Representing the National Landscape in Irish Romanticism

Julia M. Wright

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“A major contribution to Irish literary and intellectual history. Wright’s astute and incisive analysis presents original perspectives on Irish literary history, reveals significant new tropes and connections within and beyond Irish literary tradition, traces the textual genealogies of iconic sites like Glendalough and Killarney, and explores neglected works by and interconnections among writers such as Charlotte Brooke, William Drennan, William Preston, Thomas Moore, Alicia Lefanu, John and Michael Banim, Lady Morgan, Denis Florence MacCarthy, and lesser known writers.”

— Mary Helen Thuente, author of The Harp Re-Strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism

Ireland as a nation has come to be defined in part by an ideology which conflates national identity with the land. From the Irish Revival’s idealization of Irish peasants close to the land to the long history of disputes over ownership and rule of the land, notions of the land have become particularly bound up with conceptions of what Ireland is and what it is to be Irish. In this book, Wright considers this fraught relationship between land and national identity in Irish literature. In doing so, she presents a new vision of the Irish national landscape as one that is vitally connected to larger geographical spheres. By exploring issues of globalization, international radicalism, trade routes, and the export of natural resources, Wright is at the cutting edge of modern global scholarly trends and concerns. In considering texts from the Romantic era such as Leslie’s Killarney, Edgeworth’s “Limerick Gloves,” and Moore’s Irish Melodies, Wright undercuts the nationalist myth of a “people of the soil” and explores instead nationalist ideas of an international Ireland. Reigniting the field of Irish Romanticism, Wright presents original readings which call into question politically motivated mythologies while energizing nationalist conceptions that reflect transnational networks and mobility.

Julia M. Wright is professor of English at Dalhousie University in Halifax. She is the author of Ireland, India, and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Blake, Nationalism, and the Politics of Alienation.

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