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THE INSECURE AND THE IRRATIONAL: THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN OTHER IN *THE TRADITION OF THE CASTLE; OR, SCENES IN THE EMERALD ISLE* (1824) BY REGINA MARIA ROCHE[1]

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ABSTRACT. *A section of* The tradition of the Castle; or Scenes in the Emerald Isle *(1824), a novel by Regina Maria Roche, is set in the European Continent, which enacts a cultural confrontation between Britain and the Southern Other. Additionally, the South of Europe and particularly Spain is employed as a displaced scenario where the British could project their anxieties and accordingly face the conflicts of their own society. By using popular fiction and popular imagery, such as those provided by travel writing and the Gothic, Roche warns her readers about insecurity and irrationality beyond their borders – namely, war and political and religious intolerance – and about mistakes they should not make in order to reinforce their national identity and maintain their* status quo.

Keywords: Regina Maria Roche, *The tradition of the Castle; or Scenes in the Emerald Isle*, national identity, otherness, popular fiction and Spain.

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LO INSEGURO Y LO IRRACIONAL: EL SUR EUROPEO COMO EL OTRO EN THE TRADITION OF *THE CASTLE; OR, SCENES IN THE EMERALD ISLE* (1824) DE REGINA MARIA ROCHE

RESUMEN. *Una sección de la novela* The tradition of the Castle; or Scenes in the Emerald Isle *(1824) de Regina Maria Roche transcurre en el continente europeo, haciendo posible una confrontación cultural entre Gran Bretaña y el sur europeo como el otro. Además, el sur de Europa, y especialmente España, se utilizan como un escenario desplazado en el que los británicos podían proyectar sus inquietudes y por tanto enfrentarse a los conflictos de la sociedad de su tiempo. Mediante la utilización de géneros y recursos populares como los relatos de viajes y la ficción gótica, Roche alerta a sus lectores sobre la inseguridad y la irracionalidad más allá de sus fronteras, como la guerra y la intolerancia política y religiosa, y sobre los errores que no debían cometer con el fin de reforzar su identidad nacional y mantener su* status quo.

Palabras clave: Regina Maria Roche, *The tradition of the Castle; or Scenes in the Emerald Isle*, identidad nacional, otredad, ficción popular, España.

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1. INTRODUCTION

When Dr Rosebud, one of the characters of *The Tradition of the Castle; or, Scenes in the Emerald Isle*, is returning home from the Continent and has the reassuring White Cliffs of Dover within sight, sings the praises of his country by means of the famous lines of William Cowper's poem *The Task* (1785): "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still" (1824: II, 38). Thus he is implicitly referring to the hazardous and perilous circumstances that he and his companions have left behind, showing in this way the archetypal attitude in the travel narratives of the period, in which the final analysis is to prefer Britain to the Continent (Turner 2001: 10). This passage from the novel conveys thus a general and quite simple message employing the binary opposition between Britain – rational, modern and secure – and the rest of Europe, or better, the Southern Catholic Europe – superstitious, irrational and pre-modern (Morin 2011: 83). In spite of this apparent simplicity the scenario thus delineated was of great relevance in reinforcing Britain's emerging sense of national identity. Things become even less simple in the novel under scrutiny in this article, considering that *The Tradition of the Castle* brought chiefly into focus Ireland and Irish issues, as the allusion to the Emerald Isle – Ireland's poetic name – in the subtitle explicitly announces.[2]

[2] The verses of the motto on the title-page of the novel insist in the travel motive:
Oh Erin my country! –though sad and forsaken,

My chief contention in this paper is that the author of this novel, the Irish writer Regina Maria Roche (1764-1845), using the most popular genres and conventions of the moment, namely travel narratives and Gothic fiction, displaced the action of *The Tradition of the Castle, or, Scenes of Emerald Isle* to Southern Europe, which enacted a cultural confrontation between Britain and the Southern Other. This is of particular relevance in constructing national identities, especially in this period, when the idea of a Continent as a constellation of nations was affirming itself in Europe against Enlightenment cosmopolitism. Identity is always difficult to establish in isolation, "the construction of identity […] involves establishing opposites and 'others'" (Said 1979: 45) and in this regard, travellers have the privilege of facing the Other for themselves. Linda Colley, in her seminal work, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, has emphasised this point arguing that in the case of the British, they "came to define themselves as a single people not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores" (2005: 6). Moreover, moving the plot to the Continent thus provided a "displaced arena" where the British could project their anxieties and accordingly face the conflicts of their own society (Saglia 2000: 51).

Additionally, this novel is a case in point and deserves due attention given that the displacement does not occur in time – there is no Medieval or Renaissance settings, as was almost mandatory in this type of fiction. The protagonist, Donaghue, and his friends, owing to their journey, observe and participate in events that happened only 10 years before the publication of the novel, such as the Battle of Waterloo, Parisians' unrest after the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and the abolition of the Holy Inquisition in Spain. In this latter location, particularly in the Spanish city of Seville, the protagonist is imprisoned in the dungeons of the Inquisition, where all the Gothic machinery is displayed. Thus Roche not only participated, like other writers of the period, in what David Howarth has coined "the invention of Spain" (2007), but by means of the employment of a contemporary setting she also alerts her British audience about closer threats and perils.

In dreams I revisit thy sea-beaten shore,
But, alas! In a far foreign land I awoken,
And sigh for the friends who can meet me no more.

These lines have been taken from the famous ballad "Exile of Erin" (1796), written by the Scottish poet Thomas Campell, after having heard the emotional account of an Irish exile in Germany (Molloy 2006). Thus the potential reader is aware from the very beginning of the possibility of some kind of travelling abroad in the novel.

2. REGINA MARIA ROCHE AND THE LITERARY CONTEXT OF HER TIME

The second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century are referred to as the age of travel and travel writing and this enthusiasm was reproduced in uncountable publications which were avidly consumed by a curious audience (Turner 2001; Curley 2009). Additionally, as is known, this century is also known as the age of the novel in Britain. Both, novel and travel, are closely connected in this period, as travel narratives have been deemed to be crucial factors in the genesis and development of the novel (Watt 1994; McKeon 1991) and afterwards, as a customary component of fictional texts (Adams 1983; Bohls 2005).

When Roche published this novel, she might be considered an experienced novelist, who up to this moment had a substantial number of novels in the market. Two of them, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) and *Clermont* (1798), were very successful, not only in Britain but in other European countries as well, thanks to translations (Lasa Alvarez 2006; 2011).[3] Roche's literary career is a clear testimony of her capacity to adapt to the tastes and fashion of her time.[4] After writing Gothic or Gothic-like fiction, and historical novels, she shifted to a different matter when Irish regional novels, such as those of Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan, captured the attention of the readership at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Schroeder 1984). At the same time, she used to fabricate complicated romantic plots, in which various couples underwent several moving circumstances to end up with the ubiquitous happy-ever-after conclusion. Such is the case in *The Tradition of the Castle*, which narrates how Donaghue, a young man of Irish origin but brought up in England, shares the prejudiced view of the English against Ireland. Nevertheless, once in his native land, thanks to love and his concern towards his fellow country people, he ends up as a true Irishman.

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[3] Regina Maria Roche started to write before her wedding given that her first two novels, *The Vicar of Lansdowne, or Country Quarters* (1789) and *The Maid of the Hamlet* (1793) were published under her maiden name. Then, at the end of the 1790s, her two most successful novels appeared, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) and *Clermont* (1798) – interestingly, both of them were mentioned by Jane Austen in two of her novels, *Emma* and *Northanger Abbey*, respectively. After the publication of the fifth novel, Roche interrupted her literary career for seven years. She then published eleven novels set in Ireland, such as *The Munster Cottage Boy* (1820), *Bridal of Dunamore, and Lost and Won. Two tales* (1823), *The Tradition of the Castle* (1824), *The Castle Chapel* (1825), and *Contrast* (1828). Most of Roche's novels were translated into French, and two of them into Spanish, *The Children of the Abbey* and *Clermont*. The first one was a favourite among the Spanish readership with several translations and editions of the novel even as late as the 1930s.

[4] Very little is known about Roche's life, however, among the few data which have reached us about her we know that a disreputable financer stole her family's Irish property and that she had to ask for support to the Royal Literary Fund (Schroeder 2006: viii). These facts might suggest that she wrote for bread, like many other women writers before her, such as Aphra Behn and Frances Sheridan, or contemporaries to her, such as Charlotte Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Anyone familiar with the abovementioned Irish regional novel will find in this plot clear similarities with respect to Edgeworth and Lady Morgan's narratives. This genre, however, is not particularly associated with travelling, for the obvious reason that its main concern is Ireland and Irish problems. But Roche's objective of maintaining her readers' interest in her novels[5] might be behind her decision to reserve a relevant part of her novel to the hero's travelogue on the Continent. Most importantly, the alluring atmosphere created by foreign locations has to be regarded in the light of the dominant market forces and cultural fashions in a moment in which the printing business was growing rapidly. It is unquestionable that the readers' taste was a key factor; however, the existence of circulating libraries influenced to a great extent the form, topics and habits in the narrative genre of the period, and *The Tradition of the Castle* in particular is a telling instance. Roche published her novels in the Minerva Press or, as in this case, in one of the subsequent associate branches of this publishing house, A.K. Newman (Blakey 1939: 22). Most publishing houses, but this one in particular, assigned the largest part of their production to filling the shelves of circulating libraries, which preferred multivolume novels, given that they charged a fee per volume (Eliot 2007: 297; Fludernik 2009: 16).[6] Consequently, some structural features of this kind of narrative texts, such as the complex plots or the presence of digressive sections in them – as is the case in Roche's novel –, might be connected to the necessity of creating long novels in several volumes. Economic circumstances might be also adduced to justify the publication of Roche's novels, not in her homeland but in London, due to the clear decay of the Irish publishing industry in this period. Furthermore, successful Irish writers, such as Roche and many more, "needed to appeal to essentially the same British audience and British taste as their English and Scottish contemporaries" (Vance 2002: 47). Taking this into consideration, it is British national identity as a whole which will be under scrutiny in this paper.

Roche developed her literary career during the heyday of Gothic fiction and, as mentioned before, two of her novels – *The Children of the Abbey* and *Clermont* – have been considered and termed as such. But in spite of her later preference for other genres, she continued to employ certain devices connected to the Gothic, such is the case in *The Tradition of the Castle*. Although this novel does not belong to the

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[5] Roche clearly admitted in the preface to her novel *The Vicar of Lansdowne*, that she wrote to entertain her readers, for "the amusement of a few solitary hours" (1800: I, IV)

[6] For instance, in the Minerva circulating library –started by William Lane as a subsidiary business of his printing house, the Minerva Press–, in 1822 "the two-guinea subscription entitled its holder to periodical publications, but not to 'new Quarto Works', and subscribers of this class were not allowed more than two new works at a time […], a first-class subscription of five guineas provided twenty-four volumes in town, or thirty-six in the country" (Blakey 1939: 116).

genre, the presence of some Gothic thematic and technical strategies is instrumental for our analysis. As some scholars have pointed out, Gothic fiction reinforces the postulate we posed with respect to national identities, since in the opinion, among others, of James Watt, Gothic fiction "served an unambiguous and patriotic agenda" (1999: 7). In this regard, Peter Miles goes beyond and using the term Europhobia underlines that "for the English Gothic, no other is quite so other than the European other" (2002: 84) when constructing its modern national identity; however, "literary otherness is not really about others; on the contrary, it signals something about ourselves, about the pressures involved in particular acts of identity formations" (Miles 2002: 86).

As late as the second decade of the nineteenth century and beyond, the public was eager to read Gothic fiction and as the Minerva Press was a barometer of public taste (Howells 1978: 80-81) –or maybe we should say that it was the one who created the public's taste–, episodes and allusions to this popular genre's repertoire were fostered. The owners of this publishing house in particular were totally aware of the rise of consumerism in British society, which implied new methods of distributing and marketing books in the publishing industry. The expanding reading increased the demand for books and by means of this kind of publishing business, which included the presses and the circulating libraries, the Minerva Press created constant fictional novelties at low prices to satisfy it. Consequently, this Gothic component in Roche's novel aligns the text among the most popular fiction of the moment, since the readers who chose this genre were seeking, above anything else, the picturesque, exotic landscapes and far-away places and an idealised past (Summers 1968: 168, 197). Given that Catholic countries are the Gothic geographical zone par excellence, when the protagonist is imprisoned in the fortress of the Holy Inquisition in Seville, the writer integrates in her text all the formulaic devices of the Gothic genre, providing her readership with a significant number of scenes dominated by fear and hopelessness.

Gender issues are also significant when discussing Gothic fiction or the Irish regional novel. On the one hand, the majority of the books issued from the Minerva press were written by women and addressed to female readers (Blakey 1939; Lasa Álvarez 2006b); on the other, the Irish national tale is defined as a female-authored genre which shows an "explicitly public and political orientation" (Ferris 2008: 236). The massive entry of women into the literary world at the moment when Roche started her career, specialising mainly in the narrative genre, provoked continuous anxiety among the critics –mainly male–, in that it connoted unstoppable changes in the role assigned to women in the literary realm and, by extension, in the society of the period. In any case, Roche and other women could profit from these

favourable circumstances and some of them became professional writers who were able to make a living out of their writings.

Thus, Roche's novel needs to be understood in a context subject to a constellation of forces that turn around two main axes, the publishing market and the ideological context of the period. As mention above, the technique of taking the setting of the novel abroad reaffirms British national identity among readers in that they have the possibility of observing British characters in conflict with continental Others and of comparing and contrasting their homeland with other foreign countries. The usage of the most popular genres of the period is also essential since, as Benedict Anderson has pointed out, they "provided the technical means for 'representing' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation" (2006: 25). Besides, female agents and recipients of fiction are in this period noteworthy given that the ideology which sustained national virtue and patriotism was increasingly located in the middle classes, particularly "within the domestic sphere, and in the person of the generally stationary wife and mother" (Turner 2001: 19).

3. FIRST STEPS ON THE CONTINENT

In this particular case, some circumstances of the plot of *The Tradition of the Castle*, such as the hero's losing of both his parents and with them the family's fortune, and a romantic disappointment, cause him to abandon the British Isles, in search of new experiences in the Continent leaving the place which continually reminds him of these sad events (Roche 1824: I, 229) – a journey which occupies the last four chapters of the first volume and the first two of the second. Very opportunely Donaghue is offered a commission for Foreign Service on the Continent and the first image we have of the hero there is in the plains of Waterloo, where he lies wounded (278). We are in chapter seven in the first volume of the novel and as happened in the fictional texts of her well-known contemporary, Ann Radcliffe, Roche also interspersed lines of poems in her novels in order to stress some significant events or characters' deeds and emotions, but particularly to infuse the text with a poetical flavour, in accordance with Romantic tastes (Müller 2006: 174). This chapter is a telling instance since it is introduced by excerpts of two celebrated works – *Tamarlane* (1702), by Nicholas Rowe and the *Ossian's Poems* (1765) –, both of them echoing fighting and warfare. The battle of Waterloo took place on 18 June 1815 between the forces of the Seventh Coalition – United Kingdom, Russia, Prussia, Sweden, Austria, the Low Countries, Spain and certain German states – and the French Imperial army, which was defeated in it. Even though Donaghue is in the victorious side, while lying in the battlefield he ponders on the abysm between imagining and living a real battle. After having survived the violence of the battle,

he is about to perish during the subsequent spoliation; however, his loyal servant, Cormick, rescues him and carries him to a mansion, where Donaghue is allowed to stay until he recovers. Thus, no sooner is Donaghue on the Continent, he has to undergo specially harsh and dangerous circumstances, which put him at the death's door. As is known, traumatic events like a war leave a profound mark in human beings, which usually implies a greater union among them against the enemy. However, although the battle of Waterloo represents the destruction of Napoleon's imperial dreams and the institution of Britain as the major European power, it was not felt as a moment of glory by British people, impoverished as they were at that moment (Coley 2005: 321). Donaghue's attitude after the battle adumbrates this lack of enthusiasm when he does not hesitate to try to aid a dying French officer, who is anxiously asking for water (Roche 1824: I, 283), since in desperate moments after the cruelty of a battle like this, in which about 50,000 men were killed, there are neither winners nor losers. Therefore, Donaghue's first encounter with the Continent results in horror and despair, and it almost costs him his life.

The next step in Donaghue's travelogue leads the reader to Paris in chapter eight. The verses of James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1730) at the beginning of the chapter do not augur a pleasant stay in the city. Thanks to an English doctor, Rosebud, he has recovered from his wounds and arrives in Paris. From this moment on, the British travellers' party will be composed of Donoghue, his servant Cormick and Dr Rosebud. The latter will play the role of the jester in the group, similar to Cervantes's Sancho Panza in *Don Quixote*, to whom in fact Rosebud will compare himself considering the Spanish character as his friend (355, 364). Donaghue's mood when he first sets foot in the city is uncertain: "All the horrors that had thrilled him in the reading rose to his imagination at the moment, deadening the sensations he must otherwise have experienced" (305). In light of this appreciation, Donaghue appears as one of the many travellers of the period, who read about the places they were going to visit, in a similar way as we do nowadays by consulting tourist guides. As a consequence he has a previous opinion of France and Spain, which is reassessed during the journey, either to confirm or to refute it.[7] Donaghue, though, is able to surmount his preconceived thoughts and enjoy the wonders of Paris.

As might be expected, what strikes him most is the Parisians' situation in the aftermath of the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars:

> the spirit of party still prevailed everywhere, and jarring interests were the consequence; its turbulence was even carried into the public places, creating continual uproar, not

[7] In fact, García-Romeral has established a list of readings that visitors and travellers examined about Spain before setting out on a journey to the Peninsula (2004).

> merely between the conquered and the conquerors – those who, keenly remembering previous insults, seized the longed –for moment of retaliating for them– but between the Parisians themselves (Roche 1824: I, 306-307).

Consequently, this visit to the French capital city inspires anxiety and melancholy in Donaghue, a state which is aggravated by his acquaintance with a Spaniard, Don Callan, and by his awkward and disturbing behaviour. Don Callan tells the novel's hero – calling him *senor* – that he has been looking for him for a while since he is very much indebted to him because he saved his life in Waterloo. Donaghue is unable to interpret what Don Callan's intentions are. Differences in character between both men might be meaningful in that issue, since Don Callan is very nervous and impetuous, he often cries instead of speaking and he conducts himself in a great disorder (311-312). Don Callan is also described following the archetypical image of the Spaniards in the period (Alberich 2004: 40) as a proud man (Roche 1824: I, 312) who has boiling blood (318).

From the Spaniard's explanation of his present circumstances, Roche appears as a person well informed about Spanish historical events. Don Callan's own portrayal begins with his origins, his family being "descended in a right line from those illustrious Goths who so long resisted the irruption of the barbaric Moors" (314). The allusion to Goths and Moors instils in the reader's mind a first image of Spain which connects this country with two of the most ubiquitous themes of the Romantic literature: Gothicism and Orientalism. Both of them will be taken up again more extensively when the setting of the novel moves to Spain, nonetheless, they unquestionably add an antiquarian and exotic flavour to the text at this moment. As well as being a noble, Don Callan is a wealthy man, whose "coffers frequently supplied the emergencies of government, and powerfully aided in rendering that battle successful, which we fought with our hearts and swords, for the restoration of our rightful king" (314). Thus Roche refers to the circumstances leading to the expulsion of Joseph Bonaparte, crowned as Spanish king by his brother Napoleon in 1808, and the subsequent restoration of Ferdinand VII in December 1813. However, Don Callan is accused of treachery by an enemy who was financially indebted to him and has to precipitately depart from Spain and leave behind all his possessions, referring thus to how easily it might change a citizen's fortune in Spain, in that it depends on a mere accusation. In any case, Ferdinand VII's reign was very unstable with many changes in the government members and dominated intrigues in the court, which favoured this kind of events.

After having left Spain, Don Callan decides to take up arms to make a living and joins the English army: "to the brave and generous English I quickly decided on attaching myself, feeling as if I should find myself less a stranger with them than with others; this not merely from the knowledge acquired of them through their services

in the Peninsula, but also in their own country, whither my trading concerns took me more than once" (315-316). The Spaniard is echoing here a common view about the English among the Spanish people in a moment in which, after the Peninsular War and the subsequent defeat of Napoleon, the ally merits their highest esteem and greatest eulogies (Alberich 2001: 44). However, discrepancies in their character condemn Donaghue and Don Callan not to get on well. Don Callan exhibits a resentful and vengeful personality considering his reaction to the restitution of his properties by the Spanish king; Donaghue, on the contrary, reacts more rationally and thinks that injuries redressed should be forgiven, an opinion consistent with any Christian's belief (Roche 1824: I, 317-318), which Don Callan is unwilling to accept. In spite of Donaghue's apprehensions towards Don Callan, when the latter asks him and his friends to accompany him to Spain, where he can express better his gratitude, Donaghue cannot reject this invitation (342). But instead of feeling excited about visiting a new place, he leaves Paris as he entered it, in a restless mood.

The group of British travellers and Don Callan depart from Paris to Spain.[8] Spain had not been in the standard itinerary of the upper-class British travellers, known as Grand Tour. This tour of Europe which flourished during the eighteenth century usually comprehended the visit to France, Switzerland and Italy, but not to Spain. Curiously enough, in another novel by Roche, *Lost and Won* (1823), this particular journey is referred to when it is mentioned that one of the characters "had travelled –travelled not for gain, or the vulgar purpose of business, but for information and pleasure. He had already seen every thing worthy of remark in the kingdom; been to France and Switzerland, and visited part of Italy– 'And I yet trust,' he said, 'to see the eternal city, and visit the delightful regions of Greece'" (III, 43). As can be observed, Spain was not included in the usual itinerary; yet the Peninsular War and the new romantic sensibility brought Spain into focus becoming a place which deserved a visit and further examination. This is not, however, the first time that Roche set one of her novels in Spain. In fact, her novel *The Houses of Osma and Almeria; or, Convent of St. Ildefonso. A Tale* (1810) is completely located in medieval Spain, during the reign of John I of Castile in the second half of the fourteenth century. Yet the approach to the Spanish setting is completely different in this case, since the Spanish medieval setting offers an exotic and ancient background to the plot, which intermingles real and fictitious events and characters, very much in line with the historical or adventure novel.

[8] García Iborra has calculated that between 28 and 35% of the Gothic novels published between 1764 and 1820 were set geographically in the South (2007: 193), of these, 30% in Spain (208), and the majority of them in the past (209).

4. ABOUT SPAIN

The first vision the reader has of Spain is offered by Don Callan to convince Donaghue: "I have a pleasant castle near Seville, the season is propitious for travelling, and surely it is not speaking too arrogantly of my own country, to say, that a journey to it could not fail of proving highly interesting to enlightened and accomplished minds" (Roche 1824: I, 340-341). Don Callan is clearly trying to persuade the British by means of compliments, but the use of the term 'enlightened' to refer to his guest visitors is rather significant, in that it is connected with reason and logic, traits not present in Don Callan's nature, and the reader can deduce by extension that they are not among the Spaniards either. Using these scattered allusions throughout the text, the opposition between the British and the Spanish people is thus reinforced.

Nevertheless, all the Spaniards are not the same. Thanks to Don Callan's descriptions, the British travellers discover "the traits by which the natives of the different provinces are distinguished" (344). This is a special feature that romantic travellers noticed in the Iberian Peninsula, its regional mosaic (Rodríguez Martínez 2000: n.p.), which was influenced romantic notion that exalts peculiarity, singularity, difference, the small forgotten spot – elements that conform what Herder called *volkgeist*, a people's spirit. Rosebud states his preferences: "The Biscayan[9] and the Andalusian are those who amuse me most […], the former so merry and so frank, and the later equalling in impudence and extravagance to the Gascon" (Roche 1824: I, 344). The novel thus provides a slight nuance of the ethnographic turn, so common at this period in traveller's narratives. Interestingly, these short portraits of some Spanish provinces' typical inhabitants are quite similar to the ones drawn by other travellers, such as the German writer Wilhelm von Humboldt during his visit to Spain. In his opinion Basques' features are fortitude, joviality, vivacity, wit; whereas the Andalusians are exuberant and robust (1925: 66).

Dwelling again in what he recalls of his readings, Donaghue asserts his preferences with respect to Spain and he chooses Granada. His words reveal the impact that Spain and Spanish locations have made in British consciousness and the deep romantic feelings aroused by them, particularly among young romantic readers:

> But of all the provinces, I conceive Grenada [sic] must be the most interesting; how often, as I have been reading descriptions of it, have I sighed to be wondering amidst the courts of the Alhambra, and the gardens of the Generalif [sic] – enjoying the refreshing sight of

[9] The term Biscayan refers to the inhabitants of the Basque Country.

> the limpid waters of one, and inhaling the delicious fragrance of the other! That balmy air, the purity of which is attested complexions of the fair Andalusians (Roche 1824: I, 347-348).

Donaghue's option is quite understandable, since Granada represents the quintessential Spanish landscape for British audience, particularly on account of the orientalism and exoticism of the monuments mentioned hero of the novel: the Alhambra and the Generalife, both of them part of the Islamic legacy of the city (López-Burgos 2000). He also refers to Andalusian women, greatly appreciated by foreign visitors and travellers due to their charm and beauty (Bolufer 2003: 276-290; Krauel Heredia 2004: 155-157). Donaghue's discourse on Granada continues utilizing this city and its present circumstances to express some relevant opinions on Spain's decadence:

> Yet what melancholy must mingle with the pleasure the sight of it could not but afford! To see it so altered, so little realizing those glowing descriptions we have received of what it was in former times, when from its numerous gates it could pour forth an army of upwards thirty thousand men – when all was life and bustle, beauty and magnificence, health and industry; but the triumph over it has been of superstition, and what desolation ever marks its triumph! how merciless does it extirpate all that the poet loves to contemplate – that the heart of feeling delights to dwell on! but the glow of imagination, the pleasure derived from associating ideas, are unknown to it; it knows nothing of that mysterious pleasure, if I may use the expression, which a soul of sentiment experiences in tracing the feelings, the taste, the genius, of an interesting people, in the works which they have left behind them: all plead in vain – the records of departed greatness – the wonderful efforts of man's comprehensive genius – all are destroyed or defaced, to make room for sloth and ignorance, for sensuality and bigotry. Had the Spaniards pursued a different system of policy, and really been influenced by religion, I mean that religion that inclines to peace and goodwill to all, how many of the tracks now given up to waste barrenness would have been regions of beauty and fertility! (Roche 1824: I, 348-349).

Consequently, after reading this passage of *The Tradition of the Castle*, it is clear that in Donghue's opinion the decadence of Spain, represented by Granada in this case – a city which was actually impoverished at the beginning of the nineteenth century (López Burgos 2000: 15) –, is mainly due to religious causes. The choice of Granada is not on the grounds of what the protagonist is actually observing, but the city is a kind of pretext to voice a common view among the British at that time. In the eighteenth century the British who approached the Peninsula were not worried about Spain as a powerful enemy any more, they did not try to demonise the country since they did not need to, Spain was no longer a powerful kingdom. Their interest lay on the causes that lead the Spanish empire to its ruin, a question that concerned the British in order to avoid what Spain had done and sustain their current supremacy (Howarth 2007: 1-28;

Thomson 2006: 25-26). Among the circumstances adduced as the origin of this decay by travellers and writers, the superstition and irrationality of Catholicism are almost always emphasised. Texts like this "inflamed prejudice as it alerted men to the gathering storm" (Howarth 2007: 68), due to the constant debate in Britain on religious issues raised possible consequences of the Catholic emancipation.

Donaghue's assertion is reinforced by Don Callan's support: "Grenada [sic] now forms a melancholy contrast to what it once was" (Roche 1824: I, 350). Besides, the acknowledgment of the ruinous state of Spain by a Spaniard would shock the British audience because Spanish people were considered arrogant and proud. In this episode Rosebud is in charge of the humorous and more down-to-earth counterpoint on religious issues by referring to priests' improper behaviour: "if a fat bit can be got by hook or by crook, they will contrive to obtain it for themselves. What a set of locusts your priests to be sure are, don Callan! and then all their mockeries and mummeries—-" (350). As mentioned before, in the creation of the British nation it was instrumental to have an Other with which contrast and oppose its own identity to strengthen it, and as Linda Coley has put it, "militant Catholicism" (2005: 7) as opposed to Protestantism was a key reference in literature and culture in the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. However, the new poetics of Romanticism shifted the pattern in that it was precisely Spain's decline and ruins which inspired the visitors' and writers' attraction for the Iberian Peninsula. Despite the anti-Catholicism exhibited in Donaghue's discourse, the romantic trace is also there, his words reveal his inner feelings rather than intolerance, just as his emotional distress merges in some way with his description of Granada.

5. IN SPAIN

Without giving any details of the actual route they have taken, our travellers arrive in "the ancient city of Seville" (Roche 1824: I, 356) and the first place they visit is a *tertulia* – well-known Spanish entertainment among British readers in light of the narrator's words in *The Tradition of the Castle*. As happened to other foreign visitors (Bolufer 2003: 274-275), they are pleasantly surprised people and the atmosphere in this joyful and vivid gathering, which is followed by a concert and a ball:

> it highly delighted the strangers from its novelty, and corrected some errors they had been under, particularly with regard to the gravity and jealousy of the Spanish gentlemen, and the reserve of the ladies in public; nothing could surpass the vivacity of the latter, nor the affability of their manners; nor the pleasure which the former appeared to derive from witnessing their good-humour and general condescension (Roche 1824: I, 357-358).

The British travellers' tour around Seville starts on the banks of the Guadalquivir, which again stirs in Donaghue melancholic thoughts about Spain's former power and current decay: "the Guadalquiver [sic] […] no longer gives that life to [Seville] which it did in former times, when the galleons here discharged their rich freightage from Mexico and Peru" (359). The narrator is thus implicitly conveying the message that one of the causes of Spanish decadency lies in the handover of colonial and maritime supremacy in favour of Britain. The city in general is not a bustling one either, but its magnificent buildings cannot but attract their attention (Alberich 2000: 44-47). After strolling in the Alameda, they visit the Alcazar, where they are particularly impressed by its gardens owing to their Moorish origin and their Arabian flavour (Roche 1824: I, 360-361). Similarly attractive to any romantic traveller, the Cathedral of Seville as a Gothic building causes Donaghue and his friends' admiration. Interestingly, it is Christopher Columbus's tomb which incites an extensive discussion among our travellers. Obviously, it is Donaghue's discourse which bears the most telling impressions, particularly for the topic under scrutiny in this study. Quoting a great excerpt of the English translation of a travel book by René de Chateaubriand, *Travels in Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and Barbary, during the Years 1806 and 1807* (1812), he maintains that the tombs and other monuments left behind by any human society are of utility, as long as they "extend the memory of a people beyond its own existence, and make it contemporary with the future generations that fix their residence in their forsaken fields" (1802: 207). If in the case of Chateaubriand, the contemplation of the pyramids erected Egyptian pharaohs drew him to these reflections, and, since the golden era of the Egyptian empire was over long ago, similar conclusions are to be drawn from the sight of Columbus's tomb. The tombstone and its inscription – "To Castile and Arragon [sic] […] Columbus gave a new world" (Roche 1824: I, 362)[10] – operate as a symbolical allusion to a brilliant past that is now over.

The monastery of St. Francis[11] exerts a particular fascination in Donaghue due to a painting about Esther and Ahasuerus, the biblical characters, who might remind

[10] It refers to the tablet that covered the tomb, not of the illustrious seaman, but of his son, since Columbus's remains were in the Cathedral of Havana until 1898. After the lost of Cuba by Spain that year, the remains were placed in the Cathedral of Seville and a new magnificent funerary monument was erected. The text in that tombstone was longer and the motto in particular is a misreading of the words in Columbus's coat of arms, also present in the tablet, which says in Spanish: "A Castilla y a León, mundo nuevo dió Colón" (Curtis 1895: 115).

[11] Actually, this building was not a monastery but a convent: Convento Casa Grande de San Francisco, one of the most impressive religious houses in Seville, which was abandoned after the process of confiscation and then demolished in 1840. Most of its numerous works of art were disseminated or lost for ever. In part of the area formerly occupied by this convent, the city hall of Seville was built (Ferrand 2006).

him of his failed love story with the heroine of the novel, Miss Erin. Donaghue's visits to this monastery unfold a short subplot about a man locked up in its dependencies. By means of this subplot a common Gothic topic is introduced into the novel, the Catholic religious buildings, such as convents, churches, monasteries, abbeys, or chapels, as places of imprisonment. As Edward Peters sustains, in Gothic fiction characters are desurbanised or urbanised (1989: 205). Donaghue evidently has to be aligned in the second group. Although he is not the one imprisoned in the convent, he experiences in person and for the first time what seclusion in a Spanish monastery is (Roche 1824: I, 383). Donaghue is told that an innocent man needs his help to be freed from the monastery and he does not hesitate to do what is necessary to rescue him. The prisoner explains to Donaghue that he is an Englishman who has been unjustly accused and has taken sanctuary in the monastery before being arrested. Once in the monastery, however, he has found that his enemy has "even there prevailed against him, by inducing the superior to decide on giving him up" (384). Once again there is a person who has been irrationally charged with a crime and who finds himself merciless before this accusation. A shadow of mystery involves the man Donaghue releases from the monastery, in that he cannot see his face and that he escapes from the inn where they were lodging before Donaghue uncovers his true identity. The reader suspects that Don Callan might be involved in these strange events, due to Donaghue's apprehensions and suspicions and because he has vanished since the travellers arrived in Seville.

In relation with this event they also meet father Lawrence, who embodies all the negative features predicted by Rosebud about Catholic priests. If the readers thought that he was exaggerating and speaking out of prejudice, now they have the living proof that he was not. Peters provides a much more sophisticated general image of the priests who populate the pages of Gothic fiction (1989: 206), yet father Lawrence only acts out of selfishness. By his physical appearance it is obvious that he is a glutton and almost an alcoholic: "from the colour of his visage it might have been supposed, but for his vow of abstinence, he sometimes mixed wine with his water, and that to its purifying effect were owing to the large carbuncles that were cast out on his nose" (Roche 1824: I, 372-373). In fact, father Lawrence makes short work of the wine he is offered. He is also greedy and eager to accept money, not for charity but for himself.[12]

[12] Some of the works of art of the Spanish painter of the period Francisco de Goya have been connected to Gothic fiction and imagery (Peters 1989: 233-237). In this particular case, it is the portrait of father Lawrence which might remind us of one of the *Caprichos* of Goya, namely number 49, entitled "Duendecillos" (1799). As we all know, Goya's *Caprichos* are a series of drawings by which the painter satirized the Spanish society of his time, especially focusing on the clergy and the nobility. In

In the first chapter of the second volume of the novel the motto introduces the reader in a gloomy atmosphere by means of some verses of Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*, which adumbrate that a dreadful deed will soon take place. Indeed, the climactic moment of insecurity and irrationality of Donaghue's travelogue arrives when he is arrested "by order of the Holy Inquisition" (Roche 1824: II, 3). Accordingly, this section of the novel will be totally infused by Gothic imagery and allusions. In any case, as Peters points out, the Inquisition was "virtually a requisite setting" in this kind of fiction (1989: 212). Donaghue claims that he has done nothing to "provoke its vengeance" (Roche 1824: II, 3), stressing by utilising this expression the corruption and senselessness of this tribunal, since it does not deliver justice but, on the contrary, it acts out of vengeance against its victims. Donaghue's complaints and indignation are of no use and he is dragged to the prison of the Inquisition of Seville. Again the issue mentioned before concerning false accusations is retaken; now it is the protagonist of the novel himself who has been unfairly charged.[13] In any case, British readers were acquainted with this issue thanks to a number of travel writings and Gothic narratives which referred to the immense power of the Inquisition (Peters 1988: 190-217; García Iborra 2007: 157-171; Múñoz Sempere 2008: 127-132), and interestingly, some of them focused on the particular circumstance that even foreigners might fall in the inquisitors' hands (Peters 1988: 190), as happens to the protagonist of this novel. Curiously enough, Donaghue himself will refer afterwards to previous readings on the Inquisition (Roche 1824: II, 21). But what happened in real life was quite the opposite, since at that moment the influence of the Spanish Inquisition had weakened considerably (Múñoz Sempere 2008: 102). When Donaghe is able to think about who might have been responsible

"Duendecillos", the explanation provided by the painter is very significant: "Los curas y frailes son los verdaderos duendecitos de este mundo. La iglesia de mano larga y diente canino, abarca todo cuanto puede. El fraile calzado trisca alegremente y echa sopas en vino, al paso que el descalzo, más brutal y gazmoño, tapa las alforjas con el santo sayal y encubre el vino" (Carrete Parrondo 2007: 359).

[13] In fact, in José María Blanco White's *Letters from Spain*, published two years before *The Tradition of the Castle*, in 1822, the narrator speaks about a related event, provoked by a similar behaviour which he considers a common one among Spanish people: "I have sometimes been in danger of committing myself with a pompous fool that was hazarding propositions in the evening, which was sure to lay, in helpless fear, before the confessor, the next morning; and who, had he met with free and unqualified assent from anyone from the company, would have tried to save his own soul and body by carrying the whole conversation to the Inquisitors" (1822: 60). José María Blanco White was a Spanish writer, who repudiated his religious faith and escaped from his country to England, where he embraced Protestantism and joined the Anglican Church. He stayed in England until his dead considering himself an Englishman (qtd. in Howarth 2007: 63). In his adoptive country Blanco White published in English various texts about Spain and Spanish issues, particularly religion. As a consequence and in David Howarth's words, "No one did more to contribute to this index of prejudice [on Spanish Catholicism] than the extraordinary figure of the Reverend Blanco White (2007: 61). Obviously, his writings have to be interpreted in this light.

for his accusation and arrest, Don Callan is the first person who comes to his mind, given the "unaccountable dislike he has conceived" to him from the very beginning, a kind of warning he had not obeyed (Roche 1824: II, 9).

As expected, the prison is described in a totally stereotyped way as follows: "It was dusk when it stopped at an immense pile of buildings, enclosed within fortified walls of a height that was terrific. The entrance was through a succession of long, black, vaulted gateways, each more dismal than the last, as if to give a hint of that progressive despair that here seized the sinking heart" (7). Some other depictions of the interior of the building in Roche's novel are even quite similar to Anne Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1796), in which the hero is also accused and imprisoned Inquisition, although in this case the novel is set in Italy. As an instance of these telling analogies, a scene can be mentioned, in which both heroes notice a similar place and similar figures in the dungeons of the Inquisition. In the novel by Radcliffe, Vivaldi observes "Inquisitors in their long black robes, issued, from time to time, from the passages, and crossed the hall to other avenues" (1992: 197). Roche's hero, for his part, "found himself advancing into an immense hall, divided into long passages, or aisles, by rough stone arches, and through which, in different directions, several figures, all arrayed in black, were seen" (1824: II, 9). Roche might have had Radcliffe's novel in her mind when writing this and other scenes set in this terrific prison, yet the stereotypical nature of the deployments of places and characters when dealing with this particular topic might give rise to parallelisms like those quoted here. Other texts which also deal with the Spanish Inquisition are perhaps more renowned, such as Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) or William Godwin's *St. Leon* (1799).

As other victims of the Inquisition, Donaghue has to suffer his own particular Dantesque descent into Inferno –to an "infernal pit of torture" (11)– where he can perceive "the most dismal sounds of human suffering" (10) and he finally arrives at the chamber where the accused is examined, which is described displaying the magnificent decoration so familiar to the Gothic fiction reader: "at the top of this was a curtain of black velvet, descending from the lofty ceiling to the floor, and on which an immense cross was worked in silver. Before this sat six inquisitors, in the superb dress of the Holy Office, and at a little distance from them their clerks, or secretaries, to take the answers or depositions of those" (12).[14] Donaghue is not the one to be judged, but his faithful servant, who has tried to protect him against the Inquisition guards, and he can witness the hopelessness of the victim, who can do nothing to defend himself against the accusations, insisting again on the unfairness of this tribunal (19). He cannot but exclaim that "all are fiends alike here" (23).

[14] Similar chamber, characters and decoration can be found again in Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1992: 201).

After having experienced all these pains, Donaghue finds the opportunity of vindicating his own faith, which would not allow him to act like the inquisitors and priests in Spain:

> It appears to me, that treachery has been employed to place me here, to fathom and discover which, there is nothing like truth; and I would not indeed insult the Being I worship, by a fear that adhering to his commands would involve me in still greater peril. Is it not to doubt his care, and justly to forfeit it, to suffer ourselves to forsake the broad road of integrity, for the crooked and winding ones of human subtlety? (27-28).

Donaghue, quite fortuitously, regains his freedom, but not without first being afraid that he was going to be tortured in an infernal chamber (32) and then to be stabbed by a guard of the prison (33). But finally, after these thrilling and sensational scenes, Donaghue finds himself miraculously free on the shores of the Guadalquivir and to his relief, "restored to life" (35). The explanation he receives is not clarifying at all. The person who has led him to freedom is only able to tell him some confusing information about father Lawrence's profound animosity against him. The most surprising part of this discourse refers to the actual order by which he has been released: "your fate would not have been much longer delayed […] had not this very day the Inquisition been again declared abolished Cortez [sic], and an order been received from them for the enlargement of all the prisoners" (36).

The first thing that needs to be discussed concerning this passage refers to dates. As has been mentioned above, Donaghue participated in the battle of Waterloo which took place on 18 June 1815, but the abolition of the Inquisition was a long process (La Parra and Casado 2013). Roche might refer to the abolition of the Holy Office by the Cortes in December 1812, later on promulgated in a decree on 22 February 1813, or to a subsequent abolition which took place in March 1820. Thus, either Roche has made a mistake or she has deliberately connected both episodes –the Battle of Waterloo and the abolition of the Inquisition in Spain– for the sake of her narrative and ideological purposes; the juxtaposition of these two events makes much more clear, even palpable, the characters' sense of anxiety and insecurity in the Continent. Additionally, this reference to the Spanish Cortes would suggest that Roche might read texts written Spanish liberals at that time exiled in Britain, due to Ferdinand VII's absolutist government, or that she shared a parallel liberal and reformist ideology concerning Spain, by means of which this country would finally change and progress.

When the British visitors have at last a conversation with father Lawrence, the confessor is unable to give a convincing explanation. He only reveals the name of a don Proteus: "it was a man calling himself *don Proteus*, but who, I think, must have been the devil himself, to set me on to do what I did" (51). Donaghue, however, is

ever more persuaded that Don Callan was the one who caused his imprisonment, but everything "was an incomprehensible mystery to him, such as he never expected to be able to fathom" (55). The whole episode of the journey on the Continent ends like this, with an unresolved mystery, and in the next paragraph the travellers are already looking at the "white cliffs of Albion again" (55), a fact that would underline the idea that, though very meaningful, this travelogue is a species of digressive section in the novel.

6. CONCLUSION

As mentioned at the very beginning of this article, it is Dr Rosebud who provides the closing remark to their journey:

> for a real feeling of security, old England, after all, is the place! I love travelling; no one more delights in it than I do, or in adventures, that is, when they are all over, to have to talk of; but for a constant residence, give me the place where we neither fear racks on one side, or stilettos on the other'—where the accusation of man against man is bold and open as his own nature (55-56).

Rosebud's statement summarises the impressions of the travellers after their journey. Once they cross the English Channel and set foot on the Continent, they have had to undergo terrible experiences. Among other things, they have been fighting in a bloody battle and they have been persecuted and imprisoned by a dreadful and menacing institution like the Inquisition. Thanks to adequate political and religious decisions and, to a certain extent, to its geographical border – the sea – Britain is out of this terrific scenario, which explains the relief they experience when they see their homeland again. They have been on the verge of succumbing, but rationality has end up imposing itself over madness. The battle of Waterloo is the final step of Napoleon's delirious dream to conquer Europe and the meeting of the Cortes and the new liberal constitution passed in Spain are also those events which finalise with the insane and fanatic rule of the Catholic Church and its executive arm, the Holy Inquisition. Now that everything is over, the British travellers regard all these events from a superior point of view, that of the one who knows better, the civilised, the colonizer. This journey does not imply the idea of an actual colonization of the South of Europe, but at this moment the colonizer's attitude is so internalised British that they cannot help but view things with this assumption.

As already noted, the Southern European scenario also provides the adequate location to displace and negotiate current concerns of British society. Spain is of particular relevance, in that it is "a catalyst of difference and a discursive arena for clashing principles" (Saglia 2000: 64). In the novel Spain is a significant instance of the decline of an empire, particularly in a moment when Britain was extending its

domains and was becoming the largest empire ever. Spain had also been an empire and had lived a golden age, but not anymore. Accordingly, Spain would be the place to turn to in order not to repeat its errors. Our British travellers have suffered these errors, namely, religious intolerance and bigotry. Political absolutism and particularly religious fanaticism are exemplified in that gloomy vision of Spain; however, by means of the usage of popular fiction and popular imagery, such as those provided by travel writing and the Gothic, the message reached a wide audience, particularly female, who, while they were enjoying engaging and even thrilling sensations, were also absorbing relevant ideological admonitions and warnings concerning possible dangers that might threaten their nation.

As Roberto Dainotto has accurately pointed out in his book *Europe (in Theory)*, it is no longer the confrontation with the exotic Other (the Persian, the Muslim, and so on) that interests the British and other northern countries in order to reinforce their own national identity, but a confrontation with a European internal Other in the Mediterranean (51). It is an opposition that has prevailed until nowadays with a clear binary antagonism between the North and the South of Europe, with the former as the leading force and the latter one as the secondary or subaltern area (4).

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