GEO-BIO-POLITICS OF THE GOTHIC: ON THE QUEER/INHUMAN DISLOCATION OF SPANISH/ ENGLISH SUBJECTS AND THEIR OTHERS (FOR A DEFINITION OF MODERNITY AS AN IMPERIALIST GEOBIOPOLITICAL FRACTURE)

Geo-bio-política del gótico: sobre la dislocación queer/ inhumana de los sujetos español/inglés y sus otros (para una definición de la modernidad como fractura geobiopolítica imperialista)

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ABSTRACT: The article contends that the inhumanity mobilized by the Gothic novel is not only biopolitical, as queer theorists of the Gothic novel argue (Halberstam, Haggerty), but also geopolitical: it is not only about individual monsters or horrific characters but also about places and geographies of horror. By focusing on the location of the most important Gothic novels (*The Mysteries of Udolpho, The Monk, Melmoth the Wanderer…*), the article concludes that the southern-European characters and the technology of horror that they generate represent a space of past European imperialist decadence with which the British reader ultimately is made to dis/identify. By doing so, English Gothic novels disavow the imperialist past of southern Europe, and specially imperialist Spain, in order, precisely, to assert England's own present identity as new empire –hence the ultimately uncanny and unrepresentable nature of this horror. Consequently, the Gothic novel announces a biopolitical and geopolitical fracture at the core of modernity –a fracture that is not only inhuman, but also posthuman, since the Gothic already argues for the impossibility of the human by invoking a *geopolitical technology of horror*. This break or crack of modernity, which the Gothic genre maps out not only biopolitically but also geopolitically, must be ultimately read as *an inhuman and situated critique of European imperialism* thus refashioning Stephen Arata's dictum about the vampire novel as a narrative of reversed colonialism.

Palabras clave: Gothic novel, Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Technologies of horror, Europe, Imperialism, Modernity, Posthuman.

RESUMEN: El artículo argumenta que la inhumanidad movilizada por la novela gótica no es solo biopolítica, como lo han defendido teóricos queer de dicho género (Halberstam, Haggerty), sino también geopolítica: no se trata solo de monstruos individuales o de caracteres de horror, sino también de lugares y geografía de horror. Centrándose en la localización de las novelas góticas más importantes (*The Mysteries of Udolpho, The Monk, Melmoth the Wanderer…*), el artículo concluye que los personajes sudeuropeos y la tecnología de horror que los mismos generan representan un espacio de decadencia imperialista pasada con la cual el/la lector/a británico/a se des/identifica. Así, las novelas góticas inglesas ignoran activamente el pasado imperialista de Europa del sur, y especialmente del imperialismo español, para afirmar la identidad presente de Inglaterra como nuevo imperio –de ahí la naturaleza amenazadora e irrepresentable de ese horror–. Consecuentemente, la novela gótica anuncia una fractura biopolítica y geopolítica en el centro de la modernidad –una fractura que no solo es inhumana, sino también posthumana, ya que lo gótico argumenta la imposibilidad de lo humano al invocar una *tecnología geopolítica de horror*–. Esta fractura o rotura de la modernidad, que el género gótico mapea no solo biopolíticamente sino también geopolíticamente, debe ser leída como una crítica inhumana y situada del imperialismo europeo, actualizando así la definición de Stephen Arata sobre la novela de vampiros como una narrativa de colonialismo invertido.

Key words: Novela gótica, Biopolítica, Geopolítica, Tecnologías del horror, Europa, Imperialismo, Modernidad, Posthumano.

NORTH AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND «POSTHUMANIST HUMANISM»

It is interesting to compare contemporary intellectual discourse on modernity and humanism in Europe and the US. Despite the failure of the European constitution in 2005, the bombings of Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, the riots of Paris in 2006, and the ongoing economic crisis (2008-), European intellectual discourse from Habermas to Derrida, from Sloterdijk to Agamben, continues to rely on some unacknowledged exceptionality of European history and modernity. Even in the case of the most radical critic of European modernity, Agamben, his genealogy of the *homo sacer*, which unravels and, at the same time, concludes the crisis of modernity in the Nazi concentration camp, is still fully enclosed in an exceptional if not autistic Europe. Modern developments outside Europe such as slavery or the colonial origins of the concentration camp do not concern Agamben (166) and the European outside only become relevant in globalization. Behind this European exceptionalism, I believe, we can witness the refashioning of a posthumanist «humanism», now disguised under the rhetoric of Foucaultian biopolitics, in which «the European» still stands for «the human».

Similarly in the US, the most elaborate form of biopolitical posthumanism, developed by queer theorists such as Judith Butler and Judith Halbermstam, also relies, surreptitiously, in a new form of North American exceptionalism. Most North American queer theory, even when it is produced by people of color, takes the US as its ultimate political posthumanist horizon. The introduction to the *Social Text* monograph on queer studies by David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam and José E. Muñoz reflects this North American exceptionalism when they limit themselves to advancing a proposal for «epistemological humility» (15) when approaching the rest of the world in non-political terms.

Moreover, postcolonial theory and other forms of geopolitical critique do not seem to reach the core of these theories of European and North American posthumanist biopolitics, even when they propose to provincialize Europe (Chakrabarty) or criticize globalization (Appadurai). Furthermore, both exceptionalisms, North American and European, equate modernity with humanism and, thus, justify themselves retrospectively as posthumanist. Yet, this historical binarism (humanist then, posthumanist now) only works if any other geopolitical subject, most notably the (post)colony –and more generally the outside of European colonialism– is disregarded, since modernity locates the inhuman as taking place elsewhere, in the non-place of the colony and other non-European spaces. Thus, I believe that biopolitics must be combined with geopolitics to denounce these new forms of

first-world exceptionalism and binarist history as well as to rethink both the posthuman and the inhuman as simultaneous –or even to postulate their precedence over humanism and modernity.

In the following, I will attempt a non-binaristic, geo-biopolitical reading of one of the most privileged moments of modernity: the articulation of English nationalism and imperialism, that is, English modernity, in the Gothic novel, through the mobilization precisely of the inhuman. Against queer theories of the Gothic novel, such as Halberstam's or George Haggerty's, I will contend that the inhumanity mobilized by the Gothic novel is not only biopolitical but also geopolitical: it is not only about individual monsters or horrific characters but also about places and locations of horror. My emphasis on the geopolitical is meant to highlight the fact that the Gothic novel, rather than advancing the disciplines and technologies that will found bourgeois humanism in the 19th century, already announces a biopolitical and geopolitical fracture at the core of modernity –a fracture that is not only inhuman, but also posthuman, since the Gothic already argues for the impossibility of the human by invoking a *geopolitical technology of horror*. This break or crack of modernity, which the Gothic genre maps out not only biopolitically but also geopolitically, must be ultimately read as *an post/inhuman and situated critique of European imperialism*.

SOUTHERN FRANCE, ITALY, AND SPAIN AS FOUNDATIONAL LOCATIONS

The biopolitical and geopolitical fracture of European modernity articulated by the Gothic novel as a critique of imperialism can be best analyzed by addressing the issue of location. The original novels of Horace Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto*, 1764) and Ann Radcliffe (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794) are located in Italy (and southern France, in the case of Radcliffe). However, William Beckford's *Vathek: An Arabian Tale* (1786) is situated in the Orient[2]. Therefore, from its inception, the Gothic novel demonstrates a tendency to locate its narratives, not specifically in Italy, but in places that are exterior to England and, from their exteriority, can haunt the latter. They are places that haunt not only English modernity, but also European modernity *tout court* –a modernity that no longer begins with Italy and Spain in the Renaissance, but with England and France in the 18th century, i.e., with the industrial revolution, a second wave of colonialism, and the rise of the bourgeoisie.

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    2.   Originally written in French, under the new French obsession for Orientalism.

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However, the issue of location is best understood when the works of Mathew Lewis and Charles Maturin are examined. If their novels, *The Monk* (1796) and *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) respectively, are a reaction to the work of Radcliffe and choose Spain as the main location of their narratives[3], then we must understand their choice of Spain as a reaction to that of Italy, favored by Radcliffe and Walpole. Moreover, if the critical, exaggerated, and ironic tone of the two latter novels is taken into consideration, then, Spain must be interpreted as a critical, exaggerated, and ironic expansion-revision of Italy.

However, most critics have dismissed the issue of the articulation of these specific locations, Italy and Spain, by resorting to the Catholic histories of both countries, which would explain their exoticism or exteriority (Wein, Smith 25-33, Davison 130-137, 200-205; Kilgour 142-168)[4]. Most accounts fail to explain why this «exotic» location, southern Europe, works specifically as a haunting space –there are other catholic countries in Europe[5]. In short, most critical accounts are not concerned with the geopolitics of Gothic haunting, that is, with the location of the Gothic uncanny. This dismissal or disavowal precisely allows most critics to focus on England, on the English literary tradition, and on the biopolitics of the English bourgeoisie, whereby a queer and inhuman English biopolitics are problematized and studied as such, as English. In short, most (queer) biopolitical studies of the Gothic novel have been nationalist, unbeknownst to themselves.

Already in 1994, Cannon Schmitt, when studying the issue of nationalism in the Gothic novel, noted that «[F]ew devices are more typical of eighteenth- and early- nineteenth century England Gothic novels than their tendency to be set in the distant past of foreign countries. Most attempts to account of this displacement, however, have been unsatisfactory» (862-63). When discussing Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Schmitt further explains, this problem:

3. Maturin uses Ireland as the initial and final location of his narrative, so that Ireland becomes the location from which the main narrative is framed in Spain.

4. The only exception I am aware of is Bryan T. Scoular's dissertation, *Shadows of Spain*.

5. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* begins in southern France, at a time in which even many French writers and philosophers contemplated southern France as non-French (medieval, influenced by Arab and Mediterranean culture, etc.). Most critics cite the French revolution as a reference for the novels, and yet, none of the mentioned novels represent it referentially/directly. In *The Monk*, a mob kills the prioress (306) in ways that could resound with the Terror of the French revolution; yet it is a Spanish mob.

> The place of nationality in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) appears
> obvious: the text promises to reveal the secrets of an alien national identity
> to English readers… The otherwise unmotivated problem of the ways of
> the Italians suggests that the text in its entirety should be taken as emble-
> matic of Italiannes, Catholicism, a mysterious and un-English way of life
> (2013, 853).

Yet, at the end, Schmitt, following Nancy Armstrong's Foucaultian his-
tory of the English novel, ends up explaining the problem of Gothic geopo-
litics as a technology or discipline to enforce English bourgeois domesticity
among women, thus, once again foreclosing the problem of nationality
and location. In short, Schmitt renders the geopolitics of the Gothic novel
internal to the emerging English nation.

Toni Wein in her *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic
Novel, 1764-1824*, makes even a more nationalsit claim when defining the
Gothic novel as part of the nation-building project:

> I call the Gothic novel nationalist discourse because it so aptly fits the
> description offered by Deniz Kandiyoti: it «presents itself as both a modern
> project that melts and transforms traditional attachments in favor of new
> identities and as a reaffirmation of authentic cultural values culled from
> the depths of a presumed communal past» (1994, 378). This restructuring
> of personal and public history takes place on two planes, formal and subs-
> tantive (2002, 4).

However, this nationalist tendency of most criticism must be reconsi-
dered. The technology and discipline of horror developed by the Gothic
genre, that is, its inhumanity, takes place outside England, not simply
because such places are exotic, but, rather the opposite, because these
foreign locations *found* the spatial and narrative structure of the Gothic
novel and thus the English space. In other words, they are *foundational
locations*. If the convent or the castle are so important to the production
of the Gothic technology of horror, these spaces cannot be separated
from the countries in which they are located, France, Italy, and Spain,
since, as I will show in the following, there is a spatial continuity between
building and country, precisely a continuity that enables the geopolitical
foundation and articulation of the Gothic technology of horror as such –as
a geopolitical horror.

DIS/IDENTIFICATIONS OF EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

Already in 1827, Leopold Ranke, the founder of modern historiography, noted in one his foundational works, *Sovereigns and Nations of Southern Europe, in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, something that Gothic literature had already elaborated for over half a century: the historical importance of southern Europe when analyzing European modernity and imperialism. As he claims,

> [T]here was a time when the power, and, in a great measure, the civilization of Europe, seemed to have their chief seat in the South; a time when the Ottoman empire and the Spanish monarchy had grown up, face to face, to an overtopping greatness, dangerous to neighbouring and remote nations, and when no literature in the world could compare with that of Italy (1843, 1).

James Buzzard gives us another important clue to understanding the geopolitical shift pointed by Ranke between southern and northern Europe, precisely the shift in which the Gothic novel is founded. As Buzzard explains in his *The Beaten Track*, Europe undergoes a geopolitical sexualization in the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the century, southern Europe is feminized in a way that serves to legitimize northern Europe as masculine and heterosexual. Referring to Staël's *Corinne*, Buzard explains that, in the case of Italy,

> the Alps often serving as the boundary between masculine North and feminine South. Italy thus charted becomes a woman of incomparable physical charms and mysterious, imperfectly controlled poetic powers: all things Italian, including the indigenous population, exude this quality before the enamoured male spectator from the North (1993, 134)[6].

Obviously, the decline of southern Europe, erotized or libidinalized, is connected to the development of capitalism in protestant countries, as Max Weber had already explained from a sociological perspective. Thus, the choice of Italy and Spain, and more specifically the choice of a historical moment, the Renaissance, in which both reached the peak of their imperialist[7] power, is not simply a matter of otherness or exoticism, but rather a matter of geopolitical history. This history is defined by its European

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6. As in the case of Don Juan, most Gothic novels also libidinalize southern Europe through a figure of sadistic masculinity.

7. Italy's predominance in the Renaissance is imperialist but not colonial (Arrighi).

frame and, at the same time, creates a mirroring game, by which southern Europe is contemplated as the location of past imperialist powers that were feared in the past but now have become a decadent, erotized space. In short, the Gothic novel establishes *the mirror stage of English imperialism*, thus, reflecting on the mirror of decadent Spain and Italy, the self of a new England that is about to expand across the globe as the most important European imperialist power, i.e., as the new empire that will be as feared as its southern European predecessors were in the past[8]. As a result, Gothic novels are also at the forefront, with the discourse of the Spanish Black Legend, of what becomes a historical reorganization: modernity no longer begins in the Renaissance with Spanish, Portuguese and Italian imperialism, but rather with British and French imperialism in the 18th century. Hence, southern Europe becomes a non-modern, non-European place of haunting.

As Judith Butler clarifies, reflecting on Lacan's article on the mirror stage, «[T]he Lacanian position suggests not only that identifications precede the ego, but that the identificatory relation to the image establishes the ego. Moreover, the ego established through this identificatory relation is itself a relation, indeed, the cumulative history of such relations» (74). Thus, the negative political mirroring between England and southern Europe established by the Gothic novel, works as a form of haunting identification (identification and disidentification) for the formation of a national self or ego. The Gothic genre creates an accumulative process of (dis)identifications by which a country such as England (dis)identifies with its reflection on the imperialist mirror of decadent Italy and Spain. This is the imaginary nature of political (dis)identification and subjectivation organized by the Gothic novel. Therefore the horror that the different southern-European characters suffer in the Gothic novels must be understood as a result of a locational technology that begins with the dungeons and the convents but ends with imperialist Spain and Italy as ultimate spaces of horror –*imperialist horror*. The southern-European characters and the technology of horror that they generate, represent a space of European imperialist decadence and historical past with which the British reader identifies but ultimately wants to disidentify.

In the case of Radcliffe's novels and her French and Italian protagonists, the identification persists till the end. Thus there is no final disidentification. The reason for Spanish characters in Spain in the case of *The Monk* and *Melmoth* has to do with the fact that the identification with the Spanish

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character(s) and their spatial and geopolitical technology of horror is disavowed at the end and thus disidentification takes place[9]. In *The Monk*, the abbot Ambrosio strikes a deal with Lucifer and dies as a result. In the case of *Melmoth*, the identificational structure is made more complex by the presence of the Irish protagonist who travels to Spain and, as a result, also dies damned; yet, there is also a final disidentification –as Alonzo Monçada and John Melmoth become secondary.

Thus, when the gothic novels are situated in Spain identification works in a more powerful and haunting way because there is a simultaneous and final disidentification. As Zizek has explained, it is this final moment of disidentification (rather than identification) that ensures the success of identification (1984, 43-44). The interpellation exerted by the Gothic novel on the reader is fully successful and the symbolic order of European imperialism fully is enforced when the novel is situated in Spain.

Yet, Spain and Italy, unlike any colony, remain within the boundaries of Europe and, therefore, are part of European history. Thus, the libidinal and imperialist reflection that England seeks in Spain and Italy in the Gothic genre is regulated by a European symbolic order of imperialism. It is about refashioning England not simply as an imperialist power, but about rethinking England as the new European subject of imperialism and history. Yet, in the case of Spanish locations, and unlike in the Italians, there is final disavowal. In short, English Gothic novels disavow the European imperialist past of southern Europe in its most powerful way when located in Spain, as they fully assert England's own present identity as the new empire –hence the ultimately uncanny and unrepresentable nature of this Spanish horror.

Therefore, the horror that requires identifying with imperialism –as signified by Italy– and, at the same time, disidentifying with its past decadence –as signified by Spain– is ultimately European, and not simply English. Yet, if the space of identification and simultaneous disidentification is European imperialism and not simply British, Italian, or Spanish imperialism, then the technology of horror articulated by the Gothic novel is not simply English but also historically European. Even Eagleton falls prey to nationalism when he dismisses the geopolitical component of Maturin's Gothic novel and concludes: «It is clear, anyway, that whatever its stage properties of water torture and sadistic Spanish abbots, the novel's true subject is

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9. As Carol Margaret Davison has noted: «More specifically, and in contradistinction to Ann Radcliffe's concern with the stability of her heroine's identity, Lewis seems to revel in the disintegration of his hero's identity» (2009, 131).

Ireland» (1995, 190). In other words, the horror, the inhuman component that is necessary to define British imperialism and its subject is not English or national, for that matter, but rather European. The inhuman component of the English Gothic novel is *constitutively* Spanish and Italian and cannot be dismissed as simply exotic, as most studies have done so far, so that they can reframe the Gothic novel as nationally English. The inhumanity of the Gothic novel derives from the fact that it renders the nationalist project of Englishness and British imperialism impossible. The Gothic genre represents modernity as an impossible project of imperialism, as a fractured historical subject, as ruptured imperialism.

GEOPOLITICS OF THE QUEER AND THE INHUMAN

In this context, one can read more clearly the queer element of the Gothic novel. If we take *The Monk*, for example, the novel cannot be studied as a narrative about certain characters and places, which happen to be accidentally Spanish. As Thomas Elsaesser has already claimed for melodrama in general, which would also include the Gothic genre, such discourse is highly individualistic but not psychological (1976, 185). In short, there is a continuity between character and space, between the bio and the geo. The clearest example is Ambrosio, the abbot of the most famous monastery in Madrid. Midway through the novel, the reader finds out that the abbot becomes infatuated with another monk. The moment this infatuation runs the risk of becoming clearly homoerotic, the narrator informs the reader that the other monk, Rosario, is a woman in disguise: Matilda. Yet, this play on homo- and hetero-sexuality, as well as on its instability, is produced by a religious space regulated by same-gender regulations: the monastery, a space that forbids sexuality but generates repressed homoeroticism. Therefore the characters and the convent cannot be separated; rather, they become part of a spatial continuum that begins with the characters' selves and ends with the rooms of the convent. Because the characters are not endowed with an individual psychology, as in the later realist novel, they become vessels for libidinal tensions and releases, which are ultimately generated by repressed homosociality:

> The bust of transport was passed. Ambrosio's lust was satisfied. Pleasure fled, and Shame usurped her seat in his bosom. Confused and terrified at his weakness, he drew himself from Matilda's arms: his perjury presented itself before him: he reflected on the scene which had just been acted, and trembled at the consequences of a discovery: he looked forward with horror: his heart was despondent, and became the abode of satiety and disgust: he

avoided the eyes of his partner in frailty. A melancholy silence prevailed, during which both seemed busied with disagreeable reflections (Lewis 1998, 193).

This repressed homosociality and its technology of horror, however, is always regulated by the practices of the convent as institution. When the matins bell rings, the horror stops: «The friar returned the embrace, which had set his blood on fire. The luxurious and unbounded excesses of the former night were renewed, and they separated not till the bell rang for matins» (Lewis 1998, 202). Later on, this technology is redefined again as «religion's barriers»:

> For a tie spare diet, frequent watching, and severe penance cooled and repressed the natural warmth of his constitution: but no sooner did opportunity present itself, no sooner did he catch a glimpse of joys to which he was still a stranger, than *religion's barriers* were too feeble to resist the overwhelming torrent of his desires. All impediments yielded before the force of his temperament, warm, sanguine, and voluptuous in the excess. As yet his other passions lay dormant; but they only needed to be once awakened, to display themselves with violence as great and irresistible (Lewis 1998, 205-206).

Yet, the monastery and religion are not the end of the spatial technology of the Gothic novel. The novel does not elaborate a realistic geography of Spain. Rather, Spain simply becomes the synecdoche of the monastery. More specifically, a monastery and a near convent, for monks and nuns respectively, become the main spaces in which the entire novel takes place (with the exception of the story about the German castle). Only Antonia's house is mentioned, and this one, as an exceptional space, since the abbot never leaves the convent.

The other two main spaces cited in the novel are several churches, the Inquisition's dungeons, and the street outside the convent, where the mob kills the prioress of the nuns' convent. Thus, the novel establishes a fluid spatial technology that begins with the character's self but ends with Spain as ultimate territory and limit. Ambrosio is presented not simply as the abbot of the convent, but also as the moral model (soon to be corrupted) of Madrid and Spain (56).

Similarly it is not a coincidence if the other canonical novel of Gothic genre, Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, begins with Monçada's attempt to leave the convent. This character states that Madrid is a big convent, which later he expands to encompass the entire Spanish country. Monçada relates to Melmoth in this way his experience in a convent and the dialogue he has with a monk:

> This house [convent] was the first in Madrid, and the singular circumstan-
> ces of the son of one of the highest families in Spain [Monçada] having
> entered it in early youth, –having protested against his vows in a few
> months–, the hope of a scene of exorcism, –the doubt of the success of my
> appeal, –the probable interference of the Inquisition–, the possible festival
> of an auto da fe, –had set *the imagination of all Madrid on fire*; and never
> did an audience long more for the drawing up of the curtain at a popular
> opera, than the religious and irreligious of Madrid did for the development
> of the scene which was acting at the convent of the Ex-Jesuits. «In Catholic
> countries, Sir, religion is the *national drama*; the priests are the principal
> performers, the populace the audience; and whether the piece concludes
> with a "Don Giovanni" plunging in flames, or the beatification of a saint,
> the applause and the enjoyment is the same» (Maturin 1998, 164-165, my
> emphasis).

Yet, the author's choice of a convent in Spain in order to center the na-
rrative is not arbitrary, since Britain, at this point, is establishing the bases of a
bourgeois society where the main spatial divide –public and private spheres
(Habermas)– is geared towards securing domesticity as the basis of hetero-
normativity. In short, one of the main thrusts of the new English imperialist
identity is precisely towards denying its homosocial nature by projecting it
into Spain and, consequently, legitimizing heteronormativity in Britain. Yet,
as Judith Butler has proven, following Gayle Rubin, the prohibition of homo-
sexuality establishes the priority of homosexuality over heterosexuality. In
the same way, the legitimation of a heteronormative social space in England
requires that the Gothic novel denies its homosocial foundation and displa-
ces it to Spain. Yet, this geopolitical disavowal is foundational and necessary
to the production of the technologies of horror upon which the bourgeois
social space is constructed in the 19th century in Britain.

Although it would take more space to develop a full analysis of Maturin's
Melmoth, an initial examination proves that, since the writer was Irish (and
more specifically part of the Protestant Anglo-Irish society whose political
unconscious, as Terry Eagleton has pointed out, would be «the Protestant
Gothic», 1995, 187), the imperialist space of the novel expands to include
the colony for the first time –while also orientalizing Spain[10]. Important
references are made to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies as well as to
Ireland in order to hold on to the mirroring effect that the Gothic novel

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10.   The novel orientalizes Madrid by recreating a Moorish architecture that is ana-
chronistic as Madrid was founded after the expulsion of muslims: «The magnificient remains
of two dynasties that had passed away, the ruins of Roman palaces, and of Moorish fortres-
ses, were around and above him» (28).

seeks. Furthermore, if Lewis' *The Monk* is predicated on the risks of homosociality and homosexuality, Maturin's *Melmoth* is founded on the risks of homo-imperialism, through allegories of religious marriages between Catholics and Protestants. Here too, when people of different religions are about to marry, the author intervenes in order to re-establish religious order and, thus, displace religious homosociality to the Spanish field.

Therefore, it is important that Gothic novels are also read as imperialist narratives in order to rescue their inhuman character, that is, their anti-humanist, anti-individual, and anti-bourgeois ideology, so that they are not inscribed in a new humanist tradition by which the monster becomes an exceptional individual that is annihilated at the end. The inhumanity of the Gothic novel is not only biopolitical but also geopolitical. It is not simply English but also European (Spanish, Italian…). Thus, monstrosity in the Gothic novel, its inhumanity, is not only individual or exceptional; it is also political, historical, and encompasses the entire formation of European imperialism. In short, the monster is also Spain and Italy –and ultimately accounts for the history of modern European imperialism. The shortest definition of the Gothic novel would describe it as *a critique of European imperialism*, thus refashioning Stephen Arata's dictum about the vampire novel as a narrative of reversed colonialism.

Judith Halbermstam claims that the Gothic novel's monstrosity is precisely humanist in so far as it is individual. As she states: «[M]onsters, as I have been arguing throughout this study, confirm that evil resides only in specific bodies and particular psyches. Monstrosity as the bodily manifestation of evil makes into a local effect, not generalizable across a society or culture» (1995, 162). Halbermstam goes on to historicize the inhuman and the posthuman as conditions of postmodernism:

> The postmodern monster is no longer the hideous other storming the gates of the human citadel, he has already disrupted the careful geography of human self and demon other and he makes the peripheral and the marginal part of the center. Monsters within postmodernism are already inside –the house, the body, the head, the skin, the nation– and they work their way out. Accordingly, it is the human, the façade of the normal that tends to become the place of terror within postmodern gothic (1995, 162).

Yet, the inhuman and posthuman must be already established in the Gothic novel from its inception. The human/posthuman historical paradigm ultimately enforces a geopolitical unconscious in which Europe, and more specifically northern Europe (England, Germany and France) are the center of modernity. Thus, modernity can be best defined by the fracture between old and new European imperialisms and, if later Gothic novels

are considered, by the fracture between Europe and its colonies. If this is so, then we can conclude that the horror technology of the Gothic novel is also a critique of imperialism and modernity. It is not an enlightened critique, but rather the uncanny revelation of the horror of imperialism's historicity: England is bound to become Spain or Italy, to disintegrate in the horrors of imperialist decadence and fanaticism. Whether this is also a critique of European modernity and imperialism *tout court*, begs for a longer analysis.

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