

seen here – contrasts with the figure of the boy: fair-skinned, exquisite and beautiful, the future hero (Anglo-Irish):

this was a female, of patagonian size, and ferocious countenance, habited in a peasant's dress, of coarse, but shewy materials. Her harsh features, black, and sunburnt complexion, and wild, yet picturesque habiliments, of red and light blue cloth, announced her at once for one of that lawless and hardy race which inhabited the mountains near the Castle of Almaraz, know by the name of the Serrania de Ronda. She held, or rather grasped, the hand of a boy, three years old, of such exquisite infantine beauty, that, realizing the description of the poet, he might be said, indeed, to look, 'by his dusky guide, like Morning brought by Night.' (I, 16)

Le Fanu's use of the stereotyped Spanish Serrano not only 'satisfies the mid-nineteenth-century demand for details of the lives or foreign of alien races',¹⁵ but also sets a clear example of the implementation of the figure of the 'Other' in Anglo-Irish discourse. Thomas Crofton Croker's contemporary work *Researches in the south of Ireland* (1824), although written in a 'light unusually clear for his period, and . . . diligently, lovingly and, almost invariably, truthfully of them [his fellow countrymen]',¹⁶ also establishes this Irish racial distinction, adding tinges of a likely former Spanish colonization, when he compares the manners and customs of the country peoples, the mountaineers, of Cork and Kerry. Both Le Fanu's and Croker's works had London publishers and were first destined to an English reading reception, which enabled the deployment of the figure of the Irish 'Other' before the English and – most importantly – Anglo-Irish readership:

Both the fanciful eye of the antiquary and the more sober one of the agricultural tourist have observed the Spanish contour of feature in the peasantry of Kerry, and, indeed, it is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance; but the discussion of the colonization of remote ages does not fall within the object of this chapter, which is rather an attempt to detail such customs amongst the Irish peasantry as will appear most striking to the English reader, and to illustrate them with any occasional anecdotes they may suggest. The difference of costume and personal appearance in the lower orders of different

attention paid to Irish travellers in the nineteenth-century: Jane Helleiner, *Irish travellers: racism and the politics of culture* (Toronto, 2000), pp 32–3. El Empecinado's actual story differs in the fact that most guerrilleros were neither travellers nor gypsies, which reinforces the idea that Le Fanu's use of the gypsy community aims at offering a clear distinction in terms of race between the Gaelic Irish and the Anglo-Irish. ¹⁵ William Carleton, *Traits & stories of the Irish peasantry*, 2 vols (Gerrards Cross, 1990), vol. 1, p. 10. ¹⁶ Kevin Danaher in the introduction to Thomas Crofton Croker, *Researches in the south of Ireland: illustrative of the scenery, architectural remains and the manners and superstitions of the peasantry with an appendix containing a private narrative of the rebellion of 1798* (Dublin, [1824] 1981), p. viii.

districts can scarcely fail of being remarked, and the inhabitants of one barony are easily distinguished, by their peculiar dress, from those of another. On the border of the counties of Cork and Limerick, the women are generally short and plump figures; the men well-proportioned, tall and rather handsome. In some of the southern parts of Cork and Kerry the very reverse is the case; and, in the latter county, the race of small and hardy mountaineers, with light hair, grey eyes and florid complexion, added to a circular form of countenance, are strangely contrasted with the tall, spare persons of the Spanish race, if I may so term them, with sallow visage, dark, sunken eye, and jet-black hair, falling loosely over their shoulders; wearing the great-coat in the fashion of a mantle, fastened by one button under the chin, and its sleeves hanging down unoccupied by the arms.¹⁷

This biased argument, which boosts the superiority of the Anglo-Irish as a way of explaining their appropriateness within the Irish discourse, is reinforced when Donna Rosaura's maid, Dame Margarita, travels to the Serrania in order to seek information about the orphan boy, Don Juan. The terrified maid beholds a scene in which Le Fanu's seemingly Carletonian portrayal of the distinct traditions of the Serranos cements a clearly debasing approach to these contemporary Spanish mountaineers, and in turn the Irish:

I thought all the inhabitants of the Serrania a parcel of poor, low, miserable wretches, that lived on the flesh of their goats and kids. No such things, I promise you! Such drinking and feasting! The women all dressed as fine as Indian queens, . . . Observing these ladies made a ring, and surrounded two women who stood in the centre of it, I prepared myself to see some dance of their country, executed after their barbarous fashion; for you may suppose I did not expect to see in the Serrania a fandango or a saraband, much less a bolero. . . I arranged my veil to walk and see the holiday sports. But such sports! Would you believe it, the masculine wretches were challenging each other at wrestling! (I, 48)

Le Fanu's approach to this 'peculiar people', this 'other', expresses a deep fear of the gypsies not 'remaining "nature" but entering "history"' through an extended belief that the gypsies, and in turn the Irish where the 'only remaining site of cultural autonomy'.¹⁸ She thus radically opposes the model proposed by Irish cultural nation-

¹⁷ Croker, *Researches in the south of Ireland*, p. 221. ¹⁸ Although she makes no mention of Le Fanu's work, Katie Trumpener traces the representation of the gypsies in literature in a seminal article, in which she explains how the development of the gypsy-figure varied from the exoticized, the villain, the beggar, the primitive, and the superstitious to a final cultural and racial essentialism at the end of nineteenth-century English literature: Katie Trumpener, 'The time of the gypsies: a "people without history" in the narratives of the west', in Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates (eds), *Identities* (Chicago, 1995), pp 338-79.

alism in her exemplification of what is to be feared if the gypsies (in her schema, the Irish) come to rule and impose their culture on the Anglo-Irish.

In her novel, *Le Fanu* also envisages in the contemporary Spanish 'guerrillas' movement – to some extent similar to the rural uprisings of secret societies in Ireland – an idea of the Irish peasantry directly connected to their traditional community and the soil, which according to Seamus Deane 'belongs to a nationalist and communal conception of Ireland as a cultural reality',¹⁹ which *Le Fanu* clearly tends to attack. For the historian Edward Blaquiére (a contemporary of *Le Fanu's*) the Spanish guerrillas movement in the Serrania de Ronda represented the only possible outcome for these Spanish peasants, who 'goaded to madness by their tyrants civil, religious, and political, as well as encouraged by the weakness of the government, fled to the mountains of Spain and formed themselves into "guerrilleros", or banditti, spreading terror in every direction'.²⁰ Edward Blaquiére's historical analysis of the Spanish contemporary situation, with which *Le Fanu* may have been acquainted, and which went through various editions at the time, seems to beg comparison with the situation in Ireland.²¹ The figure of what have been termed secret societies²² in Ireland – Whiteboys, Rightboys, Ribbonmen, Oakboys, and Rockites – termed the 'banditti' of the time by R.F. Foster,²³ had become a regular revolutionary socio-political characteristic in peasant Ireland from the 1760s onwards. However, the climax of all these popular movements was reached in the first half of the nineteenth century mainly because just after the Napoleonic wars, European and Irish agriculture experienced congested holdings and depressed prices.²⁴ Besides, these secret societies sought to redress the limited grievances which their communities felt had

¹⁹ Seamus Deane, *Strange country: modernity and nationhood in Irish writing since 1790* (Oxford, 1997), p. 10. ²⁰ Edward Blaquiére, *An historical review of the Spanish revolution, including some account of religion, manners, and literature, in Spain; illustrated with a map* (London, 1822), p. 165.

²¹ *Fanu's* approach to these Spanish, and in turn Irish, mountaineers differs from Croker's portrait of the Irish mountaineers. For Croker, in a clear attack against absenteeism, if the Irish mountaineers are turbulent and disaffected the cause can be found not in their 'personal dislike to the British monarch, or political objections to the British constitution that have induced the Irish cottagers to appear in arms against both; but the want of superiors to encourage their labours, and to whom they might with confidence look up for support and protection': T. Crofton Croker, *Researches in the south of Ireland*, p. 14. ²² For T. Desmond Williams the term secret societies denotes 'organised groups which have pursued political, ideological or economic objectives by secret means and very often through violent action. Secret societies are not private societies, though they may have kept their affairs very private indeed': T. Desmond Williams (ed.), *Secret societies in Ireland* (Dublin, 1973), p. 1.

²³ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London, 1989), p. 292. ²⁴ The case of the chronology of Ribbon revolts reflects this fact. 'Grain prices fell 30 per cent after the bumper harvest of 1813, having been exceptionally high during the previous four years. The winter of 1813 proved unusually severe, and grain prices fell a further 15 per cent in 1814–15. Farmers were unable to pay a rent . . . the immediate cause of unrest of 1821–23 was the attempt . . . to evict tenants who had fallen into arrears or were unprepared to agree to the terms of new leases': Joseph Lee, 'The Ribbonmen', in Williams (ed.), *Secret societies in Ireland*, pp 26–35.

been inflicted by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in particular. Le Fanu was well acquainted with the literature about these societies which circulated widely in Ireland. On 30 March, 1822 the Chief Justice Bushe, in his address to the grand jury of Kilkenny, observed how the 'newspapers present but a FAINT AND FEEBLE PICTURE . . . of the atrocities' committed by the peasantry:

The peasantry had actually taken possession of the county – the gentry were obliged to seek protection against the most atrocious violence, by converting their own houses into garrisons – society, no longer secure from the encroachment of outrage, was completely disorganized – the daily repetition of crimes the most revolting; plunder, burnings, murder, the frequent infliction of torture, gave a character of peculiar horror to the crimes of the infatuated peasantry.²⁵

For Catherine Maignant, however, the figure of the secret societies in Ireland, which were seen as no more than a 'healthy exercise and, as such, viewed in rather a favourable light'.²⁶

In Le Fanu's romance the 'Big House' of Almarez vividly represents the cleavage between the Spanish nobility and the mountaineers of Ronda, as they do not partake of the prevalent social contract in Spain. This distinction is augmented by their Catholic fervour, which is not in consonance with the House of Almarez – a situation which, curiously enough, would have been Catholic in the Spanish context as well. Most certainly Le Fanu's intention resided in the exposition of the prevalent religious conflict; thus, the Irish peasants like the Spanish serranos are blinded by their religion and find no point of identification with their Anglo-Irish masters. At the centre of Le Fanu's depiction of the Spanish guerrillas lies a separation of peasants and gentry 'by strong social and religious barriers';²⁷ thus mirroring the situation in nineteenth-century Ireland, which Le Fanu constantly contrasts in her construction of the Anglo-Irish discourse via her imagining of contemporary Spain. But, behind this facile assumption, Le Fanu's fiction denounces the widespread belief that the Irish Catholic church was not denying the right to rebel and was, most securely, according to Le Fanu, even assisting and espousing revolt.²⁸

²⁵ *Historical notices of the several rebellions, disturbances, and illegal associations in Ireland, from the earliest period to the year 1822; and a view of the actual state of the country, and of the events generating, or connected with, its past disturbances, and present discontented and demoralized situation; with suggestions for the restoration and maintenance of tranquility, and for promoting the national prosperity and happiness* (Dublin, 1822), p. 57. ²⁶ Catherine Maignant, 'Rural Ireland in the nineteenth century and the advent of the modern world', in Jacqueline Genet (ed.), *Rural Ireland, real Ireland?* (Gerrards Cross, 1996), p. 21. ²⁷ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine 1798–1848* (Dublin, 1990), p. 147. ²⁸ S.J. Connolly's seminal study, *Priests and people in pre-famine Ireland, 1780–1845* (Dublin, [1982] 2001), establishes the opposite view. Priests had the task of supervising these societies and there are reports of assaults and killings of priests at the time of Le Fanu's writing. S.J. Connolly, *Priests and people*, pp 208–44.

In the autumn of 1822, in Dublin, W.C. Plunket, acting as attorney general, led the prosecution of a group of Ribbonmen. Although Plunket favoured Catholic Emancipation for some members of the Catholic establishment, he had 'pushed the evidence too far'.²⁹ Thomas McGrath produced a letter from Daniel Murray (coadjutor archbishop of Dublin), to James Warren Doyle, bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, in which Murray denounced Plunket's statement that 'there exist[ed] among Catholics (of the lowest description to be sure) a conspiracy for murdering all the Protestants of the Kingdom'.³⁰ Donald A. Kerr has recently traced this connection between secret societies and the Catholic church in Ireland during the nineteenth century and provides familiar contemporary examples, which must have been known to Le Fanu. Doyle consistently denounced the violence of secret societies, especially Ribbonmen, but also wrote and published many vindications of the religious and social rights of Catholics, to the extent he asserted that if a rebellion were to take place, this would not be opposed by any member of the Catholic priesthood in Ireland.³¹ For Le Fanu, this intricate link between the Catholic creed and the secret societies in contemporary Spain mirrored a widespread fear by the Anglo-Irish at the time. This communion between faith and guerrilla factions constituted a major attack on the social order she was trying to defend. In the novel the power of the priest over his community of 'guerrilleros' is complete:

Lawless as they were, and insensible to the force of moral ties, this wild people were not deaf to the voice of religion – religion! *that* power which speaks to the rudest mind, and can only be rejected by an artificially corrupted – not by a naturally feeling people! It formed the only bond of society they acknowledged; and feuds and quarrels, otherwise implacable, and never to be quenched but in the blood of the offender, were suspended at once by the appearance of the holy sacrament among them, and the voice of the priest accomplished what chiefs and alcaides would have striven to effect in vain. (I, 29)

The young Don Juan's education is undertaken by both the duke and the countess of Almarez, though they have different points of view with regard to nationality, heritage and tradition. The recourse to native heroes as bearers of nationhood

²⁹ Thomas McGrath, *Politics, interdenominational relations and education in the public ministry of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786–1834* (Dublin, 1999), p. 15. ³⁰ Murray to Doyle, 12 December 1822, Kildare and Leighlin Diocesan Archives, quoted in S.J. Connolly, *Priests and People*, pp. 15–16. ³¹ J.W. Doyle's most significant letters, which are contemporary with Le Fanu's work, include *A vindication of the religious and civil principles of the Irish Catholics* (Dublin, 1823) and *Letter to Robertson esq. M.P. on a union of the Catholics and Protestant churches* (Dublin, 1824). Cited in Donal A. Kerr, 'Priests, pikes and patriots: the Irish catholic church and political violence from the Whiteboys to the Fenians', in Stewart J. Brown and David W. Miller (eds), *Piety and power in Ireland 1760–1960: essays in honour of Emmet Larkin* (Belfast, 2000), pp. 16–42.

and tradition is central to Le Fanu's novel: Don Juan d'Alvarez (epitome of that nobility seeking prestige and refuge in a different tradition, as their key to their permanence in power in the land), reminds the orphan boy of French heroes, as being the bearers of legend and tradition. Conversely, his sister, Donna Rosaura presently reveals her preference for 'native' Spanish heroes:

'The names of Gaston de Foix, the Chevalier Bayard, Du Gueschin, Lahire, Dunois, awaken my heart (as the readers of Froissart say) like the sound of a trumpet.' 'And must you look so far for heroes?' interrupted Donna Rosaura in her silver voice – 'have *we* not our great captains too? – our Pelayo – our Cid – our Gonsalvo of Cordova?' (I, 69)

The recalling of past heroes as repositories of nationality constitutes a key element of romantic nationalism. Le Fanu's turn to Spanish traditional heroes partakes of an 'explicit homage to an earlier literary nationalism . . . because the literature of nationalism is concerned, again and again, with the renewal of past glories and traditions'.³² But Le Fanu's romance recognizes the ambivalent reality which sprang from the Union of 1801 and the role the ascendancy played afterwards: those who overtly favoured England, and those who defended an Irish cultural nationalism; Le Fanu clearly preferred the former. On one occasion in the novel Don Juan wanders in the 'Serrania' to find a place of refuge and solace when suddenly some pieces of paper fall at his feet:

They consisted of English verses; but, since her alliance with Spain, Don Juan had made the language of that country his study; and the conformity of the sentiments to his own perhaps aided his comprehension of the following effusion: . . . (I, 84)

This unforeseen discovery consists of a poem, written by a Spanish patriot, praising English help in the Peninsular War. The poem recalls the ominous presence of Joseph Napoleon, the French emperor's brother, as King of Spain and prefers the sense of continuity and tradition, the Burkean organicism, envisaged by Le Fanu and defended by the Anglo-Irish. England comes to Spain's rescue as a defender of the old order against the widely feared Napoleonic revolutionary tyranny:

The Spanish Patriots

While round Iberia lowers the storms of fate,
 While threatening myriads swarm upon her coast,
 Say shall she bend beneath oppression's weight,
 And sooth a bloody tyrant's haughty boast?
 Shall the mock king the pomp imperial grace,
 Shall crouching nobles his accession greet,

32 Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism*, p. 13.

Say, shall his pride a pure, an ancient race
 Trample to dust and tread beneath his feet?
 Oh no! the patriots disdain
 To wear a despot's galling chain.
 The land of loyalty and love
 Its pristine valour pants to prove –
 The land that distant worlds subdu'd
 Shall feel her ancient pride renew'd –
 Shall teach the tyrant's heart to fear
 The hour of his destruction near.
 And when, to bless the conquer'd plain,
 Returning Peace shall smile again,
 When Nature's joyous mien shall own
 The scourge of Heaven, fierce war is gone,
 The fair, the pious, and the brave,
 Shall bless the hand held out to save;
 To generous Albion, Virtue's friend,
 The proud Castilian learns to bend,
 To her, who first destruction hurl'd
 Against the tyrant of the world. (I, 85–6)

Le Fanu has a calculated aim in reproducing these lines. The Duke Don Juan d'Alvarez favoured the French influence because it helped him remain in prominence and power in Spain – a close allusion to the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy's situation in Ireland, and their defence of the order after the union with Great Britain in 1801, which kept them in power – although weakened legislatively – in Ireland. The countess and the young Don Juan, on the other hand, preferred Spanish heroes and the defence of Spanish nationality, which had also been aided by England during the Peninsular War. In her translation of contemporary Spain into an Anglo-Irish discourse was Le Fanu implying that Ireland's ancestry and nationhood were best defended by England's cooperation? All in all, Le Fanu presents this to the reader as two sides of the same coin. She attacks revolutionary Jacobinism (and hence, the attendant imperial penetration by Napoleon in Spain) which turned Spain into a colony of the Napoleonic empire. But she also firmly advocates the defence of the union, epitomised by the help of 'generous Albion', between Spanish and British forces in Spain, a clear glimpse of the necessity of the social, political, religious and cultural union between England and Ireland, which reduced the achievements of the Grattan era. Le Fanu's idea of empire and colony applies to the first example but not to the issue of Irish and British relations, as Ireland was not technically defined as a colony after the Union. As Katie Trumpener contends, Le Fanu's conception of romantic nationalism is clearly 'subject to uneven political and formal development',³³ which may account for the lack of critical attention which Le Fanu's writings have received.

De las Sierras returns to the 'Sierra' to help the Spanish cause with the people of the mountains. His patriotism gradually increases when he meets his former friend and forlorn hero Juan Gonzalez. The identification of land and hero signals an anxious trend to form a link with a former tradition as a means of initiating a conquest for the future:

My country became my idol, my parent, my all; and in the character of patriot I strove to forget that I could neither call myself son or brother to any one existing. Judge then . . . the feeling with which I viewed the unprincipled invaders, who advanced to make a desert of our beautiful land. That moment I vowed to them a hatred that should never be extinguished, as long as the print of a foreign footstep should profane the soil of Spain. (I, 188)

The spirit of religious re-conquest of a 'profaned' soil permeates through Gonzalez's words in a 'commitment to a traditional notion of custom, and of solidarity: "the cause", which did not need to be defined'.³⁴ From that moment on Juan Gonzalez and Juan de las Sierras act together as leaders in the Serrania de Ronda. The union epitomised in the cooperation of Juan Gonzalez and Juan de las Sierras is legitimized through the ultimate anchor of both the Irish and Anglo-Irish, in the novel Juan Gonzalez and Juan de las Sierras respectively. Le Fanu was once more legitimizing her own idea of Irish romantic nationalism through her belief in the reality which emerged after the Union between Ireland and England. However, the characters' friendship turns into suspicion when Juan de las Sierras starts to understand the real identity of Gonzalez, an assassin of the Serrania de Ronda, and unlike the actual Empecinado of history, who will stop at nothing to save his country. In Le Fanu's effort to express her repulsion at all disturbances and risings, Juan Gonzalez's words recall Robert Emmet's famous speech from the dock of 20 September 1803:³⁵

No! – salvation to Spain, and hatred – eternal, inextinguishable hatred to her enemies, shall be my latest words in life, and when I fall, I wish no other epitaph. (II, 115)

34 Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972*, p. 293. 35 'Let no man write my epitaph; for as no man who knows my motives dare now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them and me rest in obscurity and peace; and my tomb remain uninscribed and my memory in oblivion until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written. I have done.' Emmet's dock speech was printed in *Dublin Evening Post* (20 & 22 Sept. 1803); copied by *The Times* and in the *Morning Post* (27 Sept. 1803); an unadorned version printed by William Ridgeway, a lawyer for the defence and a printer in his own right, was published shortly after, being reprinted by him with accounts of other trials of August, September, and October 1803; a similar version printed in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* (Sept. 1803). From www.PGIL-EIRData.org.

Las Sierras believes that if Juan Gonzalez continues with his despicable behaviour his fame all over Spain as 'El Liberador' – Le Fanu's brief hint at the figure and achievements of Daniel O'Connell³⁶ – will be exchanged for that of 'El Empecinado'.

Las Sierras's love life is also intertwined with his patriotic deeds. He has fallen in love with Juan Gonzalez's sister Constantina; this relationship changes when he meets Louisa, the supposedly murdered daughter of the duke of d'Almarez. On his return to the House of Almarez Don Juan de las Sierras discovers that Louisa and her father, the duke, too much a man of blood against the patriotic cause, have been taken prisoners by the serranos, who decide to make the duke of d'Almarez swear he will unite his daughter, Louisa, to the patriot General Las Sierras. In the meantime Las Sierras receives a revealing letter:

The hour of grace is nearly past – that of a terrible reckoning is at hand. False to your love, you associate openly with your country's bitterest enemies, and, to crown the whole, espouse the daughter of her deadliest foe. Repent in time. Think you, because the heart of Constantina shrunk in vengeance, that while her sworn protector lived, her wrongs could sleep? The blow that annihilates you will fall like lightning, but it will not be less sure. *If you dare to conclude that unhallowed union, know, to a certainty, we meet again.* Trust not in friends or influence – *your* name is great, but *mine* is all-powerful in Andalusia. At a breath I can summon a thousand voices to condemn you. Nor trust to former friendship, Las Sierras – you thought you knew me, but *you knew me not all.* More might have marred the plans that required you should be *wholly mine.* Acting under a thousand forms, but still actuated by the same principle, read here and tremble, while you learn that HE whom you knew under the name of Juan Gonzalez, is the avenger whose fiat never went forth in vain,
Juan el Empecinado (III, 127)

El Empecinado explains – in religious terms – the impossibility of a union with the foes of his country. For Le Fanu, when this statement slides over into an the Anglo-Irish discourse, it emerges as the voice of the native Irish who saw in the 1801 Union of Ireland with Great Britain the end of their aspirations for freedom. A marital union between Las Sierras, already a Serrano, and the daughter of Don Juan Almarez, a representative of Spanish cooperation with France, would have encapsulated Le Fanu's desire to unite both 'irreconcilable enmities' in Ireland and her opposition to the theories of racial purity. In fact, Le Fanu proposes Las Sierras as the prototype of

³⁶ Contemporary events in the life of O'Connell at the time include the publication of *Address to the Catholics of Ireland* (Dublin, 1821), in which he called for action for Repeal of the Union and the foundation in 1823 – the same year in which Le Fanu's *Don Juan de las sierras; or, el Empecinado* was published – of the Catholic Association. Around this date the launch of mass meetings was commenced and evinced the movement of Catholics in Ireland towards legal, religious and social emancipation, which was most probably feared by Alicia Le Fanu, as the reference shows, and in turn by the Anglo-Irish at large.

the new Irish, rather than the new Anglo-Irish after the Union. Le Fanu is against a non-inclusive Irish nationalism 'which abhors multi-ethnic states'.³⁷ In this light, Le Fanu was addressing a common fear among the Anglo-Irish ascendancy at the time. During the 1820s (a decade which saw the commencement of the so-called religious Second or New Reformation) there also existed a well-known prophecy which predicted that Protestantism would be wiped out in 1825. These predictions of Signor Pastorini were a great cause of disturbance, and such political prophecies were found in many broadside ballads of that period.³⁸ This prophecy found ample support within the Irish rural community and 'became widespread in Ireland in the 1820s, where excerpts were circulated in broadsheet form, feeding into the Rockite disturbances'.³⁹

Le Fanu's novel seems to differ in this respect from much used solution of intermarriage, such as those deployed by Maria Edgeworth⁴⁰ and Lady Morgan. For Robert Tracy, novelistic versions of Anglo-Irish/Irish (or English/Irish) marriages assume that this 'happy coalescence of apparently mutual and irreconcilable enmities makes an attractive literary and political solution'.⁴¹ Edgeworth and Morgan encompassed in their novels the 'legal right of the Anglo-Irish with the traditional right of the Irish'. In the impossibility of Las Sierras's marriage to Louisa (an instance of intermarriage as he is already an ideal Serrano against the French) Le Fanu not only diverges from Edgeworth's and Morgan's literary solution,⁴² but denounces, as

37 Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and imagination: patterns in the historical and literary representation of Ireland in the nineteenth century* (Cork, 1996), p. 22. 38 For example, this 'garland' was printed in Limerick in 1821: 'Now the year 21 is drawing by degrees,/ In the year 22 the Locusts will weep,/ But in the year 23 we'll begin to reap./ Good people take courage, don't perish in fright,/ For notes will be of nothing in the year 25;/ As I am O'Healy, we'll daily drink beer.' Reprinted in Georges-Denis Zimmermann, *Songs of Irish rebellion: political street ballads and rebel songs 1780-1900* (Dublin, 1967), p. 30. 39 Charles Walmesley, titular bishop of Rama and fellow of the Royal Society (1722-1797) had written a book in 1771 under the pseudonym 'Signor Pastorini', entitled *The general history of the Christian church, from her birth to her final triumphant state in heaven, chiefly deduced from the Apocalypse of St John the Apostle* (reprinted in Dublin in 1790). This book contained a prediction that Protestantism would be wiped out in 1825. See Leerssen, *Remembrance and imagination*, p. 252. 40 For Kevin Whelan, this is evidence of Edgeworth's 'bistadialism' in Ireland; that is, the Protestant Irish were at the same level of 'civilization' as their British counterparts while the native Irish remained in an earlier feudalism. In *Ennui* (1809), *The Absentee* (1812) and *Ormond* (1817), Edgeworth reach a 'desired balance' which is 'symbolised by the national marriage which concludes all three novels'. Kevin Whelan, 'Foreword' to Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan, *The wild Irish girl: a national tale*, ed. Claire Connolly and Stephen Copley [London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000], p. xiv. 41 Robert Tracy, *The unappeasable host: studies in Irish identities*, (Dublin, 1998), p. 30. 42 Claire Connolly warns about these 'somehow transparent or self-evident' literary devices used by Edgeworth and Lady Morgan to finalise the social and political issues in Ireland as the Union of Great Britain and Ireland had been 'rapidly succeeded by Robert Emmet's rebellion in 1803, and so by 1806 [in the case of Lady Morgan's *The wild Irish girl*] had already proved far from harmonious'. Claire Connolly, 'Introduction' to Lady Morgan, *The wild Irish girl*, Claire

she has done before with the example of the woman of the Serrania de Ronda, 'the exclusivism of nineteenth-century sectarian claims [which] has its secular form also, in the emergence of a romantic nationalism [Catholic in Le Fanu's case] which veered in some instances towards theories of racial purity'.⁴³ At the end of the novel, in a fictional manoeuvre, Le Fanu trammels the two main characters' lives in such a way that the reader will forgive Las Sierras, a representative of the Spanish nobility but also a truly patriotic Spaniard in favour of the 'cause', and put all the blame on El Empecinado. Las Sierras had been captured by Gonzalez's men and sentenced to death because he was a traitor, as he did not accede to El Empecinado's wishes concerning Don Juan's marriage to Constantina, El Empecinado's sister. Donna Rosaura, the Countess d'Alvarez, on knowing the sentence on Las Sierras runs to save his life. Donna Rosaura appears at the camp and tells Juan Gonzalez, El Empecinado, to revoke Las Sierras's death sentence. He says he cannot do it because he is a traitor to the Spanish cause; but presently she declares that Las Sierras and El Empecinado are brothers. El Empecinado's character is eventually stained with his own kin's blood.

Le Fanu's translation of the Spanish El Empecinado's life and times into an Anglo-Irish discourse thus succinctly summarises the key political issues of her Spanish/Irish novel. First, she rejects cultural nationalism's reduction of peasant culture, or gypsy culture, through a debasing use of the 'other' figure and racial terms of 'nigrescence'. Second, as a dramatic aspect of the history of Ireland, Le Fanu addresses the issue of the secret societies, which 'featured widely in Irish fiction: . . . notable literary treatments include Thomas Moore, *Memoirs of Captain Rock* (1834); William Carleton, "Wildgoose Lodge" (1833); and Mrs S.C. Hall, *The Whiteboys* (1845)'.⁴⁴ Le Fanu, however, contextualises the problem of rural riots in Ireland in order to address the critical plight of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. She re-establishes the economic origin of these societies and places them in the context of the loss of power which the Ascendancy was experiencing. Third, she tackles the religious predicament of both communities in the new reality after the Union of 1801. Fourth, she despises a possible 'social concept of heroism'⁴⁵ through the representation of her two heroes, El Empecinado and Don Juan de las Sierras. Las Sierras follows the patriotic (and even adopts nationalist) tendencies of Irishness because he is the epitome of the new reality Le Fanu wants to represent, a new Anglo-Irish individual who defends the vision of Ireland from a unionist perspective. His brother, El Empecinado, stands for a rural Ireland attached to the soil, a 'guerrillero' who epitomizes an old nationalist Ireland, which rejects a possible union between both identities on the island. El Empecinado encapsulates the opposite side of the hero,

Connolly & Stephen Copley (eds), p. xxvi. In the case of Le Fanu's romance, the chronology of Irish history expands and offers many other examples of disruptive harmony. 43 W.J. McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy, tradition and betrayal in literary history* (Cork, 1994), p. 79. 44 Robert Welch (ed.), *The Oxford companion to Irish literature* (Oxford, 1996), p. 512. 45 Sean O'Faolain, *The vanishing hero: studies in novelists of the twenties* (Freeport, 1971), p. xiii.

that of the villain. Le Fanu's conundrum is solved with a close look at the title of her romance. Her choice is neither ambivalent nor equivocal: *Don Juan de las Sierras, or, el Empecinado*. Le Fanu clearly sides with the former.

In the final analysis, Le Fanu's romance *Don Juan de las Sierras* adopts and re-fashions conventionalities of what has been traditionally considered romantic nationalism. She endows both heroes with a love for the soil and race that could have enabled her, to a certain extent, to enter a canon of romantic nationalism in Ireland. However, she also portrays the tragic end of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, in Las Sierra's death, and, what is worse, she criminalizes his brother, El Empecinado, extending this 'Biblical' contest between the two brothers to the two sides of Ireland; that is, the Irish and the Anglo-Irish.⁴⁶ Fanu envisages the end of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in the death of the romantic hero, Las Sierras; but she also blames nationalist Ireland, portrayed in the serranos, the secret societies, the patriots and El Empecinado – an Irish nationalist hero – for this traumatic end of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. A general sense of betrayal⁴⁷ and guilt is extended to a nationalist Ireland in Le Fanu's novel through her appropriation and recourse to contemporary Spain. It is therefore not coincidental that Le Fanu and her writings, including *Don Juan de las Sierras, or, el Empecinado: a romance*, are excluded from the Irish canon, since, as Trumpener suggests, her 'noncanonization is of historical and political interest'.⁴⁸

46 For Bishop James Doyle, the Ribbonmen had a love of Catholicism and hatred of Orangeism. But he insisted that the Orangemen were 'our brethren in Christ': see James Doyle, *Pastoral*, Nov. 1822, pp 11–12, cited in Thomas McGrath, *Religious renewal and reform in the pastoral ministry of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786–1834* (Dublin, 1999), pp 192–3. Miss Alicia Le Fanu fiercely attacks these pastorals in her fiction as she does not believe in the promises and efforts of the Catholic Church in Ireland at the time.

47 Examples of the opposite nature can be found in W.J. McCormack, *From Burke to Beckett*.

48 Trumpener, *Bardic nationalism*, p. 131.