Guilt, Greed and Remorse: Manifestations of the Anglo-Irish Other in J. S. Le Fanu's "Madame Crowl's Ghost" and "Green Tea"

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Monsters and the idea of monstrosity are central tenets of Gothic fiction. Such figures as vampires and werewolves have been extensively used to represent the menacing Other in an overtly physical way, identifying the colonial Other as the main threat to civilised British society. However, this physically threatening monster evolved, in later manifestations of the genre, into a more psychological, mind-threatening being and, thus, werewolves were left behind in exchange for psychological fear. In Ireland, however, this change implied a further step. Traditional ethnographic divisions have tended towards the dichotomy Anglo-Irish coloniser versus Catholic colonised, and early examples of Irish Gothic fiction displayed the latter as the monstrous Other. However, the nineteenth century witnessed a move forward in the development of the genre in Ireland. This article shows how the change from physical to psychological threat implies a transformation or, rather, a displacement—the monstrous Other ceases to be Catholic to instead become an Anglo-Irish manifestation. To do so, this study considers the later short fictions of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu and analyses how the Dublin-born writer conveys his postcolonial concerns over his own class by depicting them simultaneously as the causers of and sufferers from their own colonial misdeeds.

Keywords: J. S. Le Fanu; postcolonial literature; Anglo-Irish literature; nineteenth-century literature; Irish Gothic; postcolonial Gothic

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Culpabilidad, avaricia y remordimientos: manifestaciones del Otro angloirlandés en los relatos de J. S. Le Fanu "Madame Crowl's Ghost" y "Green Tea"

La figura del monstruo y su monstruosidad constituyen uno de los pilares básicos de la ficción gótica. Vampiros y hombres lobo han sido usados para representar al Otro amenazante de una manera abiertamente física, identificando así al sujeto colonial como la principal amenaza de la sociedad civilizada británica. Sin embargo, esta amenaza adquirió, en manifestaciones posteriores del género, un carácter más psicológico, de manera que los hombres lobo fueron sustituidos por un miedo psicológico. En Irlanda, dicho cambio supuso un paso más. La etnografía tradicional ha establecido la dicotomía colonizador angloirlandés versus colonizado católico, como manifiestan los primeros ejemplos de la ficción gótica en Irlanda en su representación del otro monstruoso. Sin embargo, en el siglo XIX se produce un cambio de orientación del género en Irlanda. El presente estudio demuestra cómo el cambio de amenaza física a psicológica supone una transformación o una reordenación de la figura del otro monstruoso como católico para ser encarnado por la élite angloirlandesa. Para ello, este artículo se centra en las últimas narraciones breves de Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu para observar cómo el autor dublinés explicita sus preocupaciones poscoloniales acerca de su propia clase, mostrándola simultáneamente como causante y receptora de los crímenes que sustentaban el sistema colonial en Irlanda.

Palabras clave: J. S. Le Fanu; literatura poscolonial; literatura anglo-irlandesa; literatura del siglo XIX; gótico irlandés; gótico poscolonial

1. Introduction

Monsters have been used in literature in various forms and shapes and with different and diverging aims. Critics have read in Victorian Gothic representations of the monstrous the manifold fears of the Victorian upper class, among which fear of the Other was paramount. The Irish case poses a different situation from that of English Gothic. Given its postcolonial setting and the ethnographic division within the island, Irish Gothic tends to voice Anglo-Irish fears of the subaltern Catholic Other, showing them as "an amalgam of tenderness and terror, sentiment and savagery—human society, in fact, reduced to its most elemental, primitive condition" (Gibbons 2004, 21). Both Charles R. Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* ([1820] 2000) and J. S. Le Fanu's *The Purcell Papers* ([1880] 2007) display thorough descriptions of ignorant yet loveable backward characters, as does Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* ([1800] 1995). Jarlath Killeen puts this down to a certain inability on the part of Irish writers to produce more "realist" material: "When Irish writers tried to produce purely realist novels, they generally failed, as the Gothic interrupts, intrudes and disrupts any supposedly stable realist mood" (2014, 10). In this sense, Gothic elements can be associated with the monstrous Catholic beings that haunt the Anglo-Irish elite.

There is, however, a rather unexplored area in this field, which this article intends to study. While in later Gothic fiction at large the monstrous Other acquires a new shape, moving from the physically menacing creature to a more psychological threat, in Ireland this change has a subtle added nuance—the monstrous Other ceases to be the subaltern Catholic and instead becomes the perturbed Anglo-Irish, a clear contestation of British imperial colonial agency in Ireland. This study explores how this change is manifested in the fiction of J. S. Le Fanu by examining two of his later works, "Madame Crowl's Ghost" (1870) and "Green Tea" (1872). As the article goes on to show, this change is a manifestation of Anglo-Irish repressed fears—grounded in usurped property and unlawful land occupation—of the return of the Catholic subaltern Other who, having been repressed, surfaces in the shape of psychological beings and creatures. Far from stemming from Catholic agency, these appearances are the Anglo-Irish's own production, manifestations of their guilt-ridden conscience, as an exploration of Le Fanu's work exemplifies.

This study first reviews different approaches to Anglo-Irish Gothic, examining in depth the diverse significances critics have attributed to it, especially in relation to Le Fanu's fiction. This is followed by an evaluation of two of Le Fanu's short narratives, the aforementioned "Madame Crowl's Ghost" and "Green Tea," in order to examine exactly how and for what purpose the Dublin-born writer depicts his own class, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, in such a manner. As will be seen, the examination of "Madame Crowl's Ghost" unveils how Le Fanu delves into themes such as usurpation, redemption and contrition as examples of the pernicious consequences of the colonial enterprise on his own class, while "Green Tea" reveals how hidden, repressed guilt effactually manifests in psychotic delusions that alter the protagonist's life, itself a literary representation of the Anglo-Irish elite.

2. Literature Review

Anglo-Irish Gothic has been read as a tool through which to contest British colonial agency in Ireland and the unsatisfactory, blended, split relationship of the Anglo-Irish with their native land. Indeed, the argument runs, as a result of the colonial encounter, the relationship between the Anglo-Irish and the land is permeated by a sense of instability that leads to a displacement of the Self, simultaneously provoking conflict between the Self and the Other and triggering feelings of anxiety over the present and the future. This growing feeling of insecurity translates into a deepening sense of truncated ambition through failure to obtain the object of desire—legitimate land possession. This has an unforeseen effect—a pattern of sadomasochistic behaviour, which is, of course, present in most Gothic fictions (Day 1985, 19) and which, in turn, replicates the possessor/possessed relationship that operates between the coloniser and the colonised subject. It is within such a framework that the encounter with the Other in postcolonial Gothic fiction takes place for, in postcolonial literature in general, "the concept of the other […] signifies that which is unfamiliar and extraneous to a dominant subjectivity, the opposite or negative against which an authority is defined" (Boehmer 2005, 21). In this sense, a brief examination of postcolonial Gothic—both as a theory and as a body of literature—its principles and implications, becomes necessary prior to analysing Le Fanu's texts. Consequently, this section first clarifies some terminology, then proceeding to review how postcolonial theory and the Gothic have been blended into postcolonial Gothic. Due to its relevance for the subsequent analysis, this discussion centres on the Anglo-Irish Gothic and its imprint on the postcolonial.

The field of postcolonial studies has evolved in recent times, augmenting the terminology it employed at first, but resulting in sometimes contradictory or misleading usages. Originally, the term *postcolonialism* was used to refer to the historical period that began with the independence of the European colonies and their subsequent literary production. However, as the discipline evolved, critics realised that the origins of colonial contestation went further back in time and that the same concepts that had been deployed to examine the literature produced during and after the historical period of decolonisation could, in fact, be applied to earlier periods as well. The prefix *post-* thus came to be understood not as in "coming after" but rather as in "fighting against, contesting." *Postcolonial literature*, and the theory that studies it, would henceforward not only refer to the historical period encompassing the decolonising process and its aftermath, but rather to a literature that "critically or subversively scrutinises the colonial relationship" (Boehmer 2005, 3). This is a more overarching concept, which allows for a better understanding of the origins and development of colonial resistance as well as for the inclusion in the postcolonial canon of works written before the historical period of decolonisation, as is the case with Le Fanu's. The term *postcolonial* is understood in this way in the present article. In turn, the term *postcolonial Gothic* has been coined in recent years and is used to refer both to works of literature that combine postcolonial—in the contestatory sense of the term—and Gothic traits, and to the

theory that has emerged to interpret them. To prevent any ambiguity, in the present article the term *postcolonial Gothic* is employed to refer to the theoretical approach, while *postcolonial Gothic fiction* refers to the body of literary work categorised as such.

One of the most striking features of postcolonial Gothic fiction is how little research has been carried out in the field. As Sheri Ann Denison notes, "with the exception of [Andrew Smith and William Hughes's edited volume] *Empire and the Gothic* [2003], few lengthy works have been written on the topic of postcolonial gothic. Thus, even if much has been written about the tropes of gothic literature in general [...], postcolonial gothic remains a fertile landscape for investigation" (2009, 32-33). Denison's "Walking through the Shadows: Ruins, Reflections, and Resistance in the Postcolonial Gothic Novel" is, indeed, a key contribution to the field since she analyses the tropes and general characteristics of postcolonial Gothic fiction and produces a sound definition: "it is a literature of resistance to imperial ideology, both past and present, that focuses on destroying former ideological presentations of the colonised—whether in race, social status, sexuality or gender—even as it questions and interrogates present concerns of power and domination, including the examination of representation and human history" (2009, 22). The main drawback of Denison's study may be said to be its seemingly chronological interpretation of postcolonial Gothic fiction, which it locates primarily in the twentieth-century period after decolonisation, an interpretation many a postcolonial critic would regard as reductive. In the same line, the present study sets out to analyse Le Fanu's nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish Gothic short stories from the perspective of postcolonial Gothic theory. The rest of Denison's assessments and conclusions, however, may still be taken as valid for the present study, since she herself acknowledges that "postcolonial gothic does not hold a simple, easily constructed definition, and there is ample reason for this: it changes, as does gothic in general" (2009, 16).

It is worth pondering where the blend of the postcolonial and the Gothic comes from. Colonial settings and characters left their imprint on Gothic literature from the earliest manifestations of the genre. In her article "Colonial and Postcolonial Gothic: The Caribbean," Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert notes that Gothic literature was "from its earliest history in England and Europe, fundamentally linked to colonial settings, characters, and realities as frequent embodiments of the forbidding and frightening" (2002, 229). In fact, by the 1790s Gothic writers had exchanged the early Gothic settings of Spain or Italy for the Caribbean and other places in the Empire as a source of frightening Others. This early introduction of the colonial into the genre brought a new kind of darkness, based on race, landscape and erotic desire, which is well portrayed in Edgeworth's *Belinda* ([1801] 2009). As Paravisini-Gebert shows, *Belinda* "mirrors a growing fear in British society around 1800 of the consequences of the nation's exposure to colonial societies" (2002, 229-30).

Similarly, Gina Wisker points out that the Gothic has the potential to explore the hidden histories and silenced visions that fill the postcolonial world (2007, 147). Both

the postcolonial and the Gothic, she asserts, focus on the return of the repressed, on the expression of alternative versions of reality and history. Irish subjects in particular—and the Celtic periphery in general—were viewed from a dual perspective commonly ascribed to colonised peoples: while they were seen as a threat to the British Empire, they also became essential to its existence, thus being simultaneously both within and outside it (Gibbons 2004, 2). As Jim Hansen asserts, "it is for this reason that genocide was never [...] on the cards, for, [...] the able-bodied male was too valuable as a foot-soldier [...] in strengthening the sinews of empire" (2009, 21). It is remarkable that while the British Empire justified its existence on the basis of its civilising mission, it employed savage techniques to carry it out.

Anglo-Irish Gothic, in particular, explores and criticises these silenced histories in Ireland. In fact, Luke Gibbons sees Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* ([1820] 2000) as a critique of the imperial quest, a novel that shows that barbarism is inherent to the Empire and not just a transitory phase (2004, 24). In the same line, Hansen sees Melmoth as an embodiment of Gibbons's above-mentioned dual description of the Celt as both an indispensable part of the imperial quest and a threat to it: "Maturin imagines in the character of Melmoth, then, someone who appears constitutively doubled. Although the narrative is set against the satanic Melmoth, the social forces depicted in the novel also create a heroic Melmoth. Strangely enough, in Maturin's excessive novel, Melmoth is both the terrorizer and potential saviour" (2009, 2). In a similar vein to Denison's definition of postcolonial Gothic literature, for Hansen the Anglo-Irish Gothic tradition is one of resistance to what he terms the "unhappy marriage" (2009, 3) between Ireland and Great Britain, an allusion to the fact that the 1800 Acts of Union were themselves referred to in the (pro)British newspapers and media of the day as a "happy marriage" in an attempt to highlight the benefits to Ireland—perceived as a vulnerable female—of the strength, power and resources of the British Empire—seen as the strong male. This, Hansen points out, contrasts with the fact that "many of Maturin's own novels and plays, written directly after the ratification of the Acts of Union, continually represent both the terrors of unhappy marriages and the fractured, impossible social worlds engendered by failed domestic unions" (2009, 3).

Colonial history is, therefore, frequently addressed in postcolonial Gothic fiction and is expressed through the intertwining of myths and fables in which "Gothic tropes of split selves, were-beasts and liminal spaces address the concerns of [...] daily life" (Wisker 2007, 149). These tropes are the direct consequence of the "rape, murder and dispossession" of the indigenous peoples whose stories were silenced (Wisker 2007, 150). This intertwining process can be clearly appreciated in Le Fanu's work, where Irish folklore is mixed with Gothic tropes.

Further, postcolonial Gothic fiction may be seen as a reaction to Imperial Gothic, which Denison perceives as stemming from colonialism and its obsession with Oriental cultures (2009, 10). An amalgam of adventure story and Gothic elements written mostly at the height of the Empire, Imperial Gothic had as its

main objective "to bolster the ego of the empire by showing it as the only barricade against gothic and barbarian invasion" (Höglund 2014, 6). In Imperial Gothic, "the European hero comes under threat of reversion to a lower state, and barbarism threatens" (Boehmer 2009, 33). Although it was mostly set in colonial lands like India, Elleke Boehmer notes how "there were threats to colonial power also from within the Empire" (2009, 33-34). The European colonial project and the ideology of race based on Charles Darwin's studies contributed to the perception of the East as childlike and simian, while Europeans were "the loving, benign parents of the children of the East" (Denison 2009, 11). Similarly, Gibbons shows how the origin of British bigotry against the Irish is based on racial prejudice, dating it as far back as Reverend Hugh Peters's identification of the Irish with the Indians in 1646 as primitive and barbarian, which—in his view—justified their extermination (2004, 9). This, in turn, led to an association of degeneracy with the Irish, who were viewed as savages—"the otherness of Irish Catholicism thus possessed an ineradicable ethnic component, being perceived as immersed in superstition, savagery, and the general credulousness associated with primitive cultures or 'doomed races'" (Gibbons 2004, 13). This perception of naïveté was resisted and contested both socially—the Catholic middle-classes adopted Victorian principles in an attempt to sidestep this primitive image—and literarily, through Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* ([1790] 2015). Burke's essay had a curious double effect. On the one hand, it shifted the source of terror from ancient—Jacobite—to modern times—Jacobin—while on the other, it presented the Catholic Church as the *victim*, based on the argument that the Protestant Ascendancy maintained a strong hold on all the power institutions in Ireland and deprived the native Irish of their lawful rights (Gibbons 2004, 14). The topics of the "rape, murder and dispossession" of native peoples to which Wisker (2007, 150) alludes can be traced back to the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland, the touchstone of all Anglo-Irish power on the isle.

Contact with the foreign Other brings about a recurrent theme in Imperial Gothic fiction—the concept of pollution as a consequence of a foreign invasion. Anxiety over race, social dissolution and contamination is at the heart of many of the plots of Imperial Gothic, which are usually resolved with the restitution of the existing social order, the danger that threatens civilisation being eventually contained—"In Imperial Gothic, though the boundaries between master and servant collapse, [...] the invaders perish so that European society may continue in peace. Thus, [...] Imperial Gothic questions the limits of social ideology—but it frequently restores those limits before the final page" (Denison 2009, 15). Such racial denigration also affected the perception of Irish people, who would, as modernity settled into the nineteenth century, come to be seen as "disease carriers, the pollutants of the modern city" as notions of pollution became cruder and more radical (Gibbons 2004, 43). Both male and female Irish were perceived as a threat which, in the emerging modern nineteenth-century city, could spread diseases as fearful as cholera.

Drawing on all this, postcolonial Gothic fiction addresses issues of difference, acceptance and othering to effectively "reinstate the histories and myths of a largely hidden ancestry" (Wisker 2007, 150). Postcolonial Gothic fiction problematises and questions imposed values and interpretations of history that view (former) colonised subjects as naïve and simple, therefore challenging the colonial practice of othering that represents the colonised Other as a fascinating but dangerous being. Briefly speaking, it grants an opportunity to imagine alternative futures and relationships, leading to an "exorcism of restrictive and repressed histories and imaginative versions, and to a construction of a new set of relationships" (Wisker 2007, 155). By unsettling the pillars of British imperialism in Ireland, the short fictions of Le Fanu vindicate the cultural difference, the historical relevance and the distinct sense of identity of Irish people and their nation. When read from a postcolonial Gothic perspective, his writings can be shown to constitute a decolonising tool that deploys the postcolonial Gothic tropes of madness, violence, entrapment, individual identity, the recovery of and confrontation with the ghosts of the past, the problems of reconstructing (any) history and of accepting the history of others and the challenging of boundaries of social class, race and culture, among others, in order to bring about a literary retrieval of Irish culture.

3. JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU'S LITERARY TECHNIQUE

A particularly interesting motif in Le Fanu's later literary production is perhaps the transformation of the Self into the monstrous Other, which—applied to the Irish case—means the transformation of the Anglo-Irish into the monstrous Irish Other. Transformation is a recurrent theme in Gothic fiction, often linked to its exploration of the fragmented self. The frequent presence of doppelgängers—doubles or split selves— in Gothic fiction causes enthralment, wherein "as the protagonist watches pleasure and terror metamorphose into a single experience, he responds by a similar, but inverted, transformation" (Day 1985, 26). This transformation process is particularly obvious in Le Fanu's work. Le Fanu was closely related to the Ascendancy class, his anxiety about the uncertainty of the future, therefore, tied to "the historical foundation of the modern history of colonialism in Ireland, to the penal era that preceded the Acts of Union by more than a century, and to [the passing of the Acts of Union as] one of the instantiating moments of Anglo-Irish identity" (Hansen 2009, 39). As will be seen, the Anglo-Irish were haunted by the monsters they themselves had created, which, as noted earlier, stemmed from their sense of guilt and of feeling "isolated from and threatened by the overwhelming majority of the unfranchised and confiscated Catholic native Irish" (Moynahan 1995, 112). In this context, Le Fanu's stories radically transformed the Gothic genre, which typically "was set in a Catholic Mediterranean country [...] at a medieval, or at least a pre-Enlightenment remove of time [...] emerging when Catholic power seemed to have gone down to final defeat, [and] pandered to the insular and sectarian prejudices of the common English reader" (Moynahan 1995, 109-10).

In Le Fanu's stories, the source of monstrosity stems directly from the Anglo-Irish sense of guilt, fear and loss, which are in turn a direct consequence of the colonial order. As David Punter observes, this sense of loss, which "brooks no completion of ownership or possession among the living or the present, and [whose] effects, […] by which it can only be known, ripple through our apprehension of the authorial presence/ absence, through our readerly apprehensions, and through the histories of suppression and slavery" (2000, 21), is very often conveyed through the use of doppelgängers. According to Hansen, Irish doppelgängers have a special resonance, as they are connected to "instances in Irish cultural logic where the normative and ideological conditions for the construction of an identity […] are materially, psychically, and structurally doubled, and, subsequently, produce social contexts in which definitions are constituted by their own disjunction" (2009, 11). Such transformations are directly linked to the embodiment of Gaelic Irish Catholics as malign agents in early instances of Anglo-Irish Gothic. This portrayal of Gaelic Irish Catholics as wrongdoers was incongruous with the reality of a country where, very clearly, the Anglo-Irish elite could freely exercise their power to the detriment of the Catholic majority. In sum, such depictions had the paradoxical effect of unveiling Anglo-Irish misdemeanours: "Anti-Catholicism in Irish Gothic novels therefore served the purpose of justifying and reinforcing conservative Protestant policy in Ireland, but did so at the cost of raising the twin specters of perceived Catholic atrocities of the past and of state oppression of Catholics in the present" (Shanahan 2014, 84).

The transformation trope can be traced as early as Le Fanu's first short story collection, *The Purcell Papers* ([1880] 2007). In "The Last Heir of Castle Connor," for instance, the Other is impersonated in the character of Fitzgerald, the duellist. Fitzgerald is O'Connor's Anglo-Irish reversed image, representing treachery, disloyalty and lack of human compassion. Out of friendship, when the duel day arrives O'Connor fires in the air, thus losing his advantage and giving Fitzgerald the chance to terminate the dispute amicably by acting likewise. However, Fitzgerald's reaction is very telling: "even if he was fool enough to fire in the air, it is not in HIS power to put an end to the quarrel by THAT" (Le Fanu [1880] 2007, 56; capitals in the original). Although O'Connor finally dies of the wounds inflicted by Fitzgerald, he stands out as the moral winner. Indeed, Fitzgerald has to escape from the raging mob, who perceive O'Connor as nothing less than a martyr: "'There is no time to be lost,' said M'Creagrh {sic}; 'for, by --, you have done for him.' So saying, he threw himself upon his horse, and was instantly followed at a hard gallop by Fitzgerald" (59). The story was, of course, written in a period when Le Fanu still idolised the Jacobite rebels—in *The Purcell Papers,* Le Fanu "moved back beyond the peasant-rebel to the heroic, defeated Jacobites whose lives were at risk in their own country" (McCormack [1980] 1991, 56).

Equally ominous is "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family," in which one of the main characters—Lord Glenfallen—pretty much portrays how Anglo-Irish fortune is "irreversibly, if not always spectacularly, downward" (Moynahan 1995, 11),

this time into madness and lunacy. In this story, Glenfallen, "young and wealthy, with first-rate—yes, acknowledged FIRST-RATE abilities, and of a family whose influence is not exceeded by that of any in Ireland" (Le Fanu [1880] 2007, 201; capitals in the original), decides to take his newly wedded wife to his estate in Cahergillagh. This is a journey into the Gothic, from modern urban Dublin into the heartlands of the Gaeldom, with all the associations of guilt, remorse and hidden pasts with which it is encumbered for the Anglo-Irish. As the story proceeds, the seemingly supernatural events unveil Glenfallen's dark past—his previous marriage to a Dutch woman whom he has kept incarcerated. The climax of the story is reached when the blind Dutch woman unsuccessfully attempts to kill both Father Purcell—the narrator—and Lord Glenfallen. Her confession in the courtroom—"'Hadress, Earl of Glenfallen, I accuse you here in this court of justice of two crimes,—first, that you married a second wife, while the first was living; and again, that you prompted me to the murder, for attempting which I am to die'" (226-27)—will plague Lord Glenfallen day and night until, haunted by his own lunacy, he decides to do away with himself—"the dreadful consummation was accomplished—the fearful retribution had fallen upon the guilty man—the mind was destroyed—the power to repent was gone" (230). Originally published in the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1839, the story has been criticised for its feeble treatment of the Protestant past, since it "concludes its tale of bigamy with a too convenient madness and suicide" (McCormack [1980] 1991, 78). Nevertheless, it does contain the seeds of what would become a key component of Le Fanu's later treatment of the Anglo-Irish—Protestants are no longer heroes or educated rulers, but "thoroughly human villains, whose crimes (murder and bigamy) are violations of civil law" (McCormack [1980] 1991, 79), the consequences of which are usually felt within the family, disrupting the bases of Protestant tranquillity.

4. HIDDEN GUILT AND USURPATION: "MADAM CROWL'S GHOST"
The transformation process is further explored in Le Fanu's later fiction, such as "Madam Crowl's Ghost," written in 1870 and first published in Charles Dickens's weekly literary magazine *All the Year Round* (1870), although it would later on go on to constitute a part of *Chronicles of Golden Friars* ([1871] 2015). As with the stories contained in *The Purcell Papers*, Le Fanu places the action in a distant past—"I'M AN OLD WOMAN NOW; and I was but thirteen […] the night I came to Applewale House" ([1870] 1994, 3; capitals in the original)—and further displaces it by setting it in the idyllic, fictional Irish village of Golden Friars, thus fulfilling Denison's condition of avoiding any direct mention of a conflicting contemporary situation (2009, 4), in this case the turmoil of the 1870s in Ireland.[1] The distancing is further enhanced by

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[1]   The 1870s saw the beginning of the Land Wars in Ireland, a period of rural unrest motivated by the high rents tenants had to pay. For a more detailed account, see Alvin Jackson's work (2010, 68-140).

class distinction, as the story is told from the point of view of a peasant girl who arrives at the great house to help as a servant and "wait on Dame Arabella Crowl, of Applewale House" (Le Fanu [1870] 1994, 3). This serves a twofold objective, for apart from focusing the action on the Protestant class as an object of study—thus reversing the colonial gaze—it makes the supernatural tint the narrative is embedded in more easily acceptable to the literate reader. In fact, the narrative smoothly lures the reader into such acceptance from the very start, when the narrator tells her companions on the coach about her destination and future employment and is teased into fear:

> "Ho, then," says one of them, "you'll not be long there!"
> And I looked at him as much as to say, "Why not?" for I had spoke out when I told them where I was goin', as if 'twas something clever I had to say.
> "Because," says he,—"and don't you for your life tell no one, only watch her and see—she's possessed by the devil, and more an half a ghost." (3)

Although this conversation is supposed to have taken place in the past and is thus congruent for a girl her age, the fact that she still keeps the Bible and is unsure whether the two men were making fun of her betrays her gullibility, which in turn facilitates the reader's acceptance of the supernatural story about to take place and reinforces Gibbons's account of the colonial perception of the Irish as childlike (2004, 13).

On arriving at the manor, the narrator is instructed on how the whole house revolves around taking care of the old lady, for "the squire—his name was Mr Chevenix Crowl, he was Madame Crowl's grandson—came down there, by way of seeing that the old lady was well treated, about twice or thrice a year" (Le Fanu [1870] 1994, 4). In addition, the servants "knew that when she died they would every one get the sack; and their situation was well paid and easy" (7). This highlights two issues. First of all, the narrative reveals a class conflict, which in the Irish case, can be read in ethnographic terms—the lower-class Catholic population is wholly dependent on the decisions and designs of their Anglo-Irish masters, thus replicating the intertwining of cultures in daily life as a consequence of previous colonial acts of dispossession. Moreover, Le Fanu touches here upon another key Irish subject—absentee landlords—even though the focus of the story is not so much absenteeism as it is latent greed and guilt. One night the young girl/narrator decides, out of curiosity, to peep into Madame Crowl's chamber, where she is fascinated by the "flowered silk curtains as tall as the ceilin', and foldin' down on the floor, and drawn close all round [and] a lookin' glass" (8). By entering the chamber, the narrator also trespasses the frontier of the Gothic world as symbolised by the trope of the mirror, "the biggest I ever sid before" (8); she sees Madame Crowl lying on her bed, seemingly dead, and decides to approach her when suddenly "she opens her eyes, and up she sits, and spins herself round, and down wi' her, wi' a clack on her two tall heels on the floor, facin' me, ogglin' in my face wi' her two great glassy eyes, and a wicked simper wi' her old wrinkled lips, lang fause teeth [...]. Says she: 'Ye little limb! What for did ye say I killed the

boy? I'll tickl ye till ye're stiff!'" (9). This encounter with Madame Crowl prompts the uncovering of a rumour that had for some time captured the townspeople's imagination but had long since died, and according to which Madame Crowl,

> being young, and a great beauty, full seventy years before, had married Squire Crowl of Applewale. But he was a widower, and had a son about nine year old.
> There never was tale or tidings of this boy after one mornin'. No one could say where he went to. […] Well, no one could say what was gone wi' him; only this, that his hat was found by the lake, under a haathorn that grows thar to this day, and 'twas thought he was drowned bathin'. And the squire's son, by his second marriage, by this Madame Crowl that lived sa dreadfully lang, came in for the estates. (10)

As this rumour suggests, Madame Crowl killed Squire Crowl's legitimate heir so that her own son could inherit all his property and titles, thus perpetuating her caste. The story finishes when six months after this incident, Madam Crowl dies and, some days later, an apparition, "the likeness o' the ald beldame, bedizened out in her satins and velvets, on her dead body, simperin', wi' her eyes as wide as saucers" (11), points at the exact location of the remains of the young heir before the young narrator.

Both the aforementioned encounter and the denouement of the story actualise Le Fanu's portrayal of the Other and of the Anglo-Irish elite. As can be seen, the motif of hidden guilt is uncovered via Catholic agency—the young servant/narrator—but without any real, direct involvement on her part, as she is a mere transmitter of the hidden plot and plays no part in the deeds unveiled. Le Fanu has thus transferred the topic of guilt entirely into the hands of the Anglo-Irish and managed to reveal the real source of that guilt—usurpation of legitimate possession—thereby reinstating "the histories and myths of a largely hidden ancestry" (Wisker 2007, 150). It is difficult not to read into this narrative a criticism of the role of the Anglo-Irish in appropriating Catholic land.

Le Fanu furthers his criticism by foregrounding the fact that the discovery of the skeleton turns out to be of no avail, since—paradoxically enough—the secret, though uncovered in the eyes of the reader, remains hidden in the reality of the fiction since all proof of past happenings is destroyed by the current Squire Crowl, who "steps in saftly, wi' the poker pointed like a sword, and he gies [the skeleton] a poke, and down it a' tumbles together, head and a', in a heap o' bayans and dust […]. 'A dead cat!' says he, pushin' back and blowin' out the can'le, and shuttin' to the door" (Le Fanu 1994, 13-14). "Madame Crowl's Ghost" thus allegorises the historical guilt of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy; driven by greed, Madame Crowl condemns the legitimate heir to oblivion in order to take control of all the wealth and estates belonging to Squire Crowl. In time, however, her greed is transformed into guilt, which plagues her beyond her grave and forces her to appear—in the shape of a ghost—to point at the remains of the young heir and thus confirm the truth. This act of redemption is, nevertheless, impeded by her descendant, the current Squire Crowl, who—eager to perpetuate his lineage—

disposes of the remnants of the legitimate heir, thus reproducing the sadomasochistic pattern common to most Gothic fictions (Day 1985, 19). His assault on the skeleton can be read as flagging up the problematic history of Anglo-Irish involvement in the destruction of the indigenous heritage while, at the same time, it blurs the boundaries of personal and social identity (Denison 2009, 4), since what affects an individual character in Anglo-Irish Gothic fiction is, in fact, a representation of the status quo of a collective. "Madame Crowl's Ghost" can, in sum, be read as an allegory of usurpation, attempted redemption and contrition, acts which the Anglo-Irish have carried out throughout the history of Ireland since their arrival. In this sense, it reflects the long-standing, contradictory history of acceptance and denial that has always enveloped them, prompting them first to dissolve the Irish parliament, only to subsequently come to the fore in such nationalist movements as the United Irishmen.[2]

However, a deeper reading is possible, one which is far more meaningful in terms of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class, since what "Madame Crowl's Ghost" points to above all is familial disruption. The usurpation, greed and murder all in fact stay within the family, ultimately corrupting it and debasing its foundational principles. In Le Fanu's story, the ruling class that justified and ultimately supported the colonial quest is far from the exemplary moral model that they presented themselves as being to the colonised, which demonstrates the pernicious effects of the colonial quest on Irish society at large. In short, while "underlying all colonial discourse is a binary of coloniser/colonised, civilized/uncivilized, white/black which works to justify the *mission civilisatrice*" (Ashcroft 2001, 21; italics in the original), what Le Fanu is portraying here is a colonising class that is far from civilised.

In addition, the story acts as a reminder that "the confusions of the wild always retained the power to creep back into the colonial picture" (Boehmer 2005, 67). In colonised Ireland, there is no escaping the deeds of the past, which always return as haunting images, much as the skeleton of the rightful heir will always haunt—and question—the young Squire Crowl's right to "his" land. The haunting of the past over the present, however, becomes even clearer in Le Fanu's later work, where—quite literally—the monstrous Other is the creation of a guilty conscience.

5. Monsters of the Mind: "Green Tea"

Le Fanu's success in his later work, notably the stories in *In a Glass Darkly* ([1872] 1993), was partly due to his creation of a loophole, by which I mean a logical explanation through which the supernatural events could be elucidated in a more rational light. In this way, contemporary readers could either choose to satisfy their

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[2] In 1800 the Anglo-Irish, with a majority of seats in the Irish parliament, voted in favour of its dissolution and the subsequent annexation of Ireland to the United Kingdom. The United Irishmen was a society, mainly conformed by the Anglo-Irish, that sought to instigate republican insurrection against the British Crown. For a more detailed account, see Jackson's account (2010, 23-27, 141-254).

logical minds or they could stay within the supernatural framework. Be that as it may, as with the peasant narrator in "Madame Crowl's Ghost," this loophole technique has the effect of facilitating the reader's acceptance of the supernatural, for it reassures them that, in the end, everything could be explained logically. Perhaps this was the only way to address hidden guilt in the collective subconscious of the Anglo-Irish, since "to acknowledge [its] existence would be to pay heed to precisely those forces of disorder which are abroad within that society" (Punter 2000, 113). This is precisely Le Fanu's greatest contribution to postcolonial fiction, namely, to reinterpret the concept of the monstrous Other so feared by the Victorians as the enemy within, that is, as simply the split image of the Anglo-Irish self. There is not even a hint at the "Catholic duplicity, […] outward acquiescence but inner disloyalty" (Gibbons 2004, 75-76) that had plagued eighteenth-century Ireland. Rather, Le Fanu's stories point out that the origin of this monstrosity is to be found in "a history of unbelievable actions performed by men—and women too […]—for which, however, they apparently feel no shame" (Punter 2000, 112).

The opening story in the collection, "Green Tea," constitutes the paramount example of Le Fanu's technique. As with *The Purcell Papers*, the stories contained in *In a Glass Darkly* are all recounted though the use of multiple narrators, which both sets them in a distant past and partially justifies their supernatural content. These stories, however, are quite distinct from their counterparts in *The Purcell Papers* because even though the overall technique and the objective remain the same, the approach is quite different. The stories in *In a Glass Darkly* are presented through the filter of two narrators: the collector of the stories, who undertakes the task of committing them to paper, and Hesselius, a medical man who narrates the various supernatural cases he has witnessed and treated in his years of practice. Significantly, both the narrator/collector and Hesselius are men of science; as the former states, "in my wanderings I became acquainted with Dr. Martin Hesselius, a wanderer like myself, like me a physician, and like me an enthusiast of his profession" (Le Fanu [1872] 1993, 5). The stories laid before the reader are presented as "cases," which Hesselius recounts "as an intelligent layman might […], in the terms of his art, and with all the force and originality of genius, [he] proceeds to the work of analysis, diagnosis and illustration" (5-6). The cover of science ironically facilitates the assimilation of the supernatural narrative frame by providing "a peephole into a forbidden, or a forgotten world, created dialectically out of its very cancelling rhetoric" (Sage 2004, 23) and thus tempering its potential to terrorise the reader. The scientific cover is, perhaps, essential to Le Fanu's attempt to challenge the very pillars of colonial Ireland by attacking the religious, commercial and judiciary systems that support it.

The case Dr. Hesselius presents in "Green Tea" is that of Reverend Mr. Jennings, who "dresses with a natty, old-fashioned, high-church precision" (Le Fanu [1872] 1993, 6), a reference to his attire that is not gratuitous, indicating as it does "a clergyman committed to maintaining the Church of England in all its privileges"

(Tracy 1993b, 320). Mr. Jennings is further described as "anxious to be actively employed in his sacred profession" (7), and as a "courteous man, gentle, shy, plainly a man of thought and reading, who moving and talking among us, was not altogether one of us" (9). Mr. Jennings is, then, a man of religious convictions, but not a fanatic, and a man of intellect and reading. The latter—the reader will soon discover—is, in fact, his weakness. When Mr. Jennings reveals his misfortunes to Dr. Hesselius, he reports that he had begun to see apparitions in the shape of a ghostly mocking monkey three years earlier, when he was involved in "a work, which had cost me very much thought and reading. It was upon the religious metaphysics of the ancients" (21). His habits became obsessive, as he himself acknowledges—"I wrote a great deal. I wrote late at night. I was always thinking on the subject, walking about, wherever I was, everywhere. It thoroughly infected me" (21). In order to endure his long hours of research and study, Mr. Jennings got into the habit of drinking "tea—green tea—every now and then as my work proceeded. I had a little kettle on my table, that swung over a lamp, and made tea two or three times between eleven o'clock and two or three in the morning, my hours of going to bed" (22). It is in this state that Mr. Jennings begins to see the apparition of a "small black monkey, pushing its face forward in mimicry to meet mine" (23).

While some critics have seen in the monkey a reference to Victorian anxieties over Darwinian theories (Tracy 1993a, xiv), this animal can also be understood as a representation of Anglo-Irish concerns over their Irish Catholic neighbours, since "the British and Anglo-Irish sought to mark difference in visual representations of the native Irish with increasingly simianized features" (Egenolf 2009, 49). This is further supported by the fact that the monkey mimics Mr. Jennings's actions, with "its teeth grinning at me" (Le Fanu [1872] 1993, 23). Seen in this way, the monkey would be an allusion to the lurking fear of a Catholic uprising. As a matter of fact, "Green Tea" was written shortly after the 1867 Fenian uprising, which was "turned into a fiasco of an insurrection [consisting] of futile operations in Co. Kerry, the Dublin mountains and elsewhere and an abortive raid on Chester Castle in Britain" (Murphy 2003, 117). Fiasco or not, Le Fanu's concerns over the waning power of his class and the increasingly central role of the Catholic majority in Ireland were manifest in his fictionalised representations of both the future and the past: "In Le Fanu's fiction the future either does not exist or it portends pure nihilism in requiring an alteration from the past. In political terms, it recognizes the outer necessity of change, but stresses the inner impossibility of adjustment: 'transitional stasis' describes the contradictions implicit in the dilemma of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy" (McCormack [1980] 1991, 260).

I would argue that the monkey apparition, however, constitutes a very interesting development in Le Fanu's fiction—and, indeed, in Gothic literature at large. Monsters in his later fiction are no longer physical beings threatening to destroy civilisation but products of the mind, lurking like shadows in dimly lit rooms. Frightening as

the monkey is to Mr. Jennings, he is conscious that it is a product of his imagination: "These affections, I had read, are sometimes transitory and sometimes obstinate. I had read of cases in which the appearance, at first harmless, had, step by step, degenerated into something direful and insupportable, and ended by wearing its victim out" (Le Fanu [1872] 1993, 25). Mr. Jennings's words do prove premonitory, for he does end up killing himself. Most important, perhaps, is his unconscious acceptance of the nature of the monster, who is, in fact, Mr. Jennings's split self. This can be appreciated in the progression of the monster itself, which at first mimics the reverend's movements:

> I stopped looking at it with a feeling of loathing and horror. As I stopped so did it. […] I drew back into the middle of the road. It was an unconscious recoil, and there I stood, still looking at it. It did not move. With an instinctive determination to try something— anything, I turned briskly towards town […] all the time watching the movements of the beast. It crept swiftly along the wall, at exactly my pace. (24-25)

However, as time passes, the monster acquires a more active, violent nature, which is inversely proportional to Mr. Jennings's waning: "There is in its motion an indefinable power to dissipate thought, and to contract one's attention to that monotony, till the ideas shrink, as it were, to a point, and at last to nothing—and unless I had started up, and shook off the catalepsy I have felt as if my mind were on the point of losing itself" (30). Mr. Jennings's progressive reversed transformation can be read, I suggest, as voicing Le Fanu's fears over his own class—as the Catholic population gained power, the Anglo-Irish progressively lost it, forcing a reversed postcolonial effect on them as they became victims to the same othering process to which they had previously subjected the Catholic population. As William Patrick Day claims, as "the protagonist watches pleasure and terror metamorphose into a single experience, he responds by a similar, but inverted, transformation" (1985, 26). Finally, the monkey ends up destroying Mr. Jennings's capacity to think, reason and—most relevantly for a reverend—pray, for it starts speaking to him: "This faculty, the power of speaking to me, will be my undoing. It won't let me pray, it interrupts me with dreadful blasphemies" (Le Fanu [1872] 1993, 31). This is particularly significant, since the monster's influence threatens to invert Mr. Jennings's own nature by "always urging [him] to crimes, to injure others, or [him]self" (32).

Contrary to what would be expected were it to appear in Imperial Gothic fiction, Mr. Jennings's monkey is not a representation of the Catholic Other but rather a doppelgänger manifestation of its own creator—the Anglo-Irish Mr. Jennings. These monsters of the mind act as "mechanisms for the demonstration, not of their own monstrosity, but of the monstrosity of the culture in which they live" (Punter 2000, 119). Mr. Jennings is haunted by his duality—a Protestant minister who is deeply interested in ancient pagan cultures, which is "not good for the […] Christian mind" (Le Fanu [1872] 1993, 21)—as much as the Ascendancy class was trapped in their

being both Anglo and Irish. The monster liberated by Mr. Jennings's "degrading fascination" (21) with paganism—which, "all bound together in essential unity, and, with evil sympathy," taints "[the pagans'] art, and both their manners" (21)—is, in fact, his repressed violent nature, for the monkey is visible to him and him alone. Le Fanu's monsters of the mind are in fact those of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. Just like Mr. Jennings is haunted by his inner brutish nature, so the Ascendancy is haunted by their ruthless history of invasion, repression and usurpation. Le Fanu's monsters seem, then, to be answering Punter's metaphorical question, "who is the monster? Is it this horrifyingly distorted postcolonial army, or is it rather whatever web of violences has driven it into the world of death?" (2000, 127).

6. CONCLUSION

The monstrous Gothic Other takes a variety of shapes and forms, depending largely on the context in which it is created, with a range of postcolonial alternatives formulated to give voice to different colonial situations. This has been proven by the varied and differing fictions produced throughout the breadth and length of the Anglophone postcolonial world. In the Irish case, a significant change takes place in the nineteenth century—the move from a physical to a more psychological monstrous Other, such that monsters leave their vaults to haunt the minds of the coloniser.

The later fictions of Le Fanu exemplify this movement well. As has been seen, both "Madam Crowl's Ghost" and "Green Tea" confront the reader with a subtler, less physical but equally threatening kind of monster. The most significant change, however, stems not merely from the change of sphere—from the physical to the psychological—but rather from a crucial shift in the source of the monstrous. If previous Anglo-Irish Gothic fiction, read from a postcolonial perspective, had provided representations of the vanished spirits of the repressed and overlooked Gaelic Irish, Le Fanu's late fiction foregrounds the monstrosity spawned by the hidden guilt of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, causing their previous crimes to surface in the shape of monsters and monstrous visions. As the preceding close analysis of both the stories themselves and the circumstances surrounding their creation shows, such repressed guilt stems from the illegitimate possession of land. This reading constitutes a novelty in relation to postcolonial interpretations of Anglo-Irish Gothic fiction, since it reinterprets concepts such as the idea of the enemy within. As both "Madam Crowl's Ghost" and "Green Tea" showcase, there is, indeed, an enemy within, but contrary to nineteenth-century expectations, it is not the foreign or alien Other—the Irish Catholic, in this case. Rather, the enemy within is portrayed, recognised and exposed by Le Fanu as a manifestation of the guilt of those complicit in the colonial enterprise. Le Fanu's late fiction portrays a class—the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy—haunted by their sense of guilt over their illegitimate possession and betrayal of their own created country.

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