and equal to his French companion. Neither man survived the year 1798, du Petit Thouars having perished defending his ship against the British at Aboukir on 3 August. But had they done so, both might have eventually reached the same status, as in the French army Tone could have risen through the ranks on talent and merit. Like many an archetypal hero, Tone had to leave the land of his birth and face insurmountable challenges in order to achieve heroic status. His life had been riddled with paradoxes and contradictions, not least that by the age of twenty he had already been cast as a doomed hero in an eighteenth-century tragic national narrative, albeit in the Galway stage production of John Home’s Scottish play Douglas (1756): ‘With the benefit of hindsight, there is something both prophetic and ironic in the image of Wolfe Tone standing on stage in full battle dress’, reassuring his wife that ‘Free is his heart who for his country fights.’

The greatest paradox was Tone’s mere presence that crisp March day in the Panthéon, as after his death this relatively modest man came to be venerated among Irish nationalists in a phenomenon the French came to call panthéonisation. In Tone’s case, it is only metaphorical, as no physical monument houses his remains or indeed those of other United Irishmen. It is not by coincidence that the review by Tom Dunne of the 1998 Lilliput edition of Tone’s Life concluded with that episode. The Irish patriot had not missed the

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69 Diary of Madeleine ffrench-Mullen, Kilmainham and Mountjoy Jails, 5–20 May 1916, Allen Library (Edmund Rice House, Dublin), 201/File B. I am grateful to Darragh O’Donoghue for providing me with his transcript.
70 See Bergasse du Petit Thouars (ed.), Aristide Aubert Du Petit Thouars, ix.
opportunity to project how a civic temple could honour the deserving men of Ireland, possibly fearing the likelihood of bloodshed while not imagining his own fate: ‘If we have a republic in Ireland, we must build a Pantheon, but we must not, like the French, be in too great a hurry to people it.’

If in 1796 Ireland had not yet achieved her independence and ‘fixed her rank among the nations of the earth’, Tone’s written legacy proves that, as remains true today, Ireland was an outward-looking society. As this article has attempted to demonstrate, Tone deserves greater recognition as a European writer and as one of Ireland’s greatest cultural and literary assets. ‘Aux grands hommes, la Patrie reconnaissante.’

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Tone, *Writings*, II, 102.

The famous inscription which graces the pediment of the Panthéon.
In early August 1866 the twenty-four year old Scottish landscape and figure painter George Reid (1841 – 1913) arrived in the Netherlands. He had travelled from Aberdeen to study with Gerrit Alexander Mollinger (1836 – 67) at Utrecht having already been a student in Edinburgh at both the ‘Trustees Academy’ and at the Royal Scottish Academy (R.S.A.) Life School. In 1866 Reid was viewed by senior figures in the R.S.A. as a promising landscape painter in the late Romantic manner of Horatio McCulloch (1805 – 67). Indeed Reid had come directly to McCulloch’s attention immediately before setting off for Europe when the older artist, unbidden, had ‘corrected’ the painting of the sky in one of Reid’s landscapes as it hung on the walls of the R.S.A. annual exhibition. There was mild disquiet among R.S.A members at Reid’s decision to leave Scotland and study with Mollinger. More conservative taste found the Dutchman’s emerging Realism unpalatable and Reid was warned against contaminating his Scottish sensibilities with foreign fare.¹ When Reid returned from Holland, having abandoned his images of castles, storms and mountains, and embraced Mollinger’s Realist subject matter of rural genre, field labour and agricultural landscape, along with the Dutchman’s penchant for heavy dragged paint and overtly emotional handling, there was genuine anger. Reid was vilified in the press, then summoned by Sir George Harvey (1806 – 76), the President of the R.S.A., and castigated for ‘looking at nature through Mollinger’s eyes’.²

In truth however Reid was simply conforming to a pattern of European travel and study that was, by the mid nineteenth century, very well established indeed. For some hundreds of years that study had predominantly taken place in the Low Countries. By the time Reid travelled to the Netherlands, Scotland had had strong economic and intellectual ties with the region for over 400 years. Since 1407 Scots merchant burgesses had traded through the ‘staple’ port, which was sometimes Bruges, sometimes Middleburg, and from 1541, Campvere in Zealand. This meant that whichever of these towns in the

¹ George Reid to Alexander Walker, 30 August 1866, George Reid Archive. The George Reid Archive is in the Aberdeen Art Gallery.
² George Reid to J.F. White, 20 February 1867, Reid Archive.
Low Countries held the staple granted Scots customs and docking privileges and had a large Scottish community. All Scottish exports went through the Netherlands. Cultural ties paralleled the economic links so that when he wished to commission a major altarpiece for the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity in Edinburgh in the late 1470s, Edward Bonkil turned to Hugo van der Goes in Bruges. When seeking images of Old Testament subjects to form the basis of a government commission in 1650, the Scottish parliament looked to Rubens and to illustrated bibles from Antwerp to provide models. In the eighteenth century, Allan Ramsay (1713–84), Gavin Hamilton (1723–98) and a host of lesser lights may have flocked to Rome. Yet, David Wilkie’s (1785–1841) early and spectacular success was founded on a reworking of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting. By the nineteenth century, Scottish artists were again turning to the northern part of the European mainland for inspiration, with France gaining precedence over the Netherlands.

Popular perceptions of the ‘auld alliance’ notwithstanding, the Low Countries had been the focus of Scottish artistic links to Europe for hundreds of years. It was only as Paris developed as the hub of progressive visual culture in the nineteenth century that Scottish focus appears to have shifted to the French capital. Evidence in the form of the Glasgow School, their frequenting of Parisian ateliers and their summers on the Loing at Grez, followed by the Colourists and their various residencies and sojourns in Montparnasse, Paris Plage and Collioure, has been extensively examined elsewhere. This identification of Paris as the source of Scottish modernism, along with the desire to both hitch Scottish painting to the coat-tails of the undisputed superpower of modernist culture while simultaneously asserting the independence and uniquely valuable contribution made by the Scots, has produced some intricate and not wholly convincing apologetics. James Guthrie (1859–1930) has thus been acknowledged as sharing an aesthetic with the progressive Frenchman Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–84) but is ultimately deemed to be more profoundly influenced by his fellow Scot Arthur Melville (1855–1904). J.D. Fergusson’s (1874–1961) Les Eus, though recognised as having strong parallels to Matisse (1869–1964), ‘is also a reflection of both

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his own independence of mind and of the strength of the Scottish tradition. This ambiguous binary ambition has obscured a more nuanced understanding of the role of France in the development of Scottish painting in the nineteenth century. A closer examination of the European travel and study undertaken by George Reid reveals a more complex picture than the undeniable centrality of Holland would at first suggest.

Reid is associated with the very beginnings of Scottish interest in contemporary Dutch art. Throughout his career Reid’s main patron, and one of his closest friends, was the collector and fellow Aberdonian John Forbes White (1831–1904). It was White who bought the first modern Dutch work to come to Scotland, the landscape *Drenthe* by Mollinger, acquired from the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Likewise it was White who introduced the work of Jozef Israels (1824–1911) to Scotland, acquiring among others *The Departure* and *The Errand*, bought during the collector’s first visit to Mollinger in Holland in 1863. Reid and White were close. There are over 500 surviving letters between the two men and, particularly in the early stages of Reid’s career, White was a significant figure for Reid. He bought numerous works from him, wrote art criticism with him, travelled abroad with him, stayed in his house, sought his advice, helped him to learn French and not infrequently lent him money. Reid knew White’s extensive collection of paintings intimately and he saw and studied the Mollinger landscape and the work by Israels as soon as they arrived in Aberdeen. The immediate consequences of White’s Dutch enthusiasms and of Reid’s introduction to them was Reid’s work with Mollinger.

White made the arrangements for Reid’s visit and, given Mollinger’s considerable financial success in Scotland following White’s initial purchase, his willingness to accept Reid as a pupil is understandable. Scottish culture and the contemporary Scottish art world were not unknown quantities to the Dutchman. Surviving letters document a close, if not unproblematic relationship between master and pupil. Ten days after Reid’s arrival Mollinger wrote to fellow painter D.A.C. Artz (1837–1890), then working in Paris: ‘I am saddled at the moment with a pupil whose pupil I have become, dear Reid is a Scot from Aberdeen who speaks nothing but English and this forces me to learn English. This takes up much time, because I have to help him with everything just like a child’.

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7 G.A. Mollinger to D.A.C. Artz, 12 August 1866, Haags Gemeentearchief (The Hague Municipal Archives), Mollinger Collection. ‘Hierbij komt dat ik tegenwoordig ere
In spite of problems in communication, the change in Reid's work over the ten weeks of close study in Holland was enormous. On arrival Reid had, in Mollinger's words, 'a special preference for castles, churches and everything that is in ruins, which he decorates with thunderous effect such as rainbows and setting suns.' Reid's early exhibits at the R.S.A. support Mollinger's assessment. In the years from 1862, when Reid first exhibited, until 1866, seven out of thirteen pictures were paintings of castles, churches, towers or ruins. He took two Scottish landscapes out to Holland to work on. One was a church, Cowie Kirk, and one a castle, Dunottar. Shortly after his return to Britain, Reid produced his first major painting of field labour, The Peat Gatherers, a faithful recording of the costume, tools and methods of a characteristic mundane Scottish routine.

The break with the prevailing Scottish Romantic tradition is sudden and absolute and the catalyst for the change appears securely Dutch. However, Utrecht in 1866 was not George Reid's introduction to progressive continental painting and thought. In addition to familiarity with the European works bought by J.F. White, Reid had a considerable experience of contemporary art criticism, specifically that on French art or by French critics. In 1865 the library of the R.S.A. changed its operating structure and allowed students access during times of the year when classes were in session. Reid was a student from 1863 and was thus eligible for admission. From early in his career he assiduously read contemporary art criticism and had a wide range of periodical literature available to him. Letters to the wealthy Aberdeen lawyer Alexander Walker from 1863 onwards record the painter borrowing and returning contemporary London-based periodicals from Walker's extensive and ever-growing collection on a very regular basis. It is likely therefore that when the R.S.A. library became available to Reid he availed himself of the opportunities it afforded.

The library housed various publications of relevance to this discussion,
including *The Fine Art Quarterly Review* and, most significantly, a complete run of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* from its inception in 1859. In that journal in 1865 Paul Mantz wrote a highly favourable review of the Realist painter Jules Breton (1827–1906):

> I would not wish to upset the painters of history, religious subjects, legends and mythology, but I would merely like to tell them that there is a simple genre picture in the Salon which has more character and style than their most dramatic statements or their wisest inventions. This picture is ‘The End of the Day’ by M. Breton: it is by no means a complex work and it needs no knowledge of the classics to understand it. But these humble scenes of rural life have sometimes a serenity which resembles grandeur. M. Breton, whose talent we greatly admire and who, by good fortune, has always deserved his success, excels at painting these tranquil scenes and almost noble work in the open air. In mixing poetry and reality, he achieves results which are a joy to see and feel, and even so he never departs from the humble world of rustic labourers, and the fields of Pas-de-Calais are his complete horizon…The effect is absolutely correct, the values, scarcely felt, of shade and of light so delicately noted, that one can feel oneself breathing more easily in front of this picture and believe one smells the fresh smell of new mown hay. The figures are drawn surely and grandly with a sort of virile elegance and a severe charm; they are part of the countryside and the countryside is part of them. All is harmony and serenity in this picture, and ‘The End of the Day’ is perhaps the most complete and in its evident calm, the most moving, of the works M. Breton has exhibited until now.\(^\text{10}\)

In the early 1860s Reid wrote reviews of the R.S.A. annual exhibitions. It is instructive to trace the changes in his writing in the period after he was exposed to contemporary French views. Prior to his access to the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* Reid wrote in praise of the historical paintings of James Drummond (1816–77):

> Mr James Drummond this year exhibits two pictures – no. 429 – ‘George Wishart and John Knox’ and no. 582 ‘King James VI publicly

\(^{10}\) Paul Mantz, ‘Le Salon de 1865’ (Premier Article), *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 18 (1865), 518.
returning thanks after the Gowrie Conspiracy’. Both these works are of great merit, and characterised by the most scrupulous attention to accuracy in the costumes and detail… ‘King James returning thanks’ is a composition full of small figures, cleverly grouped and arranged, and painted with great care and delicacy – qualities however, which all Mr Drummond’s works are possessed of, but never we think so strongly and favourably seen as this year.¹¹

After exposure to contemporary French views his opinion was altogether different. Drummond was now attacked for his lack of truth to nature. His painting was judged not on its composition or historical accuracy, but on its creation of a believable sense of light and air, in Mantz’ words its ‘effect’, its ‘values’. In discussing Drummond’s medievalist Sunday Morning in 1868 Reid observed:

Here the colour is dull, dingy and cheerless, the execution laboured and hard… Look for instance, at the snow, how false in tone and colour, and in its effect of light and shadow; unless sullied and defiled the colour of snow, be it in sunshine or shade, is of marvellous tenderness, and thus it has ever been the emblem of purity. Mr Drummond fails to see this, representing it as a dull dingy white, or if in shadow, as an impure and unwholesome green.¹²

It is not necessary to attribute the shift in Reid’s position to the Mantz article specifically. The Gazette des Beaux-Arts offered regular examples of Realist criticism, both of current French painting and of the London exhibitions of the Royal Academy. The central issue is that Reid was aware of current debates in advance of his study in Holland and that this knowledge arguably came from France.

The latter extract given above is drawn from a large critical essay Reid published in 1868 in collaboration with J.F. White. The 25,000-word polemic used the R.S.A. exhibition of 1868 as a platform from which to attack current Scottish art and taste and to promote Realist ideology. Thoughts on Art and Notes on the Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy of 1868 pointedly attacked

¹¹ George Reid, ‘Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy (Second Notice)’, Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Leader, 19 February 1864, 4.

¹² Veri Vindex (G. Reid & J.F. White), Thoughts on Art and Notes on the Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy of 1868 (Edinburgh, 1868), 29.
the Scottish Romantic tradition and the spurious nature of Scottish national identity in painting. In their place it promoted an internationalist vision. It is here that the straightforward identification of Holland as the isolated cause of Reid’s new style entirely breaks down. The Realist visual language adopted by Reid from Holland was international and generally acknowledged to be closely linked to developments in France. Six years before Reid travelled to Holland, the Dutch landscape painter A.G. Bilders (1838–65) had written to a patron explaining:

I have seen pictures such as I never dreamed of. I found all that my heart’s desires in them and that I almost always miss in the Dutch painters. Tryon, Courbet, Diaz, Dupre, Robert Fleury, Breton have made a deep impression on me. So I am now thoroughly French … just by being thoroughly French I am thoroughly Dutch because the great Frenchmen of today and the great Dutchmen of former times have much in common … This luxuriant manner came originally from Holland.13

Bilders saw the absurdity of attributing discrete character to painting on the basis of national boundaries. Dutch and French painting had much in common in the 1860s, including a shared admiration for the landscape painting of the Low Countries in the seventeenth century.

Artz, the painter to whom Mollinger wrote regarding his problematic pupil, was studying in Paris in 1866 because by then the links between Dutch and French Realism were already well established. The text of *Thoughts on Art* is replete with the promotion of Dutch painting practices validated by contemporary French art theory and criticism. By 1868 Reid was well versed in both practice and theory and recognised the importance of Paris. For Reid, although his painting method came primarily from Holland, France acted as both fountainhead of new ideas and as the facilitator of cultural exchange. Having discovered the Frenchmen Breton, Millet and Diaz, via the Dutchmen Mollinger, Israels and Artz, the Scot went on to examine the well-spring at first hand and to engage in the evolving Realist debate then playing out across Europe. *Thoughts on Art* drew heavily on the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and on other French writing and in addition Reid visited the World’s Fair exhibition in Paris in 1867 and returned to study in Adolphe Yvon’s (1817–93) studio in the city in 1869.

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Thoughts on Art caused a sensation when it appeared under the nom-de-plume ‘Veri Vindex’ shortly after the opening of the R.S.A exhibition of 1868. In the painter’s own words it ‘exploded like a shell in Edinburgh’.

It attacked both scions of the Scottish art establishment such as Reid’s would be mentor Horatio McCulloch who was dismissed as ‘conventional’, ‘superficial’ and as having ‘little feeling for colour’, and Scottish cultural conservatism in general.

We … north of the Tweed are not given to change, and, in our traditions are conservative to a degree … We measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves among ourselves, refusing obstinately to believe that anything better is discoverable than our own narrow provincial views.

The solution offered was to open up Scotland to outside influence, in particular the influence of France. Repeatedly Scots are exhorted to ‘learn of that which our French and Belgian neighbours know’ or praised for showing ‘evident traces of French influence in their work’. In addition to the oft-voiced endorsement of French practice the essay displays extensive knowledge of recent French theory and criticism.

In an open letter published in the Courrier du Dimanche Gustave Courbet (1819–77) set out the principles of Realist art. While it is unlikely that Reid would have had access to this original publication, the critic Castagnary reprinted the letter in Les Libres Propos in 1864. Since the Scot was in Paris just three years later, and had an avowed interest in Realism following his studies in Utrecht, it is possible that he saw the volume. The 1867 Paris visit was taken in company with Mollinger who took Reid to visit various Realist linked painters’ studios making the encountering of Courbet’s text even more likely. Courbet wrote:

I hold the artists of one century basically incapable of reproducing the aspect of a past or future century. It is in this sense that I deny the possibility of historical art applied to the past. Historical art is by nature contemporary. Each epoch must have its artists who express it and reproduce it for the future.

14 George Reid to J.F. White, c.14 May 1868, Reid Archive.
15 Veri Vindex, Thoughts on Art, 40.
16 Ibid., 54.
17 Ibid., 53.
18 Courbet’s original letter was published on 25 December 1861 at the prompting of the critic Jules Castagnary whom he had met in 1860. The open letter set out Courbet’s beliefs about art for any young artists potentially interested in joining the teaching
In 1868 Reid wrote:

We believe the time will yet come when artists will see that the only true historical painting, and the only kind that is valuable and enduring, is that of contemporary events…There is another consideration in favour of the painting of contemporary history. The artist is able to get at the absolute relative truth of things which compose his picture.\(^{19}\)

An echo of Champfleury is likewise found in *Thoughts on Art*. Commenting on contemporary subject matter, the Frenchman wrote that ‘[t]he serious representation of present-day personalities, the derbies, the black dress-coats, the polished shoes or the peasants sabots, had a far greater interest than the frivolous knick-knacks of the past.’\(^{20}\) Reid attacked the discipline of history painting in similar terms:

The crude and ill-digested reading of history and historical romance aided by their own puerile fancies and the spurious antiquities of Wardour Street, can never make even approximation to the truth of things as they existed centuries since. It is painful to think of the amount of misdirected labour that is annually expended in seeking to realise the life of the past, while there is still so much room left for recording that of the present.\(^{21}\)

The language used by Reid in his writing is certainly revealing of his knowledge and assimilation of contemporary French criticism. His R.S.A. exhibition review of 1867 contains the sentence: ‘Our nineteenth-century art, as a rule, is sadly wanting in earnestness and purpose – wanting in what the French call *motif*.\(^{22}\)

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21 Veri Vindex, *Thoughts on Art*, 23.
This is the first example of Reid using an un-translated French technical or critical term. It was a practice that rapidly became very common in his writing.

The central technical change that Reid adopted from his studies with Mollinger was the use of tonal painting. Whenever he was required to give details of this approach he habitually used the French word ‘tonalité’. Writing in 1873, he explained:

In speaking of the tonalité of a picture it is not its tone, but its scale of what is called ‘tonic values’ that is meant, as in music, where a certain key may be high or low, major or minor. A picture may be high in tone or low as the artist sees fit, and as his subject demands; but high or low, major or minor, this key must be scrupulously adhered to till melody or picture is completed.23

The use of these terms was not mere affectation. Reid had internalised the methods of Holland and the critical language of France that underlay them. In his private correspondence there is as marked a change in language as in his published work. While the use of ‘effect’ first occurs in his letters in March 1867, the major change occurred in the immediate aftermath of writing Thoughts on Art. In the letter that Reid wrote to J.F. White describing the reception of the piece in Edinburgh he also discussed his own current painting. ‘I was rather taken with the look of the peat moss at the back of it [a house at Auchlunies] and on Saturday I made a tonalité study of some women among the peats which I think will perhaps be the making of a picture.’ By July 1868 he was writing of tonalité regularly. In a letter to A. Walker from London Reid criticised the watercolours at the Royal Academy for their want of tonalité.25 In August in a letter from Peterhead he wrote of making a tonalité study of a fisher-boy at Buchanhaven.26 Both method and linguistic usage passed into Reid’s regular painted and written vocabulary. The practical examples upon which Reid’s new method was based may have been Dutch, but the theoretical underpinnings of the work were French and acknowledged as such.

Beyond the appropriation of language and the general adoption of Realist principles to attack James Drummond and to promote tonal landscape painting

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24 George Reid to J.F. White, c.14 May 1868, Reid Archive.
25 George Reid to A. Walker, 21 July 1868, Reid Archive.
26 George Reid to A. Walker, 16 August 1868, Reid Archive.
there are more specific adaptations of French theory. The French promotion of popular songs and verse as a source of Realist imagery reappeared in Scottish guise in *Thoughts on Art*. Champfleury, for example, was opposed to poetry as a medium of expression on the grounds that it sacrificed the thought to the form. The only exception to this belief was his support for vernacular verse where the sentiment was not inhibited in any way by rules of poetic construction. In response to such views A.T. Ribot (1823–91) painted pictures based on popular ballads. *The Little Milkmaid* of c.1865 is based on the folk song *Il était une Bergère*. Songs by writers such as Pierre Dupont, written for popular performance and often revolving around peasant life and work, were well known to painters and to Realist critics. Popular and folk culture was an accepted source of Realist imagery. While literature was in advance of painting in utilising popular sources there was nevertheless considerable support for the proposition in Realist circles.

Initially it appears as if Reid adopted this proposal in its entirety and simply restated the proposition in Scottish terms:

There is no part of the literature of a country that shows the national bent of a people better than its Songs. ‘Give me the making of the songs of a country, and I care not who may write its laws’, is the trite but true saying of Fletcher of Saltoun. The songs are the outcome of the feelings of a nation, revealing its tastes, sympathies and aspirations. They are the glass in which we see mirrored the whole character of the people. The wealth of Scottish song makes it an easy task to decipher the national characteristics, for there is no country in which there is a greater outpouring of feeling in regard to the domestic affection, the incidents of simple everyday life, with its pleasures and sorrows, and the cheerful influence of the cottage fireside.

The argument rapidly developed into a plea for Scottish artists to turn to the writings of Robert Burns and Walter Scott. These were seen as sources which expressed the true nature of Scotland. Almost inevitably Burns was linked to the ‘truth to nature’ argument used to attack Drummond and history painting.

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28 The painting is now in *The Cleveland Museum of Art*.
30 Veri Vindex, *Thoughts on Art*, 55.
Thoughts on Art continued:

(Nothing can) … bind us with hidden words more closely to nature than the songs of Burns … With what pathos does he indicate the harmony that must exist between the human heart and the face of nature as he plaintively sings

‘Ye banks and braes o’ bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?’

…

Or, again
‘Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O’erhung with wild woods, thickening green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin’d am’rous round the raptured scene;’

In these love songs nature seems to become part of the poet, responsive to every shade of feeling. But, in addition to this poetic power of making himself one with nature, Burns depicted her beauties with consummate skill. From the conditions of his verse, as lyric poetry, elaborate description seldom finds a place, for the mood is too tame for him. More frequently his touches are like lightning flashes, rapid but far-gleaming. When he does condescend to the descriptive, how rich and true, as well as powerful are the tones. Witness the ‘Birks of Aberfeldy’:

‘Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o’er the crystal streamlet plays,
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.’

…

‘The scene is beautiful’ says Allan Cunningham, himself a painter, ‘and the song rivals in truth and effect the landscape’ [Bohn’s Burns, 65]. Or take his ‘Bruar Water’:

‘Here foaming down the shelving rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
Then high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild roaring o’er a linn.’

which is as vivid and vigorous as a Highland Spate by Peter Graham. But it is as a painter of Scottish character and manners that Burns is best known, and it is in this direction that his influence on Scottish art has been greatest. He threw a halo round the simple cottage life, which
has made it, and every representation of it, dear to the heart of the people… Burns gave insight into the very heart of nature.\textsuperscript{31}

An idea stemming originally from French Realist theory was thus adapted to suit local conditions and to create an original manifesto for the progress of painting in Scotland, with Champfleury’s prohibition on poetic form leading to a justification of Burns as a source on the grounds of popularity and simplicity.\textsuperscript{32}

The alterations made to French ideas were not simply expedient. \textit{Thoughts on Art} reflects Reid’s relationship with France as a library of new ideas to be explored, adapted and amended as appropriate, rather than as an authoritative textbook to be followed without question. On occasion, clearly expressed French opinion was directly contradicted by the Scot. Paul Mantz’ view of the English school at the International Exhibition of 1867 was critical of W.Q. Orchardson (1832 – 1910), and regarding his work \textit{The Challenge} Mantz wrote:

It is impossible for us to take M. Orchardson for a colourist, for the tones which he uses do not relate to each other in an ordered harmony. Moreover his method of working is most unusual. This scratched out method, which patiently puts little strokes side by side, looks more like embroidery than painting. Metsu would have been astonished by this method; van Ostade would have been profoundly upset.\textsuperscript{33}

A year later Reid singled out Orchardson for praise on precisely the grounds that Mantz decried:

Many of the most promising of the young painters including Calderon, Orchardson, G.D. Leslie, Mason, Yeames and Wells, shew evident traces of French influences in their work and greatly, we think to its advantage… (They) have infused into it many of the best qualities of

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 55 – 7. Peter Graham’s (1836 – 1921) ‘Highland Spate’ is a reference to \textit{A Spate in the Highlands}, a hugely successful painting exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1866 and now in Manchester Art Gallery.

\textsuperscript{32} There is precedent for French Realist recourse to Burns as a source in the form of a letter from J.F. Millet extolling the poet’s virtues. The letter was unpublished in 1868 and it is unlikely Reid and White were aware of Millet’s views. See Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, \textit{Millet raconté par lui-même} (3 vols, Paris, 1921), II, 145.

French art, and, notably the important element of *tonalité*. The later works of Orchardson … ‘The Challenge’, and ‘Talbot and the Countess of Auvergne’ … may be cited as examples.\(^{34}\)

In 1869, the year after writing *Thoughts on Art*, Reid returned to Paris for a second visit, this time to enrol in an atelier. Unlike his study with Mollinger in 1866 he had made no firm arrangements before leaving Scotland and hoped to use Parisian contacts to make the necessary arrangements. The Scottish painter John Dun (fl.1863–1908) and Mollinger’s Dutch colleague D.A.C. Artz were both in the city and Reid turned to them for assistance. He was to be disappointed as neither of the principal Barbizon painters with whom he wished to study, C.F. Daubigny (1817–78) and J. Breton, kept ateliers or accepted pupils. Reid had to be satisfied with joining the students in the atelier of the battle painter Adolphe Yvon. He did so on the grounds that there was a life model available to him and that for much of the time Yvon himself was not there. Reid wrote rather defensively to J.F. White ‘I don’t know if I have acted wisely in rushing into it so but at all events one has nature pure and simple, and Yvon only twice a week so no great harm can come of it.’\(^{35}\)

During those times when he was not in the studio Reid continued his study of Realism at a distance through the publicly available paintings of his chosen mentor Breton. He visited the Luxembourg gallery regularly and made what he referred to as ‘tone studies’ based on Breton’s 1859 painting *The Recall of the Gleaners*. He continued making efforts to meet Breton in person but wrote finally on the eve of his departure, ‘Jules Breton does not live in Paris so there is no getting at him – he stays away down at Courrières, Pas de Calais. I believe he has a large farm there.’\(^{36}\)

Reid’s direct experiences of Paris were different in kind from those in Holland. He worked directly under the tutelage of Mollinger in 1866 and was to return to The Netherlands in 1871 to do likewise with Josef Israels. In Paris he studied at a distance. He entertained thoughts of working under renowned French painters but accepted their inaccessibility and rather than direct instruction sought general principles on which to base his work. He studied life drawing intensively with Yvon. He studied tone by working from Breton’s example. He visited galleries and examined contemporary French Realist art. Together with his embrace and espousal of French critical theory,

\(^{34}\) Veri Vindex, *Thoughts on Art*, 53-4.

\(^{35}\) George Reid to J.F. White, 10 February 1869, Reid Archive.

\(^{36}\) George Reid to J.F. White, 9 May 1869, Reid Archive.
his activities in Paris offer an alternative understanding of the Scottish artistic relationship with the city to that usually advanced.

Paris was the hub of artistic development in the nineteenth century and as such Scots, in common with artists from across the Western cultural world, were aware of and interested in developments there. Paris did not function in a uniform manner for all, however, and frequently was not the source of direct instruction. France provided the intellectual core of contemporary experience. It offered a point of reference for painters which, were they to consider themselves progressive, they could not ignore. It was not necessarily the direct source of individual acts of change. Paris oversaw, underwrote and sanctioned change in Scotland; it did not automatically provide the commonplace education.

*University of Aberdeen*
In nineteenth-century Ireland one associates the profession of painter with the Protestant faith and the leisured class, and a glance at the list of the members of the Royal Hibernian Academy would appear to confirm this view. Equally, one might assume that all Protestants supported British Rule in Ireland, and yet it is an established fact that many of the staunchest advocates of Home Rule, such as Charles Stuart Parnell, were members of the Church of Ireland. While a number of Irish nineteenth-century artists conform to this paradigm, a study of three painters who used their art to give visual expression to their disparate political convictions suggests a diversity of political beliefs that challenges the stereotype. The artists in question are Aloysius O’Kelly, Richard Moynan and John Lavery. All three were born in Ireland between 1853 and 1856. Crucially, all three completed their initial training with a sojourn in a well-known Parisian art establishment. And all three used their artistic skills to articulate their political beliefs.

The most senior member of the group is Aloysius O’Kelly. He was born in Dublin in July 1853, the youngest of five children. His father ran a saddle-making business but his early death during the artist’s childhood meant radical change for the O’Kelly family as his mother emigrated to London to be near her relatives. One of his cousins, the sculptor John Lawlor, was working on the Albert Memorial at that time. This connection with the visual arts helped determine career paths in the O’Kelly household as three of the five children became artists.

O’Kelly reached Paris the year of the First Impressionist Exhibition (1874) when he was twenty-one years old and began his studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. His tutor, sculptor and painter Jean-Léon Gérôme, is now primarily celebrated for his Orientalist paintings rendered in meticulous detail. O’Kelly’s...
other teacher at the *Ecole* was the Spanish-trained artist Léon Bonnat whose outstanding talent as a figure painter led to his appointment as the director of the *Ecole* after the death of Paul Dubois.⁴

Like many other students in the *Ecole*, O’Kelly moved on to Brittany in 1876 to paint out of doors (known as working from the motif), where he made narrative paintings of peasant subject matter, depicting genre scenes demonstrating a knowledge of Dutch seventeenth-century masters. He also embarked on a series of observational images that documented the local landscape and peasant lifestyle. Many of the everyday activities of the peasants, their devotional rites and rituals, their occupations of fishing and farming, must have appeared familiar to O’Kelly as it echoed rural life in Ireland. The French subject matter must also have suggested the possibility of similar topics within an Irish context.

O’Kelly moved to the west of Ireland in 1881 in the prestigious role of an artist with *The Illustrated London News*. His mission was to document events during the Land War and, in this capacity, he made visual reports relating to the effects of English rule in Ireland. ‘An Eviction in the West of Ireland’, which appeared in *The Illustrated London News* on 19 March 1881, shows the forced removal of three generations of one family from a well-kept Irish cottage.⁵ The family’s possessions consisted of a bed-head, a milk churn, a table, chairs, buckets and bundles of clothes, all of which lie in disarray in the foreground. An elderly woman and a child bemoan their fate while other members of the group, including a mother carrying an infant, look towards the cottage door, where an elderly man is being escorted from the premises by a uniformed officer. The legal aspect of the eviction is emphasised by the landlord’s agent, who is mounted on his horse facing into the scene. His position of visual dominance is reinforced by a row of constables flanking the building on the right hand side of the composition. This line of armed guards contrasts with a group of peasants positioned on the other side of the cabin. The locals look on in horror at the event, their body language suggesting anger and frustration.

O’Kelly’s black and white illustration approaches the subject of eviction in a very different manner to Lady Elizabeth Butler’s 1890 painting of the same subject. Butler’s dramatic depiction of a post-eviction scene, entitled *Evicted*, painted in 1988.

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⁵ ‘An Eviction in the West of Ireland’, *The Illustrated London News*, 19 March 1881.
shows a handsome peasant woman wearing a red skirt standing defiantly in front of her ruined home. The picture is set on a cloud-swept mountainside and the gables of the demolished cottage echo the contours of the landscape. In the distance, one can see the retreating eviction party moving towards another homestead with a smoking chimney.

In 1889 Harry Jones Thaddeus’ *Eviction Scene* addressed the subject from the obverse perspective. The action takes place in the cabin interior as the painter focuses on a group of men who have barricaded themselves into the building that is currently under siege. The artist focuses primarily on the actions of the defenders who are dashing around inside the cottage with ladders and buckets of water, ready to quench the thatched roof that has been set alight by the constabulary. The cramped, crowded, smoke-filled interior is shown in semi-darkness. The fact that the daylight is spilling into the cabin above the head of a baton-wielding British officer generates a feeling of action and menace.

Not all of O’Kelly’s drawings for *The Illustrated London News* are confrontational in nature. In ‘Posting the Government Proclamation’, which appeared on 19 November 1881, the artist depicted a party of government officials pasting a proclamation to the side of a rock in a mountainous landscape. The narrative hinges on a couple passing by with a horse and cart who inquire about the document’s contents. The cart is full of carefully-stacked turf and suggests good husbandry; but the fact that the Irish have to make inquiries of the British official implies that the notification is in English and that peasants are at a disadvantage from both a linguistic and a literacy viewpoint. The proclamation in question outlawed the Land League and the subtext of the image suggests that the role of the ordinary Irishman was to accept the rule of law posted by a foreign authority.

Yet not all the images show the Irish from a reactionary viewpoint. ‘The State of Ireland, Stopping the Hunt’, published in *The Illustrated London News* on 24 December 1881, illustrated the pro-active approach being taken by ordinary people to prevent the gentry from engaging in hunting, one of the landed classes favoured winter pastimes. The artist contrasts the beautifully-attired, mounted gentry with the poorly-dressed peasants, but, while the Irish may be at a disadvantage from a sartorial viewpoint, they stand together valiantly in a tightly-formed group and state their case articulately.

The legacy of O’Kelly’s educational experience at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, coupled with his experience of painting from the motif in Brittany, led him to

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explore the devotional side of Irish life in *A Station Mass in a Connemara Cabin*, a large format oil painting exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1884. The subject – a group of peasants attending Mass in the cramped setting of an Irish cottage – may have been prompted by Gérôme’s Orientalist work, *Prayer on the Rooftops of Cairo* (1865). Both paintings show peasants at prayer. Gérôme’s work is set on a Cairo rooftop rather than in the more conventional Mosque, while O’Kelly takes the unlikely domestic interior and turns it into a place of official worship – legitimised by the presence of the priest. The hand movements of the celebrant as he blesses the congregation echo the gestural aspect of the silhouetted worshiper on the Cairo roof, while the prostrating poses of a Muslim situated towards the back of the Orientalist scene is reproduced in the grovelling actions of an elderly woman who is positioned near the dresser in O’Kelly’s Irish painting.

The practice of conducting services at unorthodox venues such as domestic dwellings and Mass rocks reflects an earlier tradition stemming from a period in Irish history prior to Catholic Emancipation when, under a penal code, Roman Catholics were placed under severe restrictions in relation to their religion. Furthermore, the scale of this work demonstrates the artist’s elevation of subject matter, putting it on a par with historical and mythological themes as it departs from the tradition of small genre pieces. In this regard, O’Kelly was following in the footsteps of Alphonse Legros and Leon L’Hermitte whose large-scale images of rustic devotions were exhibited in the Paris Salons of the 1860s.

At a time when Mass was celebrated in Latin by a priest with his back to the congregation, O’Kelly chose to depict the ritual occurring in a domestic rather than a ecclesiastical setting. Moreover, the painting shows a young handsome priest, suggesting vibrant continuation of the faith, depicted during one of the rare moments in the ceremony when the celebrant actually faces the people. This potent image was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1884, and again in London at the Irish Exhibition at Olympia in 1888 and in the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin in 1889. The work had a further life in terms of illustration; a detailed preparatory sketch was shown in Henry Blackburn’s *Academy Notes* for 1883 and it was viewed as far afield as America where it was reproduced in *The Gael* in 1895.7

Another large-scale genre painting, *Military Manouvres*, was exhibited in the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1891. This work focused on an equally important

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aspect of everyday life in Ireland, the presence of the British military. Both the scale of the work and the peasant subject matter owe a debt to O’Kelly and to other French-trained artists such as Harry Jones Thaddeus. Indeed, its creator, Richard Moynan, also received his artistic education in Europe, studying initially in Antwerp and later at the Académie Julian in Paris. Moynan’s original career choice was the medical profession, but he abandoned his studies in the Royal College of Surgeons in order to become an artist. He differed from many of his Continentally-trained colleagues in that he returned to Dublin after four years of post-graduate study in order to set up a painting practice in his native city. Hailing from the professional classes, Moynan was very conscious that a buoyant art world depended on a stable political establishment. He viewed the burgeoning threat of Home Rule and the possible severing of ties with England as a potential social and economic disaster.8

The artist celebrated his return to Dublin with a narrative studio piece entitled *We Hope We Don’t Intrude* (1887). The painting shows a group of well-dressed ladies paying a casual visit to the artist’s studio-gallery in Harold’s Cross. This work is a masterpiece of self-promotion as it immediately advertises the elegance of the studio with its excellent lighting, warm cast-iron stove and fashionable oriental and modern furnishings. The walls are adorned with academic studies clearly signalling the artist’s Continental training in Antwerp and Paris, while the framed painting on the easel shows a flower girl, a popular subject in 1880s Dublin. One is immediately struck by the clarity of the composition as two of the visitors are engaged in conversation while a third lady appears to be totally entranced by the exhibits. A particularly elegant young woman addresses the artist who is depicted with his back to the viewer. His body language suggests total approval of the visit as he respectfully welcomes the visitors.

Moynan’s personal acquaintances would immediately have recognised the fact that the women are in fact his wife and sisters – a factor designed to underscore his ability as a portrait painter. Certain elements combine to give the work a Continental feel: the ladies’ clothes are French, the lightness of the palette has an Impressionist touch, and the composition echoes Fredrick Bazille’s *The Artist’s Studio* (1870) which was painted some seventeen years earlier.

The artist’s return to Dublin in December 1886 coincided with a number of events that emphasised the shifting sands of Irish politics. William Ewart Gladstone’s first Home Rule Bill had been narrowly defeated in May of the

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8 *The Union*, 29 January 1887.
same year, leading to a split in Liberal ranks and to the party’s defeat in the subsequent election. Parnell was still actively agitating for Home Rule and had commenced his Plan of Campaign, which demanded that landlords recognise the hardships brought about by bad weather and falling prices and reduce their tenants’ rents accordingly. Furthermore, the Irish leader’s honour seemed to be in question following the publication of a series of letters in *The Times* under the title ‘Parnellism and Crime’, which linked Parnell’s name with a raft of illegal activities including his alleged approval of the Phoenix Park murders of two British civil servants – an act that he had publicly condemned. This resulted in an investigation of Parnell and his colleagues at a tribunal known as The Special Commission.9

These events preoccupied the Unionist community in Dublin to the point that they decided to establish a newspaper, *The Union*, to broadcast their political beliefs.10 Moynan soon became their chief illustrator, providing weekly images in large format that expressed their political beliefs with wit and skill. The artist supplied over 120 cartoons, and each drawing was accompanied by an explanation in the body of the newspaper. The resulting collection closely reflected the situation as viewed by The Special Commission, providing a blow by blow account of events leading up to the eventual unmasking of the letters as forgeries produced by anti-Parnellite journalist Richard Piggott.

Under the pseudonym Lex, Moynan nailed his political colours to the mast taking every opportunity to support Ireland’s ties with Britain. His large black and white illustrations drew on a variety of sources, ranging from nursery rhymes to literary texts, to underscore his message. He lampooned Gladstone as the British mouthpiece of the Irish Home Rule party depicting him as everything from an inanimate object, as in ‘The Grand Old Battering Ram’, to a pot mender unable to mend the Home Rule pot. Some cartoons relied heavily on literary allusion. ‘Gladstone’s Ghost’, for example, takes its inspiration from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene IV. The editor of *The Union* made the following comment concerning it: ‘Mr Gladstone is depicted by our artist as a political Hamlet nerving himself to follow the dead ghost of Anarchy, whose mysterious will has magnetized him into action.’11 Gladstone is shown, sword in hand, lunging blindly into the dark.

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10 Supplement to *The Union*, 28 February 1887.
11 *The Union*, 13 August 1887, 5.
Parnell also featured in many of the cartoons, although Moynan generally treated him with more respect than Gladstone. In ‘I Do Not Recollect’, the artist depicts the Home Rule leader in a pensive mood struggling to answer the tribunal’s question. Here, in the time-honoured fashion, the politician has taken refuge in a faulty memory. Philip H. Bangel, editor of The Union, explained the presence of the rodents in the background:

In this piece, Parnell, like many other politicians, takes refuge in a most evasive alibi. A report from the Parnell Commission, which appeared the previous week, reflects the fact that the trial was going badly for Parnell, Biggar and his colleagues, as Parnell admitted to ‘miss-leading the House of Commons’ and not being able to locate account books dealing with the enormous sum of £100,000.

As the Special Commission progressed, the Home Rule Party increasingly appeared to be losing momentum. Moynan took every opportunity – no matter how slight – to vilify the movement. The inspiration for the drawing ‘In Full Retreat’ was a speech made by Parnell when he was elected a Burgher of the city of Edinburgh in July 1889. During the course of his oration, Parnell referred to himself as a coward in a positive sense because he was applauded for the sentiment. Lex, predictably, took the matter out of context and seized this opportunity to poke fun at the entire Home Rule entourage. The caption of the work suggests that a good motto for the Parnellite party would be: ‘He who fights and runs away may live to fight another day’. Parnell is shown leading the charge away from a personification of the British justice system in the form of a noble knight. The armour-clad Irish cohort includes such luminaries in the Home Rule party as Michael Davitt, John Dillon and Tim Harrington. To the rear of the group is the much-hated William O’Brien who refused to wear prison clothes during periods of detention; Lex shows him waving his famous breeches at the British knight.

The tide turned in favour of the Home Rule party when Richard Piggott took the stand. Anomalies in spelling in the various letters he wrote were cited and he broke down under interrogation and admitted to forgery. This effectively brought an end to The Special Commission and the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party took recourse in the law and began a libel action

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12 The Union, 28 May 1888, 5.
13 The Union, 11 May 1889, 5.
14 The Union, 27 July 1889, 1.
against *The Times* newspaper. The newspaper settled out of court, paying Parnell a hefty £5,000. *The Union* newspaper may also have had concerns about being sued as it ceased production early in October 1889, bringing Moynan’s career as a political cartoonist to an end.

The final artist of the group, John Lavery, worked primarily in oils. He was celebrated throughout Britain as a portrait and a subject painter. Born in Belfast on 20 March 1856, Lavery was orphaned by the age of three. He was brought up in the households of various relatives in Ireland and eventually settled in Glasgow where he served a three-year apprenticeship as ‘a miniature painter over photographs on ivory’, a process that required certain drawing skills. His opportunity to fund a professional art education arose in 1881 when he received £300 compensation when a fire had destroyed his Glasgow studio. In November of the same year he travelled to Paris to study at the Académie Julian. During the following three years, he spent the winters studying in the studio and the summers painting out of doors in Brittany.

Indeed, it was this painting from the motif that first brought Lavery to prominence in the Parisian art world: ‘One Sunday I went to Noget-sur-Marne and started a little canvas, which found a place on the line at the Salon next to *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* by Manet. Mine was called *Les Deux Pêcheurs* and was purchased by Saint-Marceaux, the sculptor, for three hundred francs.’

On returning to Glasgow Lavery became a core member of a group of young, vibrant painters known as the Glasgow Boys. His importance within this group became evident when he was chosen to paint *The State Visit of Queen Victoria* during the Glasgow International Exhibition in 1888. This detailed painting documented the 253 people present during the twenty-minute ceremony when Queen Victoria was presented with an Address from the people of Glasgow. Lavery successfully managed to recreate the event over the following two years as he assiduously painted preliminary oil studies of those involved. Recent research by Brian McQuade suggests that Lavery used a series of thirty-seven photographic plates, now held by the Glasgow Photographic Club, to help him complete this enormous canvas. McQuade attributes the presence of the photographic plates in the Glasgow Photographic Club to James Craig Annan who was one of the official photographers to record the state visit.

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16 Ibid., 50–1.
Queen Victoria was reluctant to give Lavery a sitting and it was only through the intercession of Prince Henry of Battenberg that she eventually posed for the painter. The extensive research and studies necessitated by this large canvas honed the artist’s skill in portraiture. The fact that the queen was the central figure in the narrative also helped Lavery’s commercial profile. It certainly facilitated his one-man show, which was held in London the following year, and the artist soon moved to the English capital where he established a fashionable portrait practice.

In 1913, Lavery was commissioned to paint *The King, the Queen, the Prince of Wales and Princess Mary*, enhancing his status further. This painting was a resounding success to the point that when the royal family viewed the work in the artist’s studio in Cromwell Place the king requested a paintbrush and colour so that he could put his mark on the canvas and thus claim association with the creation of the piece. During the war years Lavery worked as an official war artist – underscoring his allegiance to king and country. Indeed, his close connection to the royal family, and the British aristocracy in general, makes his associations with the establishment of the Irish state appear somewhat incongruous.

Kenneth McConkey suggests a number of reasons for Lavery’s growing interest in his Irish identity.18 These include his association with Hugh Lane and his support for the proposed establishment of a municipal gallery for Dublin. Lavery took part in the Guild Hall Exhibition in 1904 under an Irish banner much to the consternation of the art critic from *The Times*. The artist also donated two important paintings to the Hugh Lane collection and his commission to record the trial of Roger Casement seems to have sparked some nationalist interest.

Yet the catalyst for Lavery’s involvement with the signatories of the Irish Treaty was his wife, Hazel, who had ancestors in Galway. Lavery commented: ‘She had much Irish blood, but she was primarily American’.19 Yet, the couple extended the hospitality of their London home to the delegates of the Irish Treaty and Lavery painted portraits of Eamon de Valera, Robert Barton, Gavin Duffy, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. The family had a particularly close relationship with Collins, and Lavery painted him in death, lying in state with the Irish flag draped over his torso, as well as recording his state funeral in *Requiem Mass for Michael Collins* (1922).

Lavery’s endorsement of the new Irish state was signalled by the donation of over thirty paintings to the National Gallery of Ireland. This generosity

proved to be reciprocated as the committee established to organise the new Irish currency asked Lavery to make a painting of his wife in the guise of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, a personification of mother Ireland. Lavery complied with this request and Hazel’s portrait adorned Irish paper money from 1928 until 1970.

The three Irish artists O’Kelly, Moynan and Lavery, demonstrate three disparate reactions to the Irish political scene. Aloysius O’Kelly’s influence in heightening awareness of the plight of the Irish peasant in the 1880s was extremely important. At a time when the simianisation of the indigenous Irish was rife, O’Kelly portrayed the plight of the Irish and their struggle against the injustices of British rule with sympathy and dignity. Images such as A Station Mass in a Connemara Cabin modified the scale and subject matter of Irish genre painting and contributed towards the process of forging a national Irish identity.

Richard Moynan came from the professional classes, a group that regarded their political and economic future as being synonymous with the aspirations of the British Empire. He clearly considered himself as an Irishman loyal to queen and country. Moynan’s belief in the Irish art establishment is demonstrated by the fact that, unlike many of his fellow painters, he pursued a career as a professional artist in Ireland at a time when English or Continental markets were more lucrative. He cogently articulated the turbulent political climate through his illustrations, while paintings such as Death of the Queen (1902) reflect his continuing loyalty to the state.

John Lavery was one of the few successful Irish artists whose international lifestyle transcended the fragmentation of the political scene. While O’Kelly moved permanently to America sometime in the 1890s, and Moynan’s struggle with tuberculosis led to his early death in 1906, Lavery managed to maintain his relationship with his English patrons while at the same time experiencing an increasing association with the emerging Irish state during the post-war period.

The link between religion and political orientation is harder to establish. O’Kelly was Catholic by birth, but his brother James – with whom O’Kelly had a particularly close relationship – was an outspoken atheist. Moynan’s membership of the Church of Ireland was central to his sense of identity, yet he assiduously avoided any religious subject matter. Lavery’s approach to religion was extremely ambiguous. His memoir clearly records his departure from the Catholic faith during his time at the Académie Julian:

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20 Simianisation refers to the depiction of the Irish peasants as monkeys
Up to that time I had been what is called a good Catholic, and an Irish one from Belfast to boot. I must say I was shocked [by some of the behaviour of his fellow students] and gladly joined my friend Alexander Roche, who attended the student’s mass up high in one of the towers of St Sulpice. But the ridicule had entered my soul, and it was not many months before I began to find the padre of St Sulpice tedious and his sermons dull. By the following winter, I had forgotten about him and had almost become an optimistic agnostic.\footnote{Lavery, \textit{The Life of a Painter}, 50.}

Yet with Lavery things are never that simple. He clearly retained certain relations with the Catholic faith as he documented his daughter Eileen’s \textit{First Holy Communion} (1902) in paint.\footnote{McConkey, \textit{Sir John Lavery}, 77.} The artist’s early experience of being Catholic by birth yet attending a Protestant school may have trained him well in the art of diplomacy. Therefore, it is not surprising that later in life he carefully balanced donations to both Catholic and Protestant institutions. This complex situation underscores the fact that the concept of stereotypes within the artistic canon is not always reliable.

O’Kelly’s education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts undoubtedly influenced his selection as special artist with \textit{The Illustrated London News}. His interpretation of rural Ireland owed much to the French practice of depicting peasant life, and the public dissemination of his illustrations led the way for a number of Irish artists to seek training in France and to emulate his work both in terms of painting from the motif and forging an interest in the every day life of the Irish peasant. Although Moynan favoured a different political orientation to O’Kelly, his close observation of the latter’s work affected his illustration style, his increasing interest in painting out of doors, and the prospect of portraying peasant subject matter.

O’Kelly’s role as an illustrator had international consequences as well. Niamh O’Sullivan observes that the Dutch artist Van Gogh was an avid collector of O’Kelly’s prints. Van Gogh was fascinated by O’Kelly’s serialization of the story of the Irish land wars and his apparent admiration for the Irishman was such that in his correspondence with his brother Theo Van Gogh he expressed the wish to become an illustrator himself. Van Gogh’s artistic subject matter was also influenced by O’Kelly. In a letter to Theo he compares his first painting of a cottage in Drenthe with its Irish counterpart.\footnote{O’Sullivan, \textit{Aloysius O’Kelly}, 35.}
Moynan’s education in Antwerp provided him with excellent drawing and etching skills that facilitated his role as chief illustrator for *The Union* newspaper. His training at the Académie Julian and his exposure to the Impressionist aesthetic led to sophisticated portraits framed in unusual narrative, such as *We Hope We Don’t Intrude*, painted on his return from France in 1887. Moynan’s initial educational experience was studio-based and this gave him the confidence to paint the human figure in a rather large scale – an approach that became a key element of his annual exhibition pieces. As his practice developed, he increasingly painted out of doors, demonstrating a lighter palette and celebrating such things as children enjoying a rural life style.

John Lavery’s initial art education was rather scrappy and therefore his sojourn at the Académie Julian was of enormous benefit – especially as the rapid execution of subject matter advocated in the art-school helped him develop a fluid handling of paint. Working out of doors, a methodology that was popular at the Académie Julian, was to become the corner stone of his art-practice. A bright palette and a sense of immediacy forged from painting from the motif are the two defining characteristics of John Lavery’s artistic success, both of which reflect a clear legacy of his Continental education.

O’Kelly, Moynan and Lavery’s sojourns at Continental art schools had far reaching effects on Irish artistic and political developments. By their example, the painters in question helped develop the approach to subject matter and studio practice of future generations of Irish artists. The fact that all three artists gave visual expression to the emerging political situation provides the contemporary viewer with three contrasting visual records of Anglo Irish relations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

*National College of Art and Design*
Samuel Beckett and Alexander Trocchi crossed paths in Paris in 1952 when Trocchi was involved in the publication of the short-lived Merlin magazine. It was via Merlin that extracts from Watt and Beckett’s French writings (composed between 1946 and 1950) first appeared in English.¹ Biographical accounts suggest that Trocchi subsequently became Beckett’s protégé and that the two shared a close friendship.² Details of the relationship between Trocchi and Beckett, however, are patchy and the scant evidence has never been adequately assessed or substantiated. Andrew Murray Scott in The Making of a Monster, states that ‘due to Samuel Beckett’s death during the preparation of [the] book, the author has been unable to confirm the detail of their relationship but many remember meetings between Beckett and Trocchi at the apartment where Beckett lived with his fiancée’.³ Biographic evidence suggests that had Scott managed to contact Beckett, he would not have been greatly forthcoming anyway (given the author’s famous reticence to be interviewed). Certainly, Trocchi read and edited the proofs for the Collection Merlin publication of Watt and was involved in negotiating contracts for this novel and the English translation of Molloy. However, Beckett was far from pleased with the layout and careless errors in the edition of Watt and an exchange of letters indicates a cooling of relations with the ‘Merlin juveniles’.⁴ For all that, according to some accounts, Beckett continued to have fondness and regard for Trocchi and expressed an interest in his work.⁵

² Andrew Murray Scott, Alexander Trocchi: The Making of a Monster (Edinburgh, 1991), 45, 79. See also Terry Southern’s commentary on Trocchi in Allan Campbell and Tim Niel (eds), A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi (Edinburgh, 1997), 77.
³ Scott, Alexander Trocchi, 45.
⁵ ‘[Beckett] is a grand old man and most fond of you. You ought to write to him from time to time, as he expressed great interest in how you are getting on’. Terry Southern to Alexander Trocchi, 20 August 1958, quoted in Scott, Alexander Trocchi, 79.
The question as to the relationship between the two writers is not merely of biographical interest for there are some intriguing overlaps between Trocchi’s fiction and Beckett’s post-war writing, *Young Adam*, which was begun well before Trocchi met Beckett, and *Cain’s Book* contain meditations on the nature of narrative and identity which, in places, verbally and syntactically echo the utterances of Beckett’s indigents. More importantly, both writers construct a literary landscape that depends on its distance (as well as its difference) from the perceived cultural limitations of the homeland. In Beckett’s work, the geographic terrain derives (as biographical and manuscript studies have illustrated) from personal memories of Ireland. However, the removal of place names, the confabulation of specific locale and the use of a shifting and recursive narrative framework transforms the landscape into terra incognita. In *Young Adam*, the Clyde and Lothian areas are seen from the vantage point of the canal that forms a conduit between both of them and this perspective accentuates the outsider status of the central protagonist. Although the novel refers to places that have a palpable reality in Scotland, the point of view and the narrative voice that Trocchi adopts shifts the landscape away from its recognisable cultural manifestations towards a more abstract and imaginary space. Likewise, in *Cain’s Book*, memories of an earlier existence in Glasgow are juxtaposed with details of the narrator’s life at the time of writing on a scow on the Hudson River: accounts of this former existence are distorted via the prism of drugs and the collation of past memories and present experience.

The context in which Beckett’s *Trilogy* (comprised of *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable*) and Trocchi’s *Young Adam* and *Cain’s Book* came into being is crucial for an understanding of these stylistic and thematic overlaps. In the first instance, both writers found their literary identity via Europe and European art. The place that makes a difference for the development of these writers – and which allows for a writing that both liberates itself from yet manages to represent the country of origin – is Paris. According to Pascale Casanova:

6 Trocchi was initially unable to read Beckett’s post-war publications because he lacked the necessary fluency in French. See Richard Seaver’s biographical commentary in Campbell and Neil (eds), *A Life in Pieces*, 59.

7 Eoin O’Brien, *The Beckett Country* (Monkstown, 1986) details those parts of Ireland (particularly the landscape surrounding Dublin) that Beckett drew upon in creating his fictions.

Paris combined two sets of apparently antithetical properties, in a curious way bringing together all the historical conceptions of freedom. On the one hand, it symbolized the Revolution, the overthrow of the monarchy, the invention of the rights of man – an image that was to earn France its great reputation for tolerance toward foreigners and as a land of political asylum for refugees. But it was also the capital of letters, the arts, luxurious living, and fashion. Paris was therefore at once the intellectual capital of the world, the arbiter of good taste, and (at least in the mythological account that later circulated the entire world) the source of political democracy; an idealized city where artistic freedom could be proclaimed and lived.9

There was then a shared feeling amongst expatriate artists that Paris, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, was a place in which it was possible to work without the constraints of aesthetic and cultural censorship: ‘Paris … became the capital of those who proclaimed themselves to be stateless and above political laws: in a word, artists’.10 Beckett and Trocchi found in this new locale the freedom to create an Irish and Scottish aesthetic which could also absorb the currents of European art and literature.

Casanova’s recent study of trans-national literary space offers a useful framework through which to understand how writers from smaller nations may forge their literary identity in relation to an established literary centre. According to Casanova, the study of literature has too often been based ‘along national lines’ which have tended to obscure trans-national currents that serve to shape and transform literary space.11 In her study of world literatures, Casanova identifies an autonomous locale, The World Republic of Letters, where cultures build up literary capital over time. She argues that ‘one of the essential stages in the accumulation of national literary resources consists in the construction of a literary capital – a symbolic central bank, as it were, a place where literary credit is concentrated’.12 In this sense, it is possible for writers from (sometimes) smaller cultures to invest in this ‘symbolic central bank’ in order for their work to gain recognition and prestige. Such a process often involves an act of translation; more radically,

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10 Ibid., 29.
11 Ibid., ix.
12 Ibid., 245.
it may involve linguistic and cultural reconstitution within the adopted domicile.

Casanova claims that Paris, both as it has been realised in literature and in its concrete reality, becomes a domicile in which the production and consolidation of literary capital is able to take place: ‘the cities where literary resources are concentrated, where they accumulate, become places where belief is incarnated, centers of credit, as it were… The existence of a literary center is… twofold: it exists both in the imaginations of those who inhabit it and in the reality of the measurable effects it produces’.13 Paradoxically, it is also in these literary centres that writers may gain the freedom to represent their own more marginal cultures: ‘some writers are prepared to leave their country and take up residence abroad in a literary capital in the name of denationalizing literature, of rejecting the systematic appropriation of literature for national purposes – a characteristic strategy of small nations in the process of defining themselves or in danger of intellectual absorption by a larger nation’.14 This is precisely the path that Beckett and his literary forebear James Joyce took in order to forge an aesthetic which, while often referring to Ireland as a point of origin, refused to be assimilated within the emergent narratives of nationhood that came into being both before and after independence.

Although Beckett and Joyce can both be considered as writers whose work resists absorption within an English literary tradition, it is also the case that, by choosing to settle in Europe, they were able to forge a critique of Ireland’s cultural and political institutions. In *Ulysses*, for instance, part of Joyce’s polemic was aimed at what he perceived as the emerging hegemony of Irish nationalism and the Catholic Church15 as much as it was an attempt to subvert the conventions of the ‘traditional’ Realist novel.16 Indeed, however much Joyce has become an overburdening presence in Irish literature,17 it is important to realise that his texts, particularly *Ulysses*, were engaged in defusing the idea of any unified ‘type’ of national identity.18 Likewise, the indeterminacies of Beckett’s writing have been interpreted as

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13 Ibid., 23–4.
14 Ibid., 314.
gestures of non-integration following the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922.19

Trocchi’s decision to move to Paris emerged from disenchantment with English attitudes towards continental philosophy: ‘I went to France, not London, from Scotland. I found the English attitude towards existentialism – French existentialism in particular – unsympathetic after the war’.20 He was additionally dissatisfied with what he saw as Scotland’s ‘provincialism’ (an outlook that he came to articulate in an infamous tussle with Hugh MacDiarmid). Paris for the young Trocchi had ‘that kind of atmosphere, that kind of situation, full of diversities, of contrasts, of new possibilities, in which the creative intelligence can produce its works, in which the critical spirit can live’.21

It was in Paris that Beckett realised his ambition to become a writer, although it took a few false starts before he found his own distinctive path. One reason for his decision to become a permanent expatriate is suggested in an exchange with Martin Esslin when he was asked ‘why he lived in Paris and if he had anything against Ireland’: ‘Oh no. I’m a fervent patriot and republican,” Beckett replied with, admittedly, a possible degree of overstatement. “Well”, Esslin queried, “why do you live in Paris then?” To which Beckett answered: “Well, you know, if I were in Dublin I would just be sitting around in a pub.”22 This throwaway remark masks the resentment that Beckett felt towards the moral censoriousness, the sexual repression and what he saw as the philistine nature of post-revolution Ireland. As Beckett’s cousin remarked, ‘living in Ireland was confinement for Sam… He could not swim in the Irish literary scene or in Free State politics the way W.B. Yeats did’.23 Beckett also frequently found return to Ireland painful; in fact, the return home would frequently cause him to suffer a number of psychosomatic ailments (including palpitations and eruptions of boils). In contrast, the city of Paris with its ‘larger horizon, offered the freedom of comparative anonymity’,24 the place may also have given Beckett the cultural and aesthetic parameters by which artistic works...

19 As Lloyd has argued, Beckett’s writing, albeit indirectly, is aimed against ‘the inauthenticity enforced upon the colonized subject, and … upon all those subjected to a globalized capitalism whose mechanism is a perpetual decoding and recoding of ideological identifications’. Ibid., 55.
20 Quoted in Scott, Alexander Trocchi, 33.
21 Quoted in ibid., 34.
23 Quoted in Knowlson, Damned to Fame, 274.
24 Ibid., 274.
could be realised that stemmed from the more radical strands of European Modernism.

Beckett’s poetry and fictional writings of the 1930s contain many signs and clues as to the direction of the later texts, such as the use of a self-reflexive narrative voice, the preoccupation with impotence, and a fixation with the failure of language and novelistic discourse to encompass the subject that it seeks to represent. His aim, even at this early stage, was to realise the literary equivalent of ‘the sound surface, torn by enormous pauses, of Beethoven’s seventh Symphony’. However, before Murphy Beckett’s writing wilts beneath the show-offy erudition (‘a procella raged in his sweetbread’), the cryptic punning, fussiness and naval-gazing self-loathing of an artist struggling to find his voice. The first novel (unpublished in his lifetime), Dream of Fair to Middling Women, is distinguished by a narrative style that is simultaneously recondite and undisciplined. Erudition and speculative thought lead to a verbal excess which relies on loose associationalism and subjective flights of grotesque fantasy to attain its effects. In some respects, this assay towards a novel demonstrates a writer who is not only trying too hard to be a modernist in the style of Joyce but who is barely able to write at all. As critics have claimed, Beckett needed to master his form before he could disrupt it. To some extent he achieved this with Murphy (first published in 1938), an urbane, witty and vexatious novel that avoids some of the formal (if not the verbal) excesses of Dream while also hinting at the darknesses made visible in the later work.

Beckett’s writing in the 1930s is also distinguished by its persistent and scathing lampooning of Ireland. In ‘Recent Irish Poetry’, he denigrated those poets or ‘antiquarians, delivering with the altitudinous complacency of the Victorian Gael the Ossianic goods’. His irreverence towards Irish culture is evinced in Murphy where the character Neary nearly gets arrested by a Civic Guard in the GPO for dashing his head against the buttocks of the Cuchulain Statue. In Dream and Murphy, there are also unflattering caricatures of poets that don the role of Irish bard (such as Austin Clark who becomes Austin Ticklepenny in Murphy). However, amidst all of this debunking there is also a need to recreate the landscape of memory, as

27 Beckett, ‘Recent Irish Poetry’ in Disjecta, 70.
becomes apparent in the numerous vignettes of Dublin and County Wicklow.  

In making the decision to write in French, Beckett managed to achieve the necessary critical distance from his subject matter that was lacking in his early work. His reasons for switching to French after the war emerged from an ongoing dissatisfaction with the stylistic embellishments of English. In the famous German letter to Axel Kaun (dated 9 July 1937), Beckett stated that it is indeed becoming more and more difficult, even senseless, for me to write an official English. And more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothingness) behind it. Grammar and Style. To me they seem to have become as irrelevant as a Victorian bathing suit or the imperturbability of a true gentleman.

The terms in which Beckett chose to posit these anxieties regarding language and the ‘things’ or absences to which language might refer can be traced back to Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s ‘Letter to Lord Chandos’, one of the most iconic expressions of the European ‘sprachkrise’. In this sense, Beckett appears to be looking towards Europe for his literary models: this is evident in the choice of language through which he vents his frustrations (German) and his ridicule of ‘official English’ and bourgeois English culture (the reference to bathing costumes and the ‘imperturbability of a true gentleman’). Beckett later opted to write in French because he felt that it was easier to write in this language without style (he had been influenced by the vernacular impetus of recent French writing, particularly Celine’s Voyage au bout de la nuit). In some

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29 In ‘Fingal’, Belacqua makes ‘great play’ of his ‘short stay abroad’ to the woman he is courting. Samuel Beckett, More Pricks than Kicks (London, 1974), 24. However, this dialogue takes place from the vantage point of ‘The Hill of Wolves’ and the narrative descriptions of County Wicklow and its environs have a picturesque quality that serve to cast Belacqua’s assertions in an ironic light.


32 These thoughts, however, can be detected as early as Dream where Belacqua reflects on the accomplishments of Racine and Malherb: ‘Perhaps only the French can do it. Perhaps only the French language can give you the thing you want’. Beckett, Dream of Fair to Middling Women, 48. Cronin notes how, in 1939, Beckett read and enjoyed Sartre’s La Nausée but was chiefly appreciative of Louis-Ferdinand Celine, whose most renowned work was Voyage au bout de la nuit, written in ‘a colloquial, slangy first-person narrative with a vast range’. See Cronin, Samuel Beckett, 307.
respects, he may be said to have freed himself from the encroachments of an English literary tradition (which he found stifling) and an equally inhibiting orthodoxy in Ireland.

Whereas in the early novels, recognisable Irish and English place names are given, in Beckett’s later work, the countryside and the towns are rarely referred to by name. In numerous passages, the landscape of Ireland is transformed into an ‘antichthon’, a shadow world, in which fragments of memory reappear within the flow of the narrative as if within a dream or afterlife. At one point, the narrator of *Molloy* worries over his recollections of a canal bank and frets that he is conflating several different places: ‘the canal goes through the town, I know I know, there are even two. But then these hedges, these fields. Don’t torment yourself Molloy’. In this passage, the reader may discern traces of Dublin (where there are indeed two canals) and the village of Foxrock where Beckett grew up. Critics have noted that, for Beckett, Ireland was both a site of personal memory and an ‘empty space’ which cannot be defined through historical and national narratives. At one point in *The Unnameable* (the third novel of the *Trilogy*), the narrator recounts a voyage home following a ‘world tour’ made by a character called Mahood whose movement is facilitated by crutches (he has only one leg). The narrator abandons this story when it becomes foreign to him, when he becomes aware of it as mythology rather than personal recollection: ‘enough of acting the infant who has been told so often how he was found under a cabbage that in the end he remembers the exact spot in the garden’. As he ceases to believe in his story, the details gradually change: the world tour alluded to at the outset is refuted when the narrator claims that the journey in fact took place on an ‘island’, the one which he ‘never left’ and the spiral or arc of Mahood’s movements detailed in the preceding account is exchanged for random and irregular movement. It may be of significance that Beckett’s narrators create a sequentially recurring diagram of activity which occasionally coincides with a national map. Perhaps

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34 According to Seamus Deane, ‘time, in Beckett is a metaphysical problem’ and ‘it is not important to decide whether or not the landscape they [Beckett’s protagonists] travel through is a version of the Irish landscape but it is useful to recognise that it has no historical presence and therefore does operate successfully as a site of absence, as a place many people have passed through without leaving a trace’ (Seamus Deane, ‘Joyce and Beckett’, *Irish University Review*, 14 (1984), 64–5.


36 Ibid., 300.
such maps are invoked merely to point up their contingency, as if, for a brief moment, the world might be reduced to an island which is also Ireland.

In Trocchi’s *Young Adam*, the terrain is more immediately recognisable, although the towns encountered during the journeys between the Clyde and Leith are given fictional names (such as Clowes and Lairs, the latter denoting muddy ground as well as a cemetery). At one point during the trip to Leith, the company on the barge encounter a man whose decrepit appearance makes a disturbing impression: ‘He was sitting on the grass verge, leaning forwards, his shoulders hunched, his chin on his chest. As we approached him he did not look up’. Something of the inhumanity of the man’s appearance unsettles Joe: ‘Two white sticks, the shins unsocked, like a thin neck from a collar, thrust upwards from split boots’. He comments to Leslie that the man ‘Might be dead just sitting there’. It is only later that he manages to piece together the full significance of what he has seen and its connection with the female corpse that Leslie and Joe fished from the Clyde in the opening chapter:

> It wasn’t a direct resemblance, but there was a connection somewhere with someone. Something vaguely familiar. I wasn’t able to put my finger on it until later. The familiarity was the familiarity of limbs out of control, of something missing that should have been there, the absence of which, more telling than what remains, strikes at one deeply, almost personally, making one feel that one is face to face with the subhuman. The dead are like that, and the maimed, and the tramp was… He had come close then to my memory of the corpse in the water, which was only a movement of limbs, less rigid than his but in some unmistakable way the same.

In this description, the man is entirely reduced to the status of object. Andrew Murray Scott is tempted to see in the passage an indirect allusion to Beckett, arguing that ‘it is almost as if the character of “Molloy” himself’ has been ‘seen’: in this sense, the vague familiarity of the ‘tramp’ becomes ‘a private joke of Trocchi’s, a planting of flags’.

Scott may be alluding to a passage in Part 1 of *Molloy*: at this point in the narrative, Molloy has come to rest by a canal bank near the town he has

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37 Alexander Trocchi, *Young Adam* (London, 2003), 68.
38 Ibid., 68–9.
39 Ibid., 70–1.
recently departed from. While there, he views an ‘approaching barge’ pulled by donkeys,

so gently approaching that the water was unruffled. It was a cargo of nails and timber, on its way to some carpenter I suppose. My eyes caught a donkey’s eyes, they fell to his little feet, their brave fastidious tread. The boatman rested his elbow on his knees, his head on his hand. He had a long white beard. Every three or four puffs, without taking his pipe from his mouth, he spat into the water. I could not see his eyes.41

The description has an iconic and biblical resonance which is very different in flavour from the passage in Young Adam. The whole scene also points towards an earlier time frame (as one may evince from the donkey drawn barge). However, what becomes apparent if one collates these superficially similar scenes is that, for the narrator of Young Adam, the figure of the tramp denotes an absence that cannot be articulated; the tramp is an empty shell, neither fully dead nor fully alive. In the passage from Beckett, however, it is the man in the barge who comes to embody an unfathomable and implacable authority: Molloy is unable to see his eyes. The narrator of Molloy also speaks through the mask of his indigent and the processes of mental and bodily disintegration that he recounts show awareness of the thresholds of being: ‘it’s coming, it’s coming. I hear from here the howl resolving all, even if it is not mine. Meanwhile there’s no use knowing you are gone, you are not, you are writhing yet, the hair is growing, the nails are growing, the entrails emptying, all the morticians are dead’.42

In his representation of Molloy, Beckett creates a dynamic between subject and object which resists the impasse denoted in Trocchi’s novel. In an earlier passage, Molloy is arrested for loitering without his papers. On recalling his name, he is released from the cells where he has been kept in custody. While standing by the ‘white wall of the barracks’, he becomes preoccupied with his own shadow:

A confused shadow was cast. It was I and my bicycle. I began to play, gesticulating, waving my hat, moving my bicycle to and fro before me, blowing the horn, watching the wall. They were watching me through the bars, I felt their eyes upon me. The policeman on guard at the door

42 Ibid., 27.
told me to go away. He needn’t have, I was calm again… The man came towards me, angered by my slowness. Him too they were watching, through the windows. Somewhere someone laughed. Inside me too someone was laughing.43

The initial image of this shadow play recalls the antics of a slapstick comedian (Charlie Chaplin springs to mind) and it is uncertain whether Molloy’s actions are disinterested and entirely self-absorbed or whether he is conscious of an outside audience. When he becomes aware of being watched (‘I felt their eyes upon me’), his play ceases. The ambiguity is heightened, however, when Molloy notes that the man who has asked him ‘to go away’ is also being watched. It is uncertain then, whether the ensuing laughter shared by at least a part of Molloy (‘inside me too someone was laughing’) is directed at Molloy himself or the man in question. If one goes with the latter reading, the whole scene comes to suggest a marked defiance on Molloy’s part towards those who hold him under observation but this defiance is concealed; it emerges from some residue of the ‘self’ which refuses to be cowed by an external authority. There is then, a complex interplay between observer and observed in this passage; a two-way panopticism in which the boundaries between private and public perception interpenetrate one another. The fact that this is a two-way process suggests that the very structures that constitute the individual may be mirrored and thereby offer a site of resistance. As Anna McMullan has recently argued, ‘Beckett’s oeuvre can be seen as a sustained critique or parody of that sovereign consciousness which seeks to see, know and record its objects. From his earliest writings, both fictional and critical, Beckett was concerned with the breakdown of the relation between self and world, or subject and its representable object: the “visible”, “knowable” world’.44 The fact that Molloy’s hidden laughter cannot be fully categorised, and thereby ‘known’, enhances this sense of an identity that cannot be coerced by external modes of identification.

For Joe in Young Adam, however, there is no escape from the binary oppositions of subject and object. The frustration that this leads to is sometimes demarcated by the excess inherent in the writing itself, as in the incident where the narrator pours custard and other items over the prone body of his girlfriend. This is the one scene that Trocchi decided not to

43 Ibid., 26.
excise from the ‘dirty’ version of the novel published by Olympia Press. The sheer excess of this scene prefigures the unspecified ‘disintegration’ that the narrator describes in the last sentence of the novel. A similar process can be detected later in the book when Joe confesses that the body discovered in the Clyde at the beginning of the narrative is, in fact, Cathie. The narrator ponders over the conclusion made by the police that she has been murdered. The use of hypothesis and provisional statements at this point in the text and the gentle cajoling of the reader, unmistakeably recalls the discourse of Beckett’s prose works (particularly the novellas and Trilogy): ‘what convinced them, I suppose, was the fact that she was wearing no clothes. That, they no doubt felt, indicated the presence of a man. At least one man. I’m with them there, of course. It’s the kind of conclusion I might jump to myself. You too, perhaps’. The narrator then proceeds to detail the events that lead to Cathie’s accidental death. After Cathie vanishes into the Clyde, Joe scrupulously covers up his traces at the scene of the accident lest he find himself incriminated: the ensuing passage is interspersed with oblique and seemingly random references to Scottish culture.

The narrative voice in this section is dry and laconic and there is a disjunction between the idiom and the events recollected. At one point, Joe realises that he will need to dispose of Cathie’s handbag: ‘I had touched that, so there would be fingerprints on it. Elementary my dear’. The allusion may remind the reader that the inventor of Sherlock Holmes was Edinburgh-born Arthur Conan Doyle (although, it must be added, that the phrase ‘elementary, my dear Watson’ did not become associated with Holmes through the books but rather from a stage adaptation). There is then an equally facetious quotation from Robert Burns’s ‘Red Red Rose’: ‘the bag would probably never be found – “till a’ the seas gang dry …”’. The well-known associations that this song has with undying love when coupled with Burns’ precedence as Scotland’s national poet gains in significance when the reader recalls Joe’s earlier reflection on his predicament. Joe associates Cathie’s death with that of his mother and sees himself as ‘an alien, an exile, society already crystallizing against me’. His status as an exile from his country appears to be tied in with a sense of abandonment from the feminine. Joe then throws away a potentially incriminating cigarette lighter into the river: ‘I wiped it carefully with my handkerchief and hurled it as far as I

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45 Trocchi, Young Adam, 83.
46 Ibid., 92.
47 Ibid., 92.
48 Ibid., 88.
could. I listened for the plop, thinking of St Mungo and the fish. Mouth open, fish. The well known tale of St Mungo and the fish (included in Glasgow’s City Coat of Arms) concerns an act of infidelity. Queen Languoreth, wife of Hydderch Hael, King of Cadzow, lends her wedding ring to a lover. The king manages to retrieve the ring and throws it into the Clyde, challenging her (in one variant of the story) to return it within three days. Mungo finds the ring through the working of a miracle; he sends a monk to fish in the river and bring back his first catch; the ring is found inside the body of a caught salmon. The reference to the story of the salmon in *Young Adam* has cryptic implications in that it points towards the resurfacing of Cathie’s body the following morning; miraculously, Joe is the first to see it while on the barge. The final quotation, made as Joe leaves the scene of Cathie’s death, is from Shakespeare’s ‘Scottish Play’: ‘I found myself walking carefully to the shadow of the line of trucks, articulating without voice: “thou sure and firm-set earth, hear not my step … for fear the very stones …”’. The reference to Macbeth’s ‘dagger’ soliloquy may merely illustrate Joe’s anxiety at being discovered but it also hints that he is not telling the whole truth. Later on in the novel, prior to the trial of Goon who is arrested for the murder, Joe sees ‘the image of Cathie’s naked body float[ing] before [him], like Macbeth’s dagger’.

The embedding of multiple quotations at this part of the narrative also emphasises the pre-constructed nature of Joe’s recollections: ‘I felt vaguely that the whole incident had taken place out of time, that there had been a break in continuity, that what happened was not part of my history. It was pervaded with the unreality of dream, fiction’. Moving back from the events described, it is surely significant that Joe’s loss of personal freedom is emphasised through multiple allusions to Scotland’s literary inheritance. (Indeed, it is one of the few places in the novel where narratives pertaining to Scotland are referred to.) Trocchi is simultaneously acknowledging the locale of his fiction and forming a conscious distance from it: the quotations are elliptical and arbitrary; in becoming a form of literary shorthand, their gravitas is considerably weakened. Joe claims that he had ‘merely to walk away’ from the site of the accident to ‘free’ himself ‘from an obsession’ and the reader can perhaps infer a similar dismissal on the part of the

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49 Ibid., 93.
50 Ibid., 94.
51 Ibid., 146.
52 Ibid., 93.
A distinction is being made here between Scotland’s earlier literary manifestations and the kind of fiction that Trocchi is writing. Trocchi’s later remark that the most important work to come out of Scotland was written by him further illustrates this sense that he is breaking away from a parochial culture seen as limiting and insufficient for artistic growth. As Scott has argued, ‘[Trocchi] came to feel that he was not merely a Scot, he was the only Scot with a true sense of the value of Scottishness. His theme of being an exile within was an important direction for fiction’.54

In *Young Adam*, the narrator’s ontological self-questioning can be seen in counterpart to Beckett’s work. The narrator foregrounds the limitations of language in expressing identity and the disjunction between words and ‘things’. The opening part of the book, in its investigation of the scission between past and present time, between the reflection of one’s mirror image and the person that one is, owes some debt to Sartre’s early writings (particularly *La Nausée*):

> I don’t ask whether I am the ‘I’ who looked or the image that was seen, the man who acted or the man who thought about the act. For I know now that it is the structure of language itself that is treacherous. The problem comes into being as soon as I begin to use the word ‘I’. There is no contradiction in things, only in the words we invent to refer to things. It is the word ‘I’ which is arbitrary and which contains within it its own inadequacy and its own contradiction.55

For all the uncertainties expressed here, there is a knowingness in the rhetoric and a clarity of purpose which in itself forms an affirmation of the forensic efficacy of language to state the ineffable. In the following paragraph, the narrator discerns ‘somewhere from beyond the dark edge of the universe a hyena’s laugh’ which foregrounds the elusive nature of the reality that the speaker is trying to express.56 However, the narrator’s investigation of the first-person pronoun in the earlier paragraph has an assurance very different from Beckett. In the *Trilogy*, the sense of impotence that the speakers experience when faced with irresolvable dilemmas of being is stated more starkly. The inability of language to effectively capture being is often expressed in frenetic

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53 Ibid.
55 Trocchi, *Young Adam*, 8.
56 Ibid, 8.
terms: ‘I seem to speak, that’s because he says I as if he were I; ‘it’s the fault of the pronouns, there is no name, for me, no pronoun for me’.57

Before his first two novels were finally published under his name, Trocchi, who became frustrated with the difficulty in finding an audience, wondered whether he ought to follow Beckett’s example. In 1956 he wrote:

No complete work had appeared under my own name anywhere. Young Adam, written in 1952, had been rejected by virtually every publisher in England, and the manuscript was growing daily yellower in the drawer of a publisher in New York. I had written what I knew to be the first of a new genre of book in the English language and … had for four years been editing the most discerning literary review in what I was beginning to think of as the same goddamn tongue: would I have to follow my friend Beckett’s example, and take to writing in French?58

It is of some significance that Trocchi refers to Beckett as a fellow exile from the appreciation of an English readership (before his French works, Beckett struggled to get published in England) and that he contemplates, albeit facetiously, switching to French as Beckett did. The implication is that Trocchi would be able to reach a wider audience if he could master the language of his adopted domicile; it is as if his mother tongue was a barrier to his success given the kind of novels he was writing. Trocchi did eventually manage to publish Young Adam (and later, Cain’s Book) and achieved a certain degree of critical success and notoriety. However, he subsequently found himself unable to produce another full-length work of fiction.

In Cain’s Book and in the ‘Insurrection’ essay, Trocchi suggests abandoning genres like the novel and poetry.59 In a television interview he stated that ‘we mustn’t consider ourselves as professional writers any longer, because that means to write novels, say, a novel as a fixed form, and it’s become an economic form – it’s got to be so long … a certain kind of thing – and the publisher requires another of the same, and that’s how you make your living, so you tend to do it: in the same way there are chairs of literature, and there’s a Shakespeare industry’.60 However, it was about this time that

58 Quoted in Scott, Alexander Trocchi, 66.
60 Quoted in Scott, Alexander Trocchi, 127. ‘For centuries we in the West have been dominated by the Aristotelian impulse to classify. It is no doubt because conventional
Trocchi’s imaginative writing was increasingly subsumed, as the preceding quotation indicates, by inflammatory polemic. This is an aspect of Trocchi’s work that Richard Seaver identified early on when Trocchi was contributing editorial essays for the Merlin publications.\(^{61}\) Arguably the polemical utterance in Trocchi’s two novels gets in the way of the fiction: in *Young Adam*, there are frequent diatribes against the institutions of legality (thereby recalling the moral note sounded at the end of Camus’ *L’étranger*) and in *Cain’s Book* there are numerous passages in which the narrator speaks out against the drug laws in the United States.

Beckett, who certainly became an agitator for modernist experimentation in his early essays, became less vocal about his writing as he progressed. He had found a means via Joyce of moving beyond bald and polemical utterances. As W.J. McCormack has noted, there is a progressive move from *Murphy* onwards away from omniscience towards the idea of the limited, uncertain, perspective of an ‘I’ voice.\(^{62}\) For Beckett, this nescient point of view becomes part of the compositional process. He once told Lawrence E. Harvey that ‘I can’t let my left hand know what my right hand is doing. There is a danger of rising up into rhetoric. Speak it even and pride comes. Words are a form of complacency’.\(^{63}\) In order to fully comprehend the forces that enabled this transition in Beckett’s writing it is necessary to identify the literary and cultural ethos that Beckett, perhaps unwittingly, absorbed. His reception as a writer and the reason that he continued to produce works of value up till the end of his life lay in a subliminal knowledge of the way that ‘high’ literature functions as an idea (or episteme, to borrow from Foucault and Derrida); despite the fact that he often chose to focus on impotence and dissolution, his work has both the self-sufficiency, ambitiousness and radicalism of modernist art.

Trocchi appears to have experienced some dilemmas in the act of writing itself and these difficulties are outlined in *Cain’s Book*. At one point, Joe Necchi

\(^{61}\) Seaver ‘disagreed with the increasingly didactic tone of Trocchi’s editorials’. Scott, *Alexander Trocchi*, 61.


(Trocchi’s fictional alter ego) states that ‘the trouble with me … is that I look pruriently over my shoulder as I write and I’m all the time aware it’s reality and not literature I’m engaged in’. Joe’s anxiety can be viewed according to Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘word with a sideways glance’ in which narrative utterances are nuanced by awareness of a potentially hostile audience. Joe goes on to construct a pastiche of Beckett:

I press the tabulator, to sluice away my uncertainty, and begin to type:

—An old man called Molloy or Malone walked across country. When he was tired he lay down and when it rained he decided to turn over and receive it on his back. The rain washed the name right out of him.

It’s a question of making an inventory…

—Cain’s Book: that was the title I chose years ago in Paris for my work in progress, in regress, my little voyage in the art of digression. It’s a dead cert the frontal attack is obsolete.

In this passage, Joe alludes to the section of Malone Dies where one of the narrator’s creations, Macmann, lies prone then supine beneath a heavy shower of rain. Joe’s subsequent claim that ‘it’s a question of making an inventory’ also draws upon Malone’s narrative (the latter makes plans to write up an inventory of his meagre possessions). In the final paragraph, Joe self-reflexively quotes the title of the novel we are reading and makes indirect references to Laurence Sterne’s The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy and Joyce’s ‘Work in Progress’ along the way. What comes across forcefully here, however, is the extent to which this re-enactment of Beckett’s Trilogy has led to a dead end. It is almost as if the character is unable, or unwilling, to assimilate the texts that he is embedding in his novel. Such features tend to heighten the tragic qualities of Cain’s Book.

It is undoubtedly the case that the body of work Beckett produced was more substantial and, arguably, of more weight than that of the younger

64 Trocchi, Cain’s Book, 23.
65 In defining the former term, Bakhtin argues that ‘this “sideward glance” manifests itself above all in two traits characteristic of the style: a certain halting quality to the speech, and its interruption by reservations’. See Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics, trans. Caryl Emerson (London, 1984), 205.
66 Trocchi, Cain’s Book, 232.
Trocchi. While this may not seem to be particularly worthy of comment, the cultural and aesthetic reasons why Trocchi’s fiction was effectively nipped in the bud after he published his second novel are significant. Although it may be the case that Trocchi’s difficulty in extending his work stemmed in part from long-term heroin addiction and his role as a spokesperson for several underground activist groups, there are more profound cultural reasons for the difficulty he experienced in expanding the terrain uncovered in his first two novels. Trocchi, who embraced Parisian existentialism and the Beat writers of America, did not, like Beckett, have a figure like Joyce to fall back upon. While Beckett felt he had to move on from his association with the latter writer in order to form his own artistic credo, it is undoubtedly the case that the uncompromising aesthetic radicalism epitomised by Joycean Modernism left its mark on his subsequent work. Trocchi did not find any analogous Scottish literary figure or tradition to which he could look. His models were European and American.

It may also be the case that Scotland in the 1960s and 70s had not cleared the cultural and political ground that allowed writers like Joyce and Beckett to flourish in the earlier twentieth century (albeit outside Ireland). This becomes evident when one acknowledges the obstacles that Hugh MacDiarmid faced in his attempt to revivify Scottish literary traditions (to ‘make it new’) or when one regards the hollowness of Trocchi’s assertion during the Edinburgh Writer’s Conference in 1962 that the most ‘interesting’ writing to come out of Scotland in the last twenty years had been written by himself. The famous clash between MacDiarmid and Trocchi at the conference is ironic for the reason that where both writers conjoined was in the sometimes didactic and polemical pronouncements they made in order to justify their aesthetic positions. Nevertheless, MacDiarmid had established a literary tradition and a line of precedents which would enable him to have more confidence as a writer. As Edwin Morgan perspicaciously suggests, ‘whether Trocchi ever fully came to terms with his Scottish upbringing and early environment, in the sense in which Joyce and Beckett did in relation to Ireland, is arguable … Trocchi, desperate to deparochialise, was swept into the new internationalism of the later 1950s and the 1960s, especially on its French-American axis, and it may be that decisions

67 Critics and biographers have argued that Trocchi’s involvement in Situationism and Sigma may have served as a distraction from the business of writing.

68 Trocchi’s exchanges with MacDiarmid and David Daiches at The Edinburgh International Writer’s Conference are reproduced in Allan Campbell and Tim Niel (eds), A Life in Pieces (Edinburgh, 1997), 154–7.
made too quickly at that time caused his difficulties in assimilating and using his own past.\textsuperscript{69} Although Alasdair Gray and James Kelman have denied that they embody a Scottish literary ‘renaissance’, it is certainly the case that their work helped create a series of traditions and precedents which would give later Scottish writers a stronger feeling of self confidence.\textsuperscript{70}

With this in mind it becomes necessary to return to Casanova’s remarks about the ability of less established cultures to forge a properly trans-national writing within the context of a more reputed literary capital. Broadly speaking, it can be claimed that Beckett and Trocchi had the same opportunities before them and both chose Paris as a centre in which aesthetic freedom might be realised. However, for Beckett there was an Irish literary tradition to react against as well as an exemplar in Joyce. Trocchi’s attempt to create a trans-national existential novel was both a success and a failure in that there was no way to move on from the impasse that he experienced after writing it. Glaswegian author Archie Hind experienced similar problems in the 1960s. His first novel, \textit{The Dear Green Place}, was, like \textit{Cain’s Book}, about the difficulties in fictionalising one’s life and culture; like Trocchi, Hind attempted to forge a literary identity in relation to some of the more significant movements in European literature (the most discernible model here is Thomas Mann). However, after publishing one of the greatest Glasgow novels ever written he was never able to complete another work.

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\textsuperscript{70} ‘What seems to be self evident [in contemporary Scottish writing] is that there’s a much more self-confident use of language. As a kind of very general point, amongst younger writers there’s a greater freedom of language than there may have been, let’s say forty or fifty years ago…. At that time… the Scottish voice would always be in the dialogue and never form a nationality in itself. That’s a crucial problem, and it doesn’t apply just to contemporary Scottish literature.’ James Kelman, quoted in Tom Toremans, ‘An Interview with Alasdair Grey and James Kelman’, \textit{Contemporary Literature}, 44 (2003), 564–86.
In this essay, I aim to make a brief study of one case of literary migration and interperception, that of the Franco-Scottish poet, essayist and travel-writer, Kenneth White. I want to look at the ways in which he represents France and Scotland in his writing, and the evolution of the reception of his oeuvre in these two countries. The case of White, I argue, sheds sobering light on the limits of the ‘stravaiging Scot’.

I. Wild Coal

Kenneth White was born in 1936 in Glasgow, the son of a Communist railwayman, and brought up in Fairlie on the Ayrshire coast. A distinguished student of French and German, he followed a familiar migratory pattern of young, upwardly-mobile and/or middle-class West Europeans in the mid-twentieth century: spending years abroad as language assistant and/or scholar – in White’s case in Munich and Paris. He also followed a now very familiar mating pattern of our times: marrying a French language assistant, in this case Marie-Claude Charlut.

It was in 1963 that, while lecteur de langue anglaise at the Institut du Monde Anglophone in Paris, the Club des Etudiants d’Anglais published his first poetry collection, *Wild Coal*. We might wonder what would have happened if Kenneth White had been language assistant at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, but, at the Sorbonne, he tapped into a powerful literary nexus.

*Wild Coal* is prefaced by the translator, academic and poet, Francis Scarfe. Scarfe writes:

> Since I first met Kenneth White when he was a brittle sharpeyed student, I have been increasingly impressed by his ferocious honesty. He has that wilfulness, sense of purpose and of destiny which is an essential element in the character of a poet or in poetry itself. He compels, irritates and excites the mind in much the same way as D.H. Lawrence, and his
poems have all that living freshness (or what D.H.L. called starkness), of Lawrence’s… It is important to point out, especially to readers in France, that poetry is passing through a very bad phase in Britain. So far as Scottish poets are concerned – and I have read them all – I do not see one who approaches White’s honesty, clarity and seriousness. As for English poetry, in the past ten years or so it has become much too cerebral and artificial.¹

Here we see qualities which will seduce many a French reader: clarity, and a sort of savage, virile authenticity. In the second preface to this slim collection, which has the dimensions of a literary launch, Jean-Jacques Mayoux, translator of Lewis Carroll, Beckett, Joyce and Shakespeare, declares:

It is generally up there in the warm filth of Glasgow or the tender smokes of Edinburgh that you have the occasion to evoke the Auld Alliance. Let us do this, for once, in Paris, to welcome this young Scottish poet who is now half one of us in his personal life, and his poetry which remains as solidly anchored ‘up there’ as James Joyce’s prose was in Dublin… A reader like me, who has always strongly felt our Celtic affinities, rediscovers them here in all their vigour. Ignoring the linguistic and other separations of the Briton and the Gael, you occasionally seem to find a younger brother of Dylan Thomas with mischievous lyricism, occasionally a last descendent of the tradition of gnomic and aphoristic poetry of the ancient Gaels… But what affinity with an Orient distant and dear to the Celtic soul appears in this solitary, simple meditation of a moment when the poet faces the world, so familiar to readers of Tu Fu and Basho?

We have here elements of the Whitean persona which the author will project and which his French supporters will celebrate: the primitive and poetic Celt, from a far west that echoes the far east. Mayoux concludes that White is ‘a man faced with the real and the human drama, who perhaps will write novels, and a lyric poet who eliminates heaviness and begins to sing’.²

Wild Coal’s poems evoke a harsh, elemental winter world. Winter whiteness clears away and kills the old clutter, preparing the way for a spring. After the pantheistic ‘Precentor seagull’, we have ‘Morning walk’, ‘When the frost came

² Ibid., 7–9. Author’s translation from the French.
to the brambles’, ‘Poem of the white hare’ and ‘Let winter now come’. Already the whiteness that irks many, but which the author would defend as positive narcissism, is evident to the point of manifesto. Hence the poem ‘White World’:

That world of white trees
Look: it is here before me
Birch wood in frost, naked
Present, alive and definite
Only fire can write on such
Ultimate fact, I ask for fire

FIRE to destroy and create
FIRE to burn the inessential
FIRE to write in this whiteness

The Scotland he prefers is an asocial one. Thus, ‘Fishing off Jura’, he finds ‘Scotland an echo all around me’. Or in ‘Snowdust’:

there is only the presence
of me
falling
sawdust
snow

Urban Scotland, in this case Glasgow, is a dystopian nightmare of hard work, bad diet and early death, hence ‘Song of the Coffin Close’ and ‘Song about the uselessness of life’. So too it appears as such in the poem ‘City’:

City the anonymous slavery that
rots the mind and makes offal
of dreams and the frenzied rootless
urge to escape from this swamp
of carrion life.

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3 Ibid., 21.
5 Ibid., 35.
Certainly, the radical roots of White are expressed humorously in the Scots poems ‘Ballad of the C and W (Carriages and Waggons) staff’ and ‘Revolt’. But there is no futuristic celebration of technology, no glorification of the workers’ transformation of matter. There is instead an appeal to cultural revolution, as in the title poem:

Is it possible to get poems fierce enough
for the hot blast furnace of the Scottish mind
poems cut from language uncouth and rough
like that wild coal in the depths of the ground
hiding in its savageness the richest ore
or is poetry to be the scholar's whore?6

And it is clear that this quest for a new, white poetics must be pursued away from Scotland. The last poem, ‘A personal winter’, concludes:

From Strathclyde to Whiteness lies the way
through all the wild weathers of the world
and through all the dog-days: si con Escos
qui porte sa çavate, de palestiaus sa chape ramendée
deschaus, nus piés, affublez d’une nate?7

Thus the scruffy elemental Scot migrates barefoot through space and language.

II. A French Scotland – a Scottish France

The establishment of Kenneth White continued the following year, with the publication of *En toute candeur*. In his preface, the highly distinguished translator Pierre Leyris wrote of his discovery of White: ‘For many years, no contemporary poet, perhaps, had sung so clearly to my ear, rendered so well the poignant grace of primordial things. That poet was a rooted poet. The sap of a land, of a race generously irrigated his own genius’. He evokes his first meeting with White in the well-to-do Parisian suburb of Meudon: ‘Passionately in love with this world and utterly refusing any other. Wilfully intransigent. Completely in revolt against the pseudo-fatality of history.

6 Ibid., 37.
7 Ibid., 48.
Conceding to cities only the most contingent of his being, between two visits to his mother the earth’.  

White does not disappoint in his long autobiographical introduction. First there are the ‘matricial hills’ that he grew up in, then a Rimballdian season in hell in the ‘furnaces of Glasgow’, producing the incandescence of ‘Le monde blanc’, the white world. White asserts: ‘The Scot is a nomad, like the Scythian, his ancestor… Perhaps, originally, the area he wandered over was the great Eurasian steppe stretching from China to the Danube; but a moor in the west of Scotland suffices. Space for movement and tranquillity for vision. This is the original ground for poetry’.  

White’s Scotia must necessarily be ‘deserta’, as illustrated by the last line of ‘Report to Erigena’: ‘Rock province, roots – and lights’. Olivier Delbard points out that ‘it is the geological past which marks above all else for White the identity of Scotland’. Scotland has an apocalyptic, tortured, fractal landscape formed by the Great Ice Age. It is archaic, pre-human territory, unfit for cultivation. Such savagery and singularity are transmitted to the eventual human settlers. It is a pre-Christian world, bearing the imprint of invasion by Vikings and Celts. Scotland is Caledonia, land of the forests, or preferably Alba, land of the white hills. The Scot is a barbarian, akin to the American Indian. He inhabits a denuded, elementary landscape: mountains, rocks, moors, coastlines, gulls, the ocean. In the archaic landscape around Fairlie, the young White engages in shamanic rites, including arboreal masturbation.  

His first way-book, Travels in the Drifting Dawn, devotes chapters to Scotland, but we are dealing mainly with the west coast, the archipelago of the isles. Scotland has, he claims, a ‘complex cartography’ – ‘All those kyles, lochs and sounds’ – which corresponds to a complex cartography of mind. This image of Scotland is echoed in the France White inhabits. We are very far from the twee and comforting stereotypes of A Year in Provence or Amélie (or are we?). Instead we have the Letters from Gourgounel, recounting his transformation of an isolated farm house in the Ardèche. There is then the blue light on the Pyrenees, the transcendence achieved in the Col de Marie-Blanque, and finally

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9 Ibid., 63.
13 White, Open World, 598.
the Armorican coast. It could be said that White was in fact a pioneer for British migration in recent decades to precisely those parts of France. Let us note that the land is not a place for labour, unless it is solitary.

White’s rare references to the Scottish Borders illustrate his geopoetic vision and its limits. In his poem ‘On the Border’, the motif is ‘rough wind, a rock, and a rowan tree’: the Borders landscape in all its bareness. White seeks to dig beneath cliché, doing ‘a little clean phenomenology’ that will bracket out the toxic waste of modern mass culture. White is interested in the geological foundations of the Borders, and in people only in their primitive, tribal state. The effects of human habitation lead only to the ‘bitter quarreling of nations’. White is not interested in ‘the border between nation and nation’; he seeks the silence at the back of the ‘noisy areas:/muzack, politics, TV shows/kilts and saddles, buttons and bows’. What matters is ‘the border/between human and non-human/between one filled of knowledge and another/between spirit and matter’. The poem assembles the keywords of geopoesics: ‘cartographies/topologies’, ‘clear mind, words and reality/complex ecology’ – ‘these Borders border on more than England’.15

His Borders is a region evacuated of politics; there are no social practices worthy of respect; popular culture is reduced to caricature. Absent are the common ridings and seven-a-sides that Hugh MacDiarmid mentions in his own poem on the Borders. All that remains is a vast, inhuman space, nature red in tooth and claw, which the solitary subject confronts. The only human beings worth mentioning are the great ‘eccentric intellectuals’ of the borders: Thomas Carlyle, Alec Murray ‘– I’m not forgetting either/MacTaggart’s Encyclopedia/or MacDiarmid’s polymathic poetica’. White’s geopoetic survey of the Borders is ‘a rediscovery of Alba’, which, if we remember that Alba means white, amounts to the poet’s narcissistic mise en scène.16

Kenneth White’s view of Scotland is also illustrated by his guide to L’Ecosse, published in 1980 and still in print. The back cover says: ‘The Romantic image fades before the factory smoke, the noise of the machines and the economic talk. This is only one of the contradictions that make the complex Scottish reality and which White strives to shed light on, by drawing from it the elements of a new discourse with truer images’.17 However, what is between the covers

does not really break with the Romantic vision. After all, its epigraph is from Jean Giono, wishing he was a native of Scotland, for her mysteries, rains, mists, sparse population and great virgin expanses. In his introduction, White portrays the Scot as filled with wanderlust, extravagant and argumentative, though also puritan.

In the opening pages, White claims spuriously that the Borderer ‘defines himself by opposition: he is not English’. White then reduces the region to MacDiarmid, minstrels, Scott and Hogg (though, curiously for a stravaiging Scot, the only Border town to be on the book’s map is Newtown St Boswells, seat of the regional council). There are brief sojourns in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but the vast majority of the guide is to the far west, ending, predictably, with the moors and fields of the south-west, then the coast at Fairlie: ‘I walk along the beach, to the sound of the waves occasionally punctuated by a gull cry.’

In his essays, poems and lectures, White is keen to de-politicise geopoetics. He seeks to leave the ‘motorway of history’, to abandon the grand narrative handed down by Judeo-Christianity to the likes of Hegel and Marx. White makes a daring and dubious distinction between geography and history – ‘breathing space’ is the object of his quest. What is left is the solitary individual, a body moving in the biosphere. Only in the distant future might politics be a beneficiary of the subject’s poetic life-work. For White, politics needs a concept of living, a grounding, and that only the single, complex, living intelligence can provide.

It would be very wrong, however, to divorce geopoetics from its historical context. We must try to understand why Kenneth White, who, as we have seen, was propounding more or less the same ideas in 1964, should become a media star in France from the late seventies onwards. White became very much L’Ecossais de service (the in-house Jock), his books published by the Parisian mainstream, and, after successfully defending his doctorat d’état on intellectual nomadism in 1979 (the year in which he adopted French nationality), was elevated to a chair in twentieth-century poetics at the Sorbonne, alma mater of Michael Scot. Thus the wandering bard joined the ranks of the French turboprofs, regularly getting a lift from Marie-Claude to the railway station at Rennes, and taking the TGV Atlantique to the Gare Montparnasse.

A change in intellectual and political climate was beneficial to White. From the early seventies there was a powerful shift against Communism in France. In 1973, the Maoist Gauche prolétarienne was dissolved: the masses among whom

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18 Ibid., 13.
19 Ibid., 172.
these revolutionary intellectuals had chosen to swim revealed themselves to be uninterested in Revolution. In 1972, the signature of a Common Programme between the Socialist and Communist Parties had marginalised the far Left, and filled with dread anti-Stalinist soixante-huitards. The brute reality of Mao’s Cultural Revolution, then of Year Zero in Cambodia, and the boat-people crisis in Vietnam, became the occasion for public soul-searching by young ex-Maoist ‘New Philosophers’. In 1974, the publication of a French translation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago* was the opportunity for a massive attack on Marxist influence in French intellectual life. Marxism, along with psychoanalysis and structuralism, were accused of being totalising, deterministic ideologies. Belief in ‘progress’ and ‘reason’ had bequeathed Terror and genocide. New Philosophers such as Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksmann traced a Satanic genealogy that stretched from the Enlightenment to Hegel to Marx through to Stalin. Communism and Fascism were collapsed together under the label ‘totalitarianism’. Against the ‘master thinkers’, against ‘totality’ and ‘grand narratives of history’, were opposed Nietzsche and nomadism. Sadie Jane Plant sums up well the spirit of such ‘post-modern’ intellectuals:

> gleeful sidestepping of convention and categorisation reappears throughout poststructuralist writing as a vital form of resistance to the ordered codes of discourse. Transcribing the situationist *dérive* from the city street to the domain of theory, Lyotard used the aimless playfulness of locomotion without a goal to describe the sort of drifting thought with which dialectical criticism can be abandoned, disallowing the arrogance of the theorist who judges, reflects, and represents the world, and providing the only honest form of intellectual practice.20

One of the most important works of this period was Gilles Deleuze’s *La Pensée nomade*, which can be read as a manifesto for post-’68 radicalism.21

The poet and critic Robert Bréchon offers an explanation for White’s success: ‘Many European minds had been waiting for such an event, such a personality. For too long, Marxist theory, psychoanalytical dogma,

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structuralist method, had damped down on literature and spread a reign of intellectual terrorism. Kenneth White’s work was seen as the sign of a great thaw’. In the April 1979 issue of *Critique*, a review founded by Georges Bataille, Bréchon went further in his praise of the self-styled ‘cosmic clown’ and ‘transcendental tramp’: ‘With him, occidental culture is re-sourced’. The work of writer and publisher Michel Le Bris, the man who propelled White into the mediasphere, offers another pointer. Le Bris’s itinerary is typical of the May ’68 generation. Originally from the west of Brittany, Le Bris became active in the sixties Parisian cultural scene, founding *Le Magazine littéraire* in 1967 before becoming the director of *La Cause du peuple*, paper of the *Gauche prolétarienne*. From 1972 onwards, Le Bris became interested in the struggles of marginal regions such as the Languedoc and his native Brittany. During this period, he founded and directed, with Jean-Paul Sartre, a collection entitled ‘La France sauvage’ published by Gallimard. He then became the driving force behind the *littératures voyageuses* movement, founding the review *Gulliver* and the hugely successful *Etonnants voyageurs* festival in Saint-Malo. In his essays and novels, Le Bris criticised the *gauchiste* adventure and wrote in favour of ‘spiritual’ and of ‘romantic’ revolt. He railed against the deleterious effects of Marxism, psychoanalysis and structuralism. He attempted to save the creative individual from suffocating determinations: economic, psychosexual and linguistic. He valorised the heroic subject as it is found in adventure novels (for example those of Robert Louis Stevenson) and in travel-writing.

For the likes of Le Bris, Kenneth White was another such heroic subject, dancing free of the wreckage of twentieth-century history. White had no truck with the deterministic ideologies that he held responsible for our accumulated misery. Writing in Maurice Nadeau’s influential journal, *La Quinzaine littéraire*, in September 1978, Jean-Clarence Lambert declared that White was nothing less than ‘the first coherent expression of the post-modern world.’ It can be said that, for the French audience, Kenneth White was a potent and paradoxical hybrid: both postmodern in his nomadism, and, as the Celtic bard with a head full of zen, embodying a form of plenitude which postmodernism normally deconstructs.

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The breakthrough of White contrasts tellingly with the French intelligentsia’s ostracism of another privileged recipient of Alexander Trocchi’s *Sigma Portfolio*, Ian Hamilton Finlay. Finlay’s commission to make a garden in Versailles to commemorate the Bicentenary of the French Revolution was cancelled by the Ministry of Culture after a press campaign which highlighted the Scot’s dangerous interest in the Jacobin Terror and the Second World War, and especially his playful use of guillotines and the symbol of the Waffen SS. Finlay, who knew the history of the Revolution through Thomas Carlyle, and did not speak a word of French, was crushed by precisely the ‘anti-totalitarian’ consensus under which White thrived.26

III. 1989 and Since

1989, year of the Bicentenary, but also of the Tienanmen Square massacre and the fall of the Berlin Wall, marked a crucial turning-point in the fortunes of Kenneth White. In that year, White launched the International Institute of Geopoetics, whose aim is nothing less than the creation of a new ‘world’ on the ‘earth’. The Institute aims to be the final realisation of White’s dream of those vanguard ‘groupments’ which would re-source Western culture, learning from the successes and failures of such short-lived predecessors as The Feathered Egg, the Jargon Group and Alexander Trocchi’s para-situationist Project Sigma.27 And it was in that year that Kenneth White made a publishing comeback in his native land, with the appearance in Edinburgh of his collected longer poems, *The Bird Path*.28

Certainly, some Scottish critics acclaimed what Hugh Macpherson called ‘the return of the nomad poet’.29 Catherine Lockerbie described White as ‘taking a different angle, with work of a thirst-slaking limpidity which has thoroughly entranced the French but not, so far, his compatriots’.30 However, it is interesting to consider the Scottish resistance to the homecoming of White. For example, in the 1990 *Chapman* special issue on White, Graham Dunstan Martin’s ‘A Pict in Roman Gaul’ sarcastically mocks the French fad for White:

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‘How exotic we Scots are after all! Could it be the case that so outlandish a people possess some occult lore which the Mediterranean French would dearly love to share?’ White offers Parisians a wonderfully barbaric Scottishness. And France, containing north and south, Latin and Gaul, is susceptible to the ‘great fresh wind blowing in from elsewhere’. Martin attacks the abstract generalities to be found in White, notably the ‘white world’ poem I quoted earlier, and contrasts this limited poetics with that of the Frenchman Jacques Dupin – who transforms generalities into allegory – and the Scots Norman McCaig and George Mackay Brown who manage to combine in tension metaphor and sensory detail. This attack on abstraction extends effortlessly to a criticism of the French:

White’s language is very French in spirit and method – it accords with the (currently) most admired French poetic manner. It is not an accident that he has been so successful in France, where his English translates so purely, so directly. He is an excellent ambassador for Scotland – and for the poetry of MacDiarmid. I sympathise with much that he is trying to do, for it is true that reality is more than Cartesian rationalism or Derridean clever-cleverness… On the other hand I have the gravest reservations about the quality of White’s poetic language… It is my belief that Scotland does possess great living poets, but that they are most often to be found to the north of Carter Bar.31

Martin was not the only acerbic critic. Around this time, in the *Glasgow Herald*, Douglas Dunn described White as ‘anti-social’ and practising ‘thin-witted international zennery’.32 In the *Times Literary Supplement*, Gerald Mangan concluded scathingly: ‘very few French readers will feel the whole weight of [White’s] debts to MacDiarmid, Alexander Trocchi, Neil Gunn, W.S. Graham and other Scottish predecessors, less translatable than himself or less translated, who have brought back rather more articulate log-books from regions even more rarefied.’33 Beyond the strictly Caledonian space, Terry Eagleton applied his cruel wit to the White phenomenon:

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The French have a perverse habit of enthusing over British writers who remain, for us, stubbornly mediocre. ‘The foremost living English-language poet’, raves *Le Nouvel Observateur* about the Glaswegian Kenneth White, a commendation which might uncharitably be translated as ‘one of the few widely available in translation’… Perhaps the regard the French have for this émigré Scot isn’t all that mysterious. He is the prototype of the anarchic Bohemian which, as James Joyce reminded us, is always the stout bourgeois’ image of the poet. Spaced-out and laid-back, a kind of tartan troubadour or Rimbaud in a sporran, he belongs to the ‘it must be poetry because it’s happening to me’ brigade. His is the vagrant, visionary spirit travelling the roads from Leith to Labrador, a song in his heart, a fuzzy orientalist thought in his head and a bottle of Irish Mist in his rucksack.34

A protégé of Douglas Dunn, Adam Thorpe, also joined the Gallo-sceptic chorus: ‘Perhaps, as I also at times desperately assume of theorists like Derrida or Kristeva, White works better in French. Or perhaps his beguiling ideas of wholeness and primal relationships and life-energy strike more of a chord over there’.35

This native distrust of the Frenchness and foreignness of White finds its mirror image in the claims of White’s disciples. In his posthumously published study *The Radical Field*, the late Tony McManus quoted uncritically from Francophone critics praising White, as if to be praised in Paris necessarily means that White is right, and confers grandeur and gravitas on his oeuvre.36 Symptomatically, these quotations are often not dated, which detaches White from the context in which his writings were received.

I would argue that the changing context has brought a decline in, or even reversal of, Kenneth White’s fortunes. After 1989, and the collapse of the totalitarianism against which White was promoted as a biocosmopoetic, postmodern alternative, France entered a new and uncertain phase, demanding a new poetics. Now that the victory of freedom has brought the insecurities of rampant individualism, social exclusion, globalisation and the clash of civilisations, the French seem more morose and anxious than ever. This is not the time of Gilles Deleuze and *jouissance textuelle*. This is the time for neurotic

chick-lit and autofiction (see Amélie Nothomb) and, above all, the enfant terrible of contemporary French letters, Michel Houellebecq.

To illustrate this change of mood, let me quote one of Houellebecq’s prose poems, in which, for sake of argument, we could replace the swallow with a seagull:

Swallows fly off, slowly skim the waves, and spiral up into the mild atmosphere. They do not speak to humans, for humans remain tied to the Earth. Swallows are not free. They are conditioned by the repetition of geometrical orbs. They slightly modify their wings’ angle of attack to trace spirals ever wider in relation to the surface of the globe. In short, there is no lesson to be learnt from swallows.

Sometimes, we drove back together. On the immense plain, the setting sun was enormous and red. Suddenly, a rapid flight of swallows came zooming across its surface. You shook, then. Your hands gripped fast the leather-coated steering-wheel. Then, so many things could draw us apart.37

Here we are far from the radical subjectivity of a body moving freely in the biosphere.

It is hard to see White in the world of Houellebecq: the supermarket aisles, commuter trains, swingers clubs and sex tourist resorts blown up by Islamic terrorists. It is difficult to see him wax lyrical about Dolly the cloned sheep, or concur with Houellebecq’s wish for ‘the total destruction of nature, and its replacement with a more rationally organised world’.38 On the other hand, Houellebecq’s love-hate relationship with New Age in his most important novel, Les Particules élémentaires (Atomised), expressed through his attraction to Buddhism, in the interweavings of the Book of Kells, and in the main character’s disappearance into the sunlit waves on the far western coast of Ireland, are not that far away from the White World.39

There are, indeed, French philosophers who echo White: Michel Serres’ ‘Natural Contract’, Edgar Morin’s ‘Planetary Patriotism’, and, from the younger generation, Michel Onfray’s Théorie du voyage. Poétique de la Géographie.40

40 See Michel Serres, Le Contrat naturel (Paris, 1990); Edgar Morin and Anne Brigitte Kern, Terre-patrie (Paris, 1996); and Michel Onfray, Théorie du voyage. Poétique de la
The latter seems to lean heavily on the (unquoted) work of the lad from Fairlie (although with his references to gypsies and homeless people, Onfray gives a militant edge to nomadism). The White World can still draw the crowds. In May 1996, I was invited to take part in a debate at the Printemps celte in Paris. Kenneth White was performing at another event in the programme. The festival was held in a big hall in the science park of La Villette. At the entrance to the hall were placed deck-chairs. On the PA was broadcast the sound of the sea: waves, gulls (but no holiday-makers or ice-cream vans). It expressed the urban alienation and reification of the coastline which explain why some people are so attracted to White.

Nevertheless, White is no longer the star he was. His essay and especially poetry production in France has declined considerably in the course of the last twenty years. After some good symposia and issues of the Cahiers de Géopoétique, the Institute shrivelled to a scrappy archipelago stretching from the Isle of Lyng to Belgrade. There are two vast white spaces on the geopoetic map: China and Russia. The homelands of Han Shan and shamanism remain doggedly resistant to White’s nomadism.

Certainly, the publication in 2007 of his Un monde ouvert, in the ‘domaine anglo-saxon’ of Gallimard’s prestigious Collection Poésie – the only Scot to have ever been included, and the only living English-language poet – showed that he was still on the French literary map. The distinguished biographer and critic, Gilles Plazy, could write in the preface: ‘A poet he is, one of the most significant today (few œuvres have as much force, coherence and perspectives), and, beyond the genres, outside reductive definitions, he is, above all, someone who, to quote Hölderlin’s phrase, “dwells poetically on the earth” and knows how to say it in various ways’. In Le Monde, Monique Petillon wrote of a ‘poet of strong wind’: ‘Insatiable reader and traveller, geographer and ornithologist, such is our poet, in love with solitude and liberty’. On the other hand, apart from an interview on Radio France Internationale, the book made little media impact and its sales are well below those of his books on L’Ecosse.

It is rather in his home country that White seems more prolific and in view. The last shards of Scottish publishing, Polygon-Birlinn and Sandstone,
have published his prose and poetry, ‘catching up’ just as French interest fades. White certainly seems to have been welcomed home by some: every year between 2001 and 2007 he was invited to monologue for one and a half hours at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, directed by Catherine Lockerbie, daughter of a Professor of French. On the other hand, he remains excluded from most anthologies of Scottish poetry. In the words of Stuart Kelly, literary editor of *Scotland on Sunday*, ‘anthologies are the most blatant statements of canon formation, and, judged by his representation in these alone, it would appear that the “neglected” label fits White well’. 44 In his new history of Scottish literature, Robert Crawford devotes only two sentences to him, while devoting several pages to J.K. Rowling and his own St Andrews’ colleagues John Burnside, Kathleen Jamie and Don Paterson. 45

In conclusion, the movements of Kenneth White in 2007, forty years after he settled in France, give us an idea of the situation and status of our author: guest appearances at the *Festival du Livre de Bretagne*, the *Festival Interceltique de Lorient*, and the *Etonnants Voyageurs* festival in Saint-Malo, these appearances intercut with those at Inverness, Ullapool and the Edinburgh International Book Festival. The persona of the wandering Scot, the neglected exile, no longer has any credibility, though it is essential to the White phenomenon. Instead, White seems to have become genuinely migratory: monogamous as seagulls, Kenneth and Marie-Claude White annually follow established routes between France and Scotland.

*University of St Andrews*

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44 Stuart Kelly, ‘Canons to the left of him, canons to the right of him: Kenneth White and the Construction of Scottish Literary History’ in Gavin Bowd, Charles Forsdick and Norman Bissell (eds), *Grounding a World: Essays on the Work of Kenneth White* (Glasgow, 2005), 190–1.

A Backward Glance
(i.m. Charles Rennie Mackintosh)

David Kinloch

Je garde ce beau souvenir. Ô matériaux! Belles pierres!... Ô trop légers que nous sommes devenus!

(Paul Valéry, *Eupalinos*)

There are plenty of ruined buildings in the world but no ruined stones.

(Hugh MacDiarmid, *On a Raised Beach*)

Seams, veins, flutes…and green for them, green or an igneous yellow sparking in the rock’s black larynx. They pale to a linen coloured path winding its contour into schist. Bright rock!

I fail to fix you on my canvas. Each morning, after breakfast, I travel to my ear of stone down the wavering trail of paint: tympanum, it shapes the picture’s echo, softening the seesaw of my brush washing shell-like on the surface. Each time I make a stroke is like a backward glance over ruined buildings. Och, what Tosh! Margaret, who’s away in London seeing to her teeth would have a great hee-haw at this: Bonjour Monsieur Orpheus!
Bathos aye hovers in the Port Vendres air. 
I’ll put it in the daily *chronicle* I send her, 
then we’ll chuckle eh? Margaret and her Toshy.

When I raise my head from this resistant rock, 
the more distant landscape’s leitmotifs 
catch at the corner of my eyes: gulls, 
tombstones, jib sails, each patch of white 
lifts me towards the Canigou and that northern room

we worked and loved in. I see 
two faces pouring over plans and lines, 
disentangling to be roses, rooms 
disclosing facets, snow-lit faces 
like petals opening to morning.

My Margaret, named for a flower, 
despite the art there was pea-soup, 
dover sole and _obergene_ in bacon fat 
for lunch! Roast *boeuf*, red cherries 
and Rock-e-ford! The air was _clair_

and perfect. The *Poupee, Acola* 
and the *Danielitto* brought in 
wood and gold to our sunlit harbour. 
There are cobwebs on your chair.

At night the port wind builds 
against the shutters of my heart: 
brute slam of Tramontane, 
dischveled architect building 
from the past’s fast rock.

His shriek shakes, tears 
from gulls behind the panes 
or dies away -not quite, not quite- 
a mosquito in the lull, 
a fret of pain sawing at my ear.
On the harbour’s starboard
a green light glints;
on its port, a red;
no letter though from Margaret:
silver beyond snow.
So then, begin again: picnic
on the ground bass, my *cord du roy*
*ecorche*! Fumitory and rue hard by
entice the dead, my picture too I fear
as I ruin rock with paint.

Remember how I used to shape
the air we breathe, channel its currents
with posts and joists, float
the spars of human skeletons
high like kites then tether them
as temples to the gods of stone.

These wild cherries though
are divine! So grey, so ripe,
they dance on my tobacco tongue
ordering which portions of their taste
they take from life, from death.

Dance the cherry then! Like that other
Margaret, Margaret Morris who dances
in my mind just as the rock begins to dance:
each glitter of mica is a tiny meadow
in the stone, lit and capped by cloud,
and wings about her ankles
beat out the rhythm of the brush:
it winds down through stone,
tracing out a cage of stairs made
up of complex carpentry, loosening
its long hair to a white room
like a song; no, a white room
like the act of singing, a line
unfinished, whispering.

White room, black rock:
the private dream dies hard,
is hard, persistent as a cherry stone,
immured, declarative as those roses
made of lips and eyes.

Eye-lidded schist whose texture
to the touch is that of wood,
a stony timberwork whose noggins
of bright rock refuse at last
all but the chaste succulence

of abstraction, my saviour:
divine geometry!
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