(Post)Colonial Discourse and the Irish Self in the Writings of J.C. Mangan

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Abstract:

Both Gothic and postcolonial theory centre on the self and the other, and on the relationships of dominance concurrent to them. Gothic literature has traditionally explored this relationship through the dichotomy self vs. other, identifying the former with the protagonist while the latter would be everything else in that world. Postcolonial theory applied to Ireland has traditionally understood this axiom in the realization of the opposition Irish vs. English. The short stories of J.C. Mangan, however, challenge that axiom by further complicating a reductionist perception of the Irish (literary) scene. The main argument of the present paper, therefore, is that far from being a dichotomy, the Irish case is better understood as a triangle in which two of its vertices are fixed—Catholics/Irish and English—while the third vertex, that of the Anglo-Irish, gradually shifts positions from the English to the Irish one, following a creolization process in which they are both victims and victimizers.

Keywords: postcolonial literature, Irish literature, discourse and identity, Gothic literature, J.C. Mangan, colonial literature, short story

Both Gothic and postcolonial theory centre on the self and the other, and on the relationships of dominance concurrent to them. In Gothic literature this relationship has traditionally been expressed through the dichotomy self vs. other, in which the self is the male protagonist while the latter is "everything else in that world" (Day 19), Gothic literature being, thus, an exploration of the formation of identity. In colonial Gothic[1] this is brought under the axiom colonizer-colonized, and, therefore, characters are analysed as manifestations of a dichotomy which usually links first the other to the monstrous, who is subsequently presented as the colonized subject. However, as pointed out in previous research (Jorge 2019), the Irish case further complicates this simple binary relation. The running argument of the present paper is that far from being a dichotomy, the Irish case—as the writings of J.C. Mangan portray—is better understood as a triangle in which two of its vertices are fixed—Catholics/Irish and English—while the third vertex, that of the Anglo-Irish, gradually shifts positions from the English to the Irish one, following a creolization process in which they are both victims and victimizers.

Jim Hansen's *In Terror and Irish Modernism* (2009) is a perfect example of this as it explores domesticity as a metaphor for the Irish-English relationships. As Hansen explains, after the 1800 Act

of Union both British and Irish media employed this metaphor to show the usefulness (or uselessness) of the Union. In Hansen's dichotomy, the British are portrayed as the sturdy husband, ready to give protection to the feeble, weak female-portrayed Ireland. While traditional postcolonial readings have read in such depictions an attempt to colonize and subjugate peoples, in the Irish case the same metaphor was deployed by both colonized and colonize alike, even if their purposes differed (Jorge 2019). Irish Gothic displays the peculiarity of presenting marriages as the failure of the domestic sphere; far from being liberated by the marriage institution, women are entrapped in it, isolated and recluse, in what can only be seen as an abrogation of the British ideological apparatus (Jorge 2019). As an exploration of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* makes clear, familial relationships present in Irish Gothic can be read in such political terms, "[m]oreover, by imagining the social world via the metaphor of domestic affection, Burke conflates the affective language of the intimate and domestic spheres with the practical and political language of the public sphere." (Hansen 2009, 13)

As Jorge (2019) explicates, "This use of domesticity, however, reveals more than female representations in Irish Gothic. It must be remembered that the perception of Ireland as feminine was extended to the country itself and not just to its female inhabitants." (72) It naturally follows that the Irish male was presented in female terms, an instance that can hardly be considered new, as the Irish—indeed, the Celt—had always been subject to such portrayals, in what postcolonial theory has come to define as a feminisation of the colonized other, presented as effeminate and child-like, somehow inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race (Innes 2007, 139). Such readings do not significantly impact male characters in Irish Gothic fiction. Quoting Hansen at large,

> The Irish male depicted in this fiction experiences the internal incommensurability that follows from this apparently impossible dualism. Like the women of the female Gothic, he finds himself confined in Gothic houses, but if he attempts to escape, he is immediately coded as excessive, violent and irresponsible. Irish masculinity finds itself [...] incapable of wholly embodying either the masculine authority or the feminine passivity demanded by the dualistic and misogynistic Western culture. (Hansen 2099, 12)

It is precisely because of this dualism that the male characters portrayed in the fictions of J.C. Mangan resist an easy classification under the dichotomy self vs. other, since in many instances they are both at the same time. This paper examines this dualism of the Anglo-Irish elite as both colonizers and colonized, prototypical of *creole* and settler societies, and how this is portrayed from the perspective of a Catholic (presumably outsider) Irish writer. Read in the context of the Protestant cultural nationalism of the 1830s, Mangan's writings appear to promote a creolization of Irish society in a move away from the ties which link the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy class to their English background, laying the foundations for later writers' contribution to the Irish Gothic short story, most notably J.S LeFanu and Bram Stoker. Protestant cultural nationalism, it must be remembered, is a coinage to term the early nineteenth century rise of a sentiment among Irish Tories to label their

Irishness in opposition to the incipient Catholic nationalism. Having Edmund Burke (1729-97) as its main ideologist and its main means of expression in the literary *Dublin University Review,* the principles of this movement have been summarized by Samuel Ferguson in his 'A Dialogue between the head and the heart of an Irish Protestant,' published in 1833 in the *DUM,* which contains "the early and cogent expression of the dilemmas of Protestants, disillusioned with British governments and seeking cultural leadership in a country, the religion of whose majority they disliked and suspected." (Murphy 2003, 80)

Characterisations and representations of the self are essential tenets in this process. Magan's stories explore the complex relationship between colonized and colonizer subjects with their native lands and with the metropolis simultaneously, representing the struggle of the self and the other, whose division is obscured due to their ambiguous situation. These two principles are controlled by two antagonizing forces—submission and possession—which are also at play in the tense relationships between the colonized and colonizer. Thus read, "the act of writing texts of any kind in post-colonial areas is subject to the political, imaginative, and social control involved in the relationship between colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft 1989, 29). However, as the present analysis proves, the characters at play do not epitomize the figure of the colonizer; instead, such characters "portray in-between figures, colonizers but not quite, in an attempt to 'decolonize the mind,' and in a move forward to the creation of a shared national consciousness" (Jorge 2019, 73).

It is surprising that J. C. Mangan chose as the main subjects for his stories an array of characters which can only be related to the upper-Protestant classes, especially if one is to remember the main aim of postcolonial writers—"to recover and reclaim lost identities, to recuperate and reinvigorate and free a dominated culture" (Jorge 2019, 73). A rapid review of Mangan's protagonists will reveal an array of noblemen (Amelrosa in "Love, Mystery, and Murder"), bankers (Braunbrock in "The Man in the Cloak"), idle proprietors (Basil in "The Thirty Flasks") or doctors (Grosstrotter in "The Threefold Prediction"). Such representations are striking, as they represent a class to which Mangan was—rather conspicuously—an outsider.

Such characterizations appear in direct opposition to the general tendency in postcolonial writing, "in which the need to reclaim history, to tell the many histories of colonized peoples from the point of view of the marginalized other, seems to be the main priority" (Jorge 2019, 73), what Boehmer (2005) terms "historical retrieval", a process "through which historically damaged selves could be remade" (185) and which would require some sort of reclamation of oral memory. Peasants, slaves or fishermen, are thus noticeably absent, in the vein of much colonialist narratives (Boehmer 2005, 63), or they perform secondary roles, usually remaining in the background.

It must be noted, however, the growing tendency to ascribing greater importance to such characters in the evolution of the genre—no doubt a reflection of the importance Catholics were gaining in Irish society throughout the nineteenth century; however, it still remains true that "the Irish Gothic short story does not give voice to the subaltern in an overt way as other postcolonial traditions would do" (Jorge 2019, 73). This, however, does not imply a lack of criticism of the colonial question. The method, already observed in Mangan's *Literae Orientales* (Baggett 2000, 173), consists in

adopting the imperialist perspective to be able to criticize it later on, even if in a somewhat veiled way.[2] It is what could be termed a criticism from within, "a denunciation of the colonial situation but placing the focus on the figure of the colonizer rather than on the colonized. A clear act of what postcolonial theory terms abrogation" (Jorge 2019, 73), posing a striking contrast to most postcolonial writing, as the self whom the reader encounters in these stories *seems* to be that of the colonizer.

Employing '*seems'* here is not gratuitous—it betrays an ambiguity, an ill-at-ease state, as characters do not comfortably fit into this class. The opening assumption for the present research was the reductionist nature of the dichotomy colonized-colonizer, suggesting that some parallelisms could be drawn between the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and these characters, most remarkably, their social status. A further key element which would classify them into this class is the fact that "they are not *real* colonizers. Their social position, inherited from their colonizer forefathers, places them as agents—and sufferers—of the colonial quest" (Jorge 2019, 74). Lawyers, landlords, members of ancient landed families, all enforce and benefit from what can be read as colonial rule but there is no "protagonist concerned to define his own identity, enthusiastic about training for imperial service, and convinced of his ability 'to shine'" (Boehmer 2005, 60). In contrast, the reader is presented with an array of characters very much at odds with their inherited roles, a streak "which starts with Mangan and which is continued through other Irish Gothic writers such as J.S. Le Fanu and Bram Stoker" (Jorge 2019, 74).

Even when in their prime—as estate house owners and/or as members of the nobility—, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is usually surrounded by an aura of decay. Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, written just right after the momentous loss of the Anglo-Irish Parliament pre-empts subsequent similar representations. Likewise, John Melmoth's aristocratic family inhabit their now rundown mansion—"As John slowly trod the miry road which had once been the approach, he could discover, by the dim light of an autumnal evening, signs of increasing desolation since he had last visited the spot, - signs that penury had been aggravated and sharpened into downright misery" (Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* 200, 11). It is a remarkable coincidence that the ascent of the Irish Gothic short story coincides with the waning of the Ascendancy.

By the time Mangan was writing his stories—mostly during the 1830s—, "most of the revolutions which had taken place during the first years following the Acts of Union—White-boys, Shanavest, Caravats—were over, including the failed attempt led by Robert Emmet in 1803" (Jorge 2019, 74). Despite the widespread sentiment of Anglophobia and the recital of historical grievance (Foster 1989, 155), the 1830s saw a "new wave of nationalism in politics led by the charismatic Daniel O'Connell, who would manoeuvre to obtain political capital for himself and for Ireland, mostly through peaceful means" (Jorge 2019, 74), a movement which significantly influenced Mangan. Similar happenings, such as the Tithe Wars, were over by 1830, having been politically addressed by the Irish Church Temporalities Act (1833) and the Tithe Rent Charge (1838). Despite sectarianism being on the rise both in Britain and Ireland in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, by the 1830s the Ascendancy rule over Ireland was effectively over, in part due to Westminster's efforts to "develop a neutral machine of control" (Murphy 2003, 22). Dublin, for instance, had "become

an amalgam of lawyers and doctors belonging to the—mostly Protestant—upper-middle classes. The education issue had been also partially addressed through the creation of a National Education System, which did much to enlighten the poor classes" (Jorge 2019). Despite inequality being still evident, there was aura of prosperity to be had by some Catholics and Presbyterians who now belonged to the middle-classes and the bourgeoisie, an ascent mainly prompted by the Napoleonic Wars, "a fact which might have preoccupied the Ascendancy class, since it constituted a threat to their privileges and status" (Jorge 2019, 74). Despite this, it would be wrong to think that the separation between the Protestant Ascendancy and the native Catholic population was over. As Foster asserts, "[t]o be a Protestant or a Catholic in the eighteenth-century indicated more than a mere religious allegiance: it represented opposing political cultures, and conflicting views of history" (Foster 1989, 136). Such division was to be heightened by a crucial episode in Irish history—*a Gorta Mór* or the Great Famine.[3] There can be no doubt that some of the guilt which plagues some of these characters originates in the role the Protestant Ascendancy played during those years. It is, however, this last term, 'Ascendancy', which is problematic.

Irish society was, at that time, "a more complex construct than more reductionist views would have it" (Jorge 2019, 75), implying that the traditional view Colonizer/Protestant Ascendancy vs. Colonized/Catholics, needs reinterpreting—"Recent scholarship promotes an interpretation that escapes this binary model, arguing that—especially in the Irish case—it is reductive" (Jorge 2019, 75). As Wright asserts, "we need to question more thoroughly the utility of binary formulations in order to grasp more fully the complexity of an imperial history that reaches across, and builds upon, different historical moments, geopolitical situations, imperial ideologies, and discourses of resistance" (Wright 2007, 5-6). In a similar line of thought, Hansen argues that

> This critical approach often imagines Anglo-Ireland as the lone name for colonial false consciousness, rather than as one hybridized component of a more complicated cultural and socio-political matrix that includes Catholics of the bourgeois, proletarian, and agrarian variety, a divided, declining Anglo-Protestant ascendancy, and an oft-overlooked Anglo-Protestant middle class. (Hansen 2009, 9)

On a first reading, characters appear to be perpetuating the figure of the colonizer and of colonial status and, therefore, the subaltern other is filtered through the colonial gaze, thus maintaining the mainstreams of colonial discourse, or "the systems of cognition [...] which Europe used to found and guarantee its colonial authority" (Boehmer 48) by which the other is shown as "less human, less civilized, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass" (Boehmer 2005, 76). However, criticism and scholarship should consider whether such superficial reading holds.

In this line, Jorge (2019) reminds us that "A deeper reading will show this figure to be just the opposite of what the prototypical colonialist figure ought to be—weak and feeble, terrorized rather than terrorizer, in awe of the other instead of subduing it" (75). As Boehmer (2005) recollects, "masculinity and its exertion of power were pivotal in the colonial quest" (71); thus, by making the male figure the centre of its criticism, "the Irish Gothic short story performs a double function—it

exposes the unsuitability of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy as a ruling class for their inaction and connivance with the colonizers, and it criticizes the application of the colonial system in Ireland" (Jorge 2019, 75). Mangan's short narratives would, thus, be questioning one of the principles of colonial discourse, which is "appropriated and subverted, and exposed in a completely different light. Mangan's appropriation of the colonizers' voice establishes a trend in the Irish Gothic short story which will be continued by J.S. Le Fanu and Bram Stoker" (Jorge 2019, 75). Far from being colonialist literature,[4] Mangan carries out an analysis and a criticism of the Anglo-Irish elite by showing them as "helpless and self-centred characters, embedded in a paralysis product of their double status as colonized and colonizer subjects, thus questioning their identity as a class" (Jorge 2019, 76).

In Mangan, the protagonists are the victims of a Gothic world which is outside their control and from which they find themselves unable to escape, a world, however, they enter of their own accord and spuriously. Rarely, however, does Mangan make them appear before the reader as deliberately treacherous and malignant. Instead, it could be asserted that their flaw is that of *naïveté*, for their actions are oftentimes presented under a cover of romance and idealism. By so arranging his characters, Mangan displaces the burden of malignity and misdoings from the colonized other to the colonizer self, thus reversing colonial discourse.

"The Thirty Flasks" (1838) introduces us to the character of Basil Theordore Von Rosenwald, a young man of aristocratic descent, who despite his rights and advantages inherited as a nobleman, finds himself close to ruin. This, the reader soon finds out, is due to his having run up large debts in gambling, "Last night in my madness I rushed from the *rouge et noir* room to the *roulette* table—my brain was on fire—and in twenty minutes, without well knowing how, I found that I had parted with notes for four thousand florins!" (Mangan 2002a, 179). Basil is thus revealed as a flawed character—he suffers from the vice of gambling, which he himself terms as a "madness", an uncontrollable malady which has brought him to forfeit even his most precious treasures—his family inheritance, "You recollect the diamond bracelets, my mother's miniature set in brilliants, the other trinkets that hung there—each of them once dear to me as life [...]" (Mangan 2002a, 179). The reader is thus aware that not only does Basil suffer from an uncontrollable disorder—gambling, a vice close to sin in the eyes of the Victorians—but he has also been unable to keep hold of his legacy. He is, however, not shown in a bad light to the reader. To counterbalance this flaw, Mangan shows Basil as a man in love with Aurelia Von Elseberg, an almost impossible love, due to the circumstances—let us not forget—into which he himself has got; when Aurelia's nineteenth birthday arrives, her father confronts Basil thus, "On this account I regard it as imperative on me to make every exertion for the advancement of Aurelia's *real* welfare; and you will not take it ill, Mr. Rosenwald, if I say I conceive that your present circumstances are not exactly those which could justify me in looking forward to you as her husband and my son-in-law" (Mangan 2002a, 198). This scene is very telling, since it performs a double function in the story. On the one hand, Basil is revealed as a man in love, which balances his gambling habits and shows him in a good light in the reader's eyes, and which gives him a pretext to enter the Gothic world—he needs to recover his fortune if he is to wed his love. On the other hand, it also reminds the

reader that, under the present circumstances, Basil is unable to provide *welfare*, a word whose double meaning Herr Elseberg implies as a pun upon Basil, since he is talking about "*real* welfare", that is, pecuniary stability as opposed to happiness, thus reminding the reader that the marriage institution is, above all, a form to maintain property and wealth, and thus status. Basil is metaphorically unmanned—he is no longer a provider, he cannot fulfill his task to maintain and increase wealth and richness.

Thus caught in the imbalance of being and not being masculine, his only resource is to enter the Gothic world and agree to a Faustian compact, even when the Nabob explicitly denies it, '"Sell my soul to the Prince of darkness?"—interposed the Nabob. "No, my dear brother," [...]. "You do me justice in believing me incapable of that extreme act of insanity and impiety"' (Mangan 2002a, 185). The compact, consisting in exchanging inches for wealth, is so wicked and convoluted that Basil—in an example of nineteenth-century rationalism—assumes it to be false,

> "This is not all: your appearance otherwise becomes altered for the worse; and, in short, by the time you have drained the thirtieth flask you will have sunk down to mu height, and present precisely such a spectacle to the eyes of all who see you as I do now, while I, on the other hand, shall be in possession of all your present advantages of feature and figure. You understand me definitely and clearly?"
> "Really, my worthy Sir," said Basil, still laughing, "your solemnity would impose on the devil himself. I do understand you—and am willing to go any length you like to countenance your joke. I trust you will not find me ungrateful. (Mangan 2002a, 191)

Even though, in the end, the Nabob is exposed as an evil figure—Maugrabant—, it should not escape the reader's perception that, as far as the compact goes, Basil was never cheated, since the terms were always clear. Thus, Basil is unmanned a second time, only on this occasion, physically. Viewed in the post-Act-of-Union Ireland, it is easy to associate it with a criticism of the paralysis that characterizes Anglo-Irish ruling classes since the loss of parliament in Green College and which contrasts powerfully with its previous bulging activity.[5] Like the Anglo-Irish, Basil is paralysed, incapable of taking decisive steps, for his actions are in reality a vicious circle which drags him more into the Gothic world he finds himself unable to leave—he forfeits his inches in exchange of money with which to pay off his debts but, instead, he uses that very same money to go on gambling, and thus the story repeats itself. Published in 1838 in the *DUM,* the story is reminiscent of the state in which the Union had left the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. As Murphy poses it, "By the early 1830s the days of Ascendancy rule in Ireland were effectively over" (Murphy 25). Trapped in this paralysis and unable to break away, Basil's future, like that of the Ascendancy class, is literally a diminishing one.

Hansen attributes this paralysis to the fact that male characters are torn between two equally opposing forces. As he asserts, "In the context of the colonized Ireland of the nineteenth century [...] the masculinity stands as confined and exiled, terrorized and terrorist. It comes to embody both vulnerability and the threat to all things vulnerable" (Hansen 4). In other words, caught up in the double status of simultaneous being and not being—colonized and colonizer—, characters find themselves unable to *define* themselves. As the story progresses and Basil keeps losing his inches, he

becomes someone else—a mockery of his previous being—and yet remains Basil Von Rosenwald at the same time. The following dialogue, which happens towards the end of the story, illustrates the point,

> "I have been inquiring for Mr. Rosenwald," said the stranger. "Can you, Sir, direct me where to find him?"
> "I am he," said Basil.
> "What! You!" cried the stranger.
> "I am the wreck of him who *was* Basil Rosenwald," replied our metamorphosed hero. (Mangan 2002a, 235).

Paradoxically, it is through the aid of the colonized other that these characters eventually find salvation, opening up a recurrent theme in Mangan: salvation achieved through redemption. Mangan's characters find deliverance through a mixing of opposites, establishing a trend which will be continued and enhanced by Le Fanu. His stories, then, give answer to that school of criticism which promotes a return to an idealized past through the utter rejection of the colonized present, a futile task as the legacy of colonialism "could not be entirely eliminated" (Boehmer 2005, 78). Ultimately, Basil is saved by the appearance of a figure come from the East—Rubadubb Snooksnacker Slickwitz, who is the executor of Basil's parental uncle, who "has lately died in Aleppo, and has left you heir to all his immense property" (Mangan 2002a, 236). Not only does this allow Basil to recover his inches—and thus his self—but it also allows him to marry Aurelia, ultimately delivering him from damnation and restoring lost equilibrium, "[a]s for Basil and Aurelia they have been now for some years married; and their union has been blessed with a large family of small children, who bid fair, [...] to inherit the singular beauty and plural virtues of their estimable parents." (Mangan 2002a, 238)

This union of opposites also has a deeper reading in terms of national identity, in consonance with the principles of Protestant cultural nationalism as defined by Burke and according to which the Protestant elites should be leading the aforementioned union. As Murphy poses it, "[u]nder the Union [...] parts of the Ascendancy embraced a Celtic cultural nationalism which they saw themselves as leading" (Murphy 2003, 41). This idea of reconciliation of opposites leading to a happy ending, to a seemingly perfect union, is, no doubt, a reflection of the cultural nationalism of the 1830s and 40s, which further reinforces the argument of the creation of a shared national identity. Let us not forget that Mangan's short-story writing career spans for something less than a decade (1833-1841), the years in which the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy had begun to understand that their rule over Ireland based on dominance was waning, "[t]he 1830s were to be years of Tory cultural nationalism which was wedded to Ireland's union with Britain and place in the empire, just as the 1840s were to be the years or a romantic political nationalism, in Young Ireland and the Nation newspaper, which aspired to political independence" (Murphy 2003, 78). Interestingly enough, the two stories which speak more clearly of reconciliation, "The Thirty Flasks" and "The Man in the Cloak", were both published in the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1838, the same magazine which

had published, in 1833, Ferguson's "A Dialogue between the head and the heart of an Irish Protestant". By then the *DUM* was the new focus and heart of the Protestant intelligentsia in Ireland (Hall 2000, 4), and adhered to Ferguson's idea of a shared culture, "[Ferguson] believed that Celtic models would provide a cultural common ground for Irish Catholics and Protestants" (Murphy 2003, 81). That Mangan participated of this idea of a shared culture is clear from his taking part in such cultural projects as the Ordnance Survey. However, Mangan's commitment to the national cause was made even clearer when he started publishing for the *Nation*, the newspaper founded by the Catholic Charles Gavan Duffy in 1842 with O'Connell's blessings to attract younger Protestants to the repeal cause (Murphy 2003, 88). Yet, it is not clear if by the end of his days Mangan still conceived this idea as possible—his last story, "The Threefold Prediction", is perhaps his most overt attack on colonialism and, by the end of the story, any attempt at reconciliation is impossible—"The whole blame was flung on me, and, though I was pitied, my medical reputation received a mortal wound. I, too, shortly afterwards quitted Vienna." (Mangan 2002b, 147)

Additionally, the story subverts two other principles which can be applied to the Anglo-Irish. Hansen identifies terror as a driving force, both political and cultural, which has shaped Irish identity. However, in the Irish case, both sides of the conflict believe themselves to be terrorized,

> Throughout the nineteenth century, the disenfranchized Gaelo-Catholics will see themselves as the victims of the usurping, tyrannical Anglo-Irish, and the Anglo-Irish will see themselves as victims of the barbaric Gaelo-Catholic agrarian violence and terrorism. [...] Both the Gaelo-Catholic and the Anglo-Irish become accused of and caught up in the double bind provoked by terrorism. The dynamic seems driven by what we might call the logic of the justified victim. Each side identifies itself always and only as terrorized in order to justify its own occasional terrorism. (Hansen 2009, 15)

Basil sees himself as a victim, a sufferer of a swindler. Thus, when he meets Slickwitz, he describes his situation in the following terms, "[o], stranger, whosoever you are; if you have any power over the villain, exercise it, I implore you, in forcing him to restore me to that of which he has robbed me!" (Mangan 2002a, 235). Basil refers to the Nabob as a "villain" who has "robbed" him of his inches even though the reader already knows that he has agreed to the compact of his free will; in fact, he is obliterating the fact that he is the main and only causer of his own misfortunes since he has lost his inheritance due to his addiction to gambling. Basil's unfounded accusation only reinforces the idea of his guilt.

In a similar vein, the story tackles an issue which troubled Victorian society—fear of miscegenation. Mangan, like J.S. Le Fanu and Bram Stoker, must have been aware of the different theories which were widespread during the Victorian era. Proof is that Mangan ridicules phrenology in several stories, most notably in "The Man in the Cloak". Excessive population and urban congestion represented causes for anxiety for the early Victorians, as did the widespread of cholera, also known as "the Irish disease" (Gibbons 2004, 46). The fact is that massive migration from Ireland to the ports and industrial heartlands of Britain meant overcrowding and poor hygiene. This, together

with the theories of such social reformers as Thomas Malthus or Dr. William Duncan, contributed to the perception of the Irish as a source of contagion and pollution, "of the 'foreign and accidental' infection that invades the system" (Gibbons 2004, 44), which threatened social stability.

The compact the Nabob proposes is exactly that which Victorian society most feared—the usurpation and collapse of their identity by that of the monstrous other. Close to the climax of the story, Basil visits the Nabob, who has been altered to "five feet eleven" while Basil is a mere "three feet seven" (Mangan 2002a, 234). Basil's nightmare is also that of the Victorians and of the Anglo-Irish. Mangan abrogates that concept, however, by displacing again guilt from the other to the colonizer. When accused of deceiving Basil, the Nabob retorts, "[y]et what right, I repeat, have you to complain? You have not been choused out of a single rap. [...] you voluntarily chose, with your mouth open, to drink away one of the noblest gifts with which Providence had endowed you—your stature" (Mangan 2002a, 233-4). Mangan is thus reminding his contemporaries of something they were acutely aware—their guilt. The Anglo-Irish, as part of the British colonial campaign, were conscious that their privileges and status emanated from the dispossession of the native Gaelic-Catholics, and thus they lived in fear of an oncoming Catholic rebellion. As Julian Moynahan comments, "the Anglo-Irish voted for the Union out of fear. Fearing a retribution by Catholics that might follow upon the full enfranchizement, they sought to sink their political identity into the larger identity of Protestant Britain's parliament, where they could never be outvoted, so they thought, by a native Irish majority." (Moynahan 1995, 9)

Endnotes:

1. Boehmer distinguishes between *colonial literature* and *colonialist literature.* The former is defined as a general term encompassing "any writing concerned with colonial perception and experiences, written mainly by metropolitans [...] during colonial times" (Boehmer 2), while *colonialist literature* refers to "that which was specifically concerned with colonial expansion [...] written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them. It embodied the imperialists' point of view." (Boehmer 3)
2. It would be an omission to assert or imply that Mangan started such a deployment of mirroring by not dealing directly with the voice of the colonized, since Mangan and subsequently Le Fanu and Stoker applied a technique which had a lot to do with genre. In Gothic literature criticism operates at a more subconscious level, as any appropriation of a genre must still be recognizable as stemming from this genre, that is, they must operate reasonably within the margins of the genre, or else the appropriating effect would be lost. As Christopher MacLachlan puts it in his introduction to *The Monk*, "Gothic in general [...] gives expression to deep disquiets of its time but cannot offer solutions. Instead, it raises some of those fears and uses them as the oblique referent of its surface meaning" (xxii). Due to the very own nature of the stories Mangan set out to write, the colonial question cannot be addressed directly; instead, it dwells under the surface, appearing every now and then in the shape of guilt and remorse. The colonial question, then, is treated but in a subtle way, through subterfuges, apparitions and ghosts that come to haunt the self.
3. Although Mangan's last short story, "The Threefold Prediction", was published in September 1845 and the Famine started in August that same year, it had not yet reached catastrophic proportions, since the first deaths by starvation were recorded in 1846 (Murphy 96). Its impact on his writings cannot have been, therefore, as great as on Le Fanu or Stoker.

4. See note 3.
5. As Curtis asserts when describing the effects of the 1800 Act of Union in Ireland, "[f]or Dublin the change meant from one prosperous and stately capital to that of a dull provincial city with stagnant trade." (Curtis 353)

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