The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction

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This book took a long time to write and a lot of it has been rattling around in my head for over a decade. It is no surprise, therefore, that I have clocked up much more intellectual debt than I could possibly pay back here. In a post-bailout Ireland, though, only banks are allowed to escape repayment, so I’ll make an attempt. My friends and family, especially Martha Fanning, Meghanne Flynn (who found the idea of a book about novels no one reads anymore rather amusing), Eilís Lawlor, John Lawlor, Eimear McBride, Eoin Smith, all deserve places in heaven. The School of English in Trinity College Dublin, is exemplary in terms of its collegiality, and I must thank the following for numerous conversations and arguments, but mostly for the encouragement I received over the years spent writing: Brian Cliff, Philip Coleman, Helen Conrad O’ Briain, Paul Delaney, Nicky Grene, Crawford Gribben, Kate Hebblethwaite, Elizabeth MacCarthy, Anne Markey, Stephen Matterson, Brendan O’Connell, Eve Patten, Margaret Robson, Sam Slote. Although I am nothing but an interloper, my eighteenth-century studies colleagues have been particularly welcoming and generous with very useful advice, reading suggestions, and many acts of kindness, including allowing me to read unpublished papers. Aileen Douglas, Ian Campbell Ross and Tina Morin know far more about the subject of this book than I do and would have written a much better one on the subject than I have. Bernice Murphy occupies the office opposite my own and has not only had to suffer my constant attention-seeking for the last few years, graciously guiding me towards not only ever-more horrific viewing material and invaluable critical reading, but has also cheered me up when the going got tough. Darryl Jones, as usual, was a friend, colleague and wise guide and spent far more time talking to me about the book than either it or I deserved. Students in my classes on Literary Monsters had to endure my first public airing of many of the ideas that found their way in here and often patiently explained to me how misguided I am about such things
– so I thank them too. I am grateful to the anonymous readers who made very good suggestions which I tried to address as best I could.

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To my wife, Mary Lawlor, and our daughter, Eilís, I owe the most gratitude. I offer them my love and dedicate the book to them both.