

The Member of ‘Quality’ and the ‘Other’: Colonial Fallacy and Othering in James G. Farrell’s *Troubles*

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ABSTRACT

The present article examines the longstanding strife between the Irish Catholics and Anglo-Irish Protestants through James Gordon Farrell’s historical novel, *Troubles* (1970). By focusing on the character of Edward; a representative of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in the novel, this study argues that the representation of the native Irish Catholics suffers from “othering”. The study relies on the concepts formulated and explicated by postcolonial critics like Fanon, Said and Spivak in their critical works as its theoretical premise. The article first traces the epistemological creation of the native Catholic Irish as the “other” by the British and secondly; it investigates its role in grooming Edward’s ideology of othering the natives. Further, the paper argues that Edward’s position regarding the “other” is not sudden; instead, it is an outcome of the long tradition of the British colonial fallacy about the native Gaelic-Irish.

Keywords: Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, Catholics, Ireland, J. G. Farrell, othering, Protestants

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INTRODUCTION

The history of colonization of Ireland can be traced back to the middle of the twelfth century when Henry II invaded County Wexford. This first attempt of colonization was later followed by the expansionist motives of several monarchs, that resulted in the complete subjection of Ireland under the English Crown. The introduction of the settlers, serving British interest, on the

Irish land is very crucial in Irish history as the plantation policy and the subsequent replacement of the Irish landlords by the settlers, resulted in the shift of power from the insiders (natives) to outsiders (settlers). The settlers generally comprised the aristocrats and the army officers, primarily Presbyterians and Protestants from Scotland and England respectively. Resultantly, over time, a new class, the Protestant Ascendancy, emerged in Ireland out of the social, political, economic oppression, discrimination and colonial subjugation of the native Irish population, which was dominantly Catholic. This new Protestant ruling class was critical of the faith and practices of the Catholics, which resulted in a clash between the two sects, a conflict of ideologies which continues till date. This tension between the two may appear obvious and ordinary due to the difference in religious beliefs and practices, but when analyzed critically and intimately, this clash appears to have emerged, gained momentum and, and persists because of the colonial practises by the British settlers, during the initial phases of Irish colonization.

Edward Said, in his path-breaking work, *Orientalism* (1978), talked about the epistemological creation of the “Orient” by the West. He sees colonialism in the East, as a military-political project that has been backed up by the ideas, knowledge and opinion, the West (Europeans) has created, documented, and disseminated about the “Orient”. Said, saw “Western scholarship on the Orient (a term that encompassed the Middle East in particular and Asia in general) as disparaging and demeaning,

treating non-Western peoples as childlike and uncivilized, belonging to backward cultures that were in need of enlightenment — from the West” (Lary, 2006, p. 3). The Europeans, Said, was referring to were the British and the French, the two great imperial powers and colonizers across the world till the twentieth century. Elucidating the binary relationship between Europe and Orient, Said (1978/2003) wrote,

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. (Said, 1978/2003, p. 2)

“The idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 1978/2003, p. 8), helped the Europeans to construct the Orient as primitive, savage, pagan, uncultured, uncivilized and exotic in their episteme. They made it a basis, and justification, for their presence and colonization of the East. What Said had pronounced was the binary opposition of the West and the East, concerning the European colonization process in the Orient countries. He, however, does not recognize the colonization of Ireland by England, both part of the West. In fact, what the British did later in the East they had already done in Ireland long before. According to Colley (1992), “Ireland was in many respects the laboratory of the British empire” (p. 327) where they tested their preliminary colonial exercises.

Scott Cook also voices a similar opinion, "Much of the legal and land reform that the British sought to implement in India, for example, was based on experiments first implemented in Ireland" (qtd. in Colley, 1992, p. 327).

Similarly, the British established their epistemological domination over Ireland long before they did so in the East. What Said, observes about the Orient is also applicable in the context of Ireland. The British settlers projected the life, manners and practices of the Irish people in a negative light, apparently to disparage them, in their literature in an attempt to reinforce their cultural, ideological and literary supremacy over them. This epistemological domination by them has played a key role in forming the sensibility of the English protestants and Anglo-Irish protestants of the later generation.

The social tension emerging out of the interaction between the two communities, Catholics and Protestants, in Ireland is visible in James Gordon Farrell's historical novel, *Troubles* (1970), as it voices out the settler-native experiences in Ireland during the early twentieth century. Farrell showed the perennial tension between the native Catholic Irish and the settler Protestants in the novel through characters like Edward Spencer, an Anglo-Irish Protestant, and Sarah and Murphy, both native Catholic Irish. The present article traces the epistemological creation of the native Catholic Irish as the "other". By focusing on Edward as a typical colonial-settler persona, it is being argued how religion has been used as a form of "othering". It is further concluded that Edward's prejudice against the natives is not sudden; instead, it is an outcome of the British epistemic tradition,

which has always projected the Irish as the inferior other.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The paper critically examines *Troubles*, the first novel of Farrell's Empire trilogy, which exposes the prejudiced attitude of the Anglo Irish Protestants towards the native Catholic Irish by engaging them into a series of historical events. A critical reading of the novel reveals that the native Catholics suffer "othering", an ideological discrimination by the Anglo-Irish Protestants, because of their different religious practices. "Othering" is the outcome of a "discursive process by which a dominant in-group (in this case the Anglo-Irish Protestants) constructs one or many dominated out-groups (in this case the Gaelic Catholics) by stigmatizing a difference – real or imagined – presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination" (Staszak, 2008, p. 2). The present paper explores the ideological othering of the native Irish, in the novel, by using the avant-garde postcolonial critical formulations such as Frantz Fanon's concept of "the other", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's idea of "othering", Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism" and Louis Althusser's (1971/2001) notions of "interpellation", "Ideology", and "Ideological State Apparatuses". Besides, literature since the sixteenth century has also been adverted to develop the idea of "episteme", which plays a very vital role in the propagation of "othering".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tracing the Episteme

The first colonizing project of Britain starts with its neighbouring country, Ireland. In fact, "Ireland has often been described as both the first and the last colony of the British Empire" (Kenny, 2004, p. 1). The British Empire had always exercised its authority and dominance on a foreign land by tactics. One of that was to slander the natives in the name of religion. First, they besmirch their religious faiths and practices as unscientific and pagan. Then they denigrate them as uncivilized, creating a space for themselves to rule them, in the name of civilizing them. They did the same in Ireland to colonize them. But the case in Ireland was quite different and complicated compared to the Orient because Ireland was a "colony whose subject population was both 'native' and 'white' at the same time" (Gibbons, 1991, p. 95). The Irish were Catholics, following at least one form of Christianity, as opposed to the Orient nations where people had altogether different faiths. So the binary (in this case) in which a western country (England) was looking at another western country (Ireland) was that of right/wrong path of Christianity.

Reformation in England had ended the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church and changed the perspectives of people regarding its practices in the sixteenth century. The publication of *Ninety-five Theses* in 1517, by Martin Luther in Germany, played an important role in the inception of Protestant faith across the world. The Act of Supremacy in 1534 and

The Act of Uniformity in 1558 further helped in the extensive spread of Protestantism in England from the sixteenth century onwards. Accordingly, people of England found Protestantism as an alternative to the Roman Catholic faith. Although the struggle between the two beliefs, for monopoly and dominance, continued; the disposition of James II in 1688 and the failure of Catholics in the Glorious Revolution jeopardized any chance of reestablishment of Catholic power in England forever. The Catholics in England were proscribed from many social and political opportunities, and Protestantism was propagated as the best form of Christianity. Later, it became a touchstone for the English to determine the civility of people of other faith when they embarked on their colonizing mission.

In Ireland, where the population was dominantly Catholic, this segmentation in Christianity became a crucial factor in determining the civility of the native Irish. The settlers hated the Irish Catholics and their doctrines. According to Garry Waller (1994), "Catholic doctrine was viewed as intellectually corrupt, its practices worldly, its clergy lazy, ignorant and venal" (p. 54) by the settlers as opposed to their Protestant doctrine. Edmund Curtis (1942) notes that the settlers at first "burned Irish abbeys; destroyed sacred relics; and attempted to root out the papacy by every possible means" (qtd. in Hechter, 1972, p. 184). Later on, Papal Laws were enforced on the Catholics to control them. However, J. C. Beckett (1966) is of the view that the laws were "not to destroy Roman Catholicism but to make sure that its adherents were left in a position of social, economic, and political inferiority" (qtd. in Hechter, 1972, p. 184).

Nicholas P. Canny in his article "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America" (1973) had traced the anti-Catholic Irish literature of the sixteenth century by its early settlers like Henry Sidney, Carew and other Protestants. They had branded the Catholic population of Ireland as "pagan" due to the variance in their religious practices with the Roman liturgical system. Canny had referred to texts like "On the Disorders of the Irishry" (1572), by an unknown Palesman, "Notes on Ireland" (1571), by Tremayne, *A Short Survey of Ireland* (1609), by Barnaby Rich, *De Republica Anglorum* (1685) by Thomas Smith and many other written records by Sir Henry Sidney, Charles Blount, Sir George Carew, Sir Peter Carew and Sir John Davies to establish his claims. These narratives represent the Irish as anti-God, blasphemous, wicked, unclean, nomads, savage, brutish, uncivil and barbarous. Years before these settlers' documentation of the manner and life of the Irish, Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Topographia Hibernica (The Topography of Ireland)* had already presented a similar picture of the native Irish. For him, the Irish are far from civilized nations and "they learn nothing, and practice nothing but the barbarism in which they are born and bred, and which sticks to them like second nature" (Cambrensis, 1913/2000, p. 70). It is quite possible that the settlers of Renaissance might have read this treatise in Latin and may have tailored their prejudices against the Catholic Irish.

Famous renaissance poet, Edmund Spenser (1596/1934), in his work *A View of the Present State of Irelande* noted about the Irish, "They are all Papists by their profession, but in the same so blindly and brutishly informed for

the most part as that you would rather think them atheists or infidels" (qtd. in Canny, 1973, p. 585). His treatise outlines the "abuses and cultural inferiority of the Irish, necessitating their transformation into reasonable subjects" (Hadfield, 1994, p. 2). G. W. Kitchin had argued that his epic-poem "The Fairie Queen" (1596) is a "manifesto to shew the right of England over Ireland in the days of Queen Elizabeth and to justify her severe measures, in which Spenser had necessarily taken some part" (qtd. in Fitzpatrick, 2000, p. 61).

These documents where the Catholic Irish are shown as brutish, uncivilized and subhuman, form convincing evidence of the propagandist iconography of the British. One apparent reason for the Protestants' hatred of Catholics in Ireland seems to be the belief that priests drive the Catholics. The priests during that time were treated as agents of enemies of Great Britain, i.e. the Spanish and the French, which were Catholic countries. It is believed that these priests were in touch with foreign enemies and were trying to establish themselves in Britain and reclaim the church. The allegations of the connection of the Catholics with the adversaries caused the Protestants to brand them as traitors and enemies. Resultantly, a large number of Catholic priests were executed in Ireland.

Besides religion, "manner" turns to be another key factor in the "othering" and determining the civility of the native Irish. Ireland has been an agrarian country with a majority of rural population. For the English, who had traversed Renaissance, and drunk "life to the lees" (Tennyson, 1911, p. 6), the rusticity and the provinciality of Ireland was contemptuous. They were able to pursue their

argument further when they witnessed the appearance of the native Irish, their habits, customs, and agricultural methods (Canny, 1973, p. 586). The British settlers projected themselves as racially superior and religiously correct while the “Irish were frequently cast as racially inferior” (Kenny, 2004, p. 2) and religiously on the wrong path.

Despite the integration of Ireland and Britain under one Crown through the Act of Union in 1800, the vile biasness of the British towards the Irish continued, as is evident from the following quote by nineteenth-century historian and novelist, Charles Kingsley:

I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country. I don't believe they are our fault. I believe that they are happier, better, more comfortably fed and lodged under our rule than they ever were. But to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black, one would not feel it so much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours. (Kingsley, 1877, p. 308)

According to John Coakley (2004), “the English effort to create a unified sociopolitical community by Act of Union was rather unsuccessful” (p. 3) as the British failed to assimilate with the Irish. He said, “the most demanding question, then, relates not to the failure of the Irish to become British but rather to the failure of the English to adopt the peoples of the United Kingdom as their “imagined community” and to create a shared nation with them” (Coakley, 2004, pp. 3-4). Said (1978/2003), in his book, *Orientalism*, said, “The relationship between Occident and Orient

is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (p. 6). This argument regarding the Occident and Orient relationship is also valid with regard to British and Irish as we can see that a network of power and hegemony has been fabricated by the British through literary representation.

The fallacious episteme created by the people like Cambrensis, Henry Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Charles Kingsley, among others has played a significant role in framing the sensibility of the protestants of later generation. The continuing power of the notion that Catholics were the hereditary enemy needs to be stressed because it is sometimes supposed that it receded after 1700 in the face of growing rationalism and literacy (Colley, 1992, p. 318) but unfortunately it did not. The British never assimilated with the Catholic Irish, and that the Irish are uncivilized, barbaric and pagan, became the tenet of the protestant English. Linda Colley (1992) noted, “Catholics as a category remained in popular mythology an omnipresent menace” (p. 317) and the Anglo-Irish protestants still perceive, if not believe wholly, the Catholics, as “other”, “different” and “inferior” in comparison to them. This phenomenon of conflicting variance brings tension between the two communities in Ireland, and it continues to the present day.

Edward Spencer: An Upshot of the Fallacious Episteme

Religion qualifies as the foremost factor, among others, that is responsible for the longstanding unrest in Ireland, which has erupted time and again. Irish Civil War (1919-21), which is also the setting of *Troubles*, is the most crucial attempt in

this regard. The Catholic community in the early twentieth century, overwhelmed with great nationalistic fervour, demanded autonomy and independence for Ireland from the British control. However, the ruling Protestants did not agree with Catholics regarding the freedom of Ireland. Farrell mentions the tension in *Troubles* at great length where on the one hand the native Catholic characters show their solidarity with the contemporary political situation; by engaging themselves in activities against the Crown, while on the other hand, Edward Spencer, a protestant, considers this as an act of treachery and betrayal to the Majesty and Britain and is in strong opposition to the Catholics.

Frantz Fanon instancing the "other" in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, says that the governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, "the others" (Fanon, 1961/1963, p. 40). Farrell presents the long-existing dichotomy between the members of "quality" and the "other" in the novel. Edward Spencer, who is an Anglo-Irish Protestant, sees the native Irish Catholics as the "other" and himself as the member of "quality". He is Farrell's "chief representative of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and British Imperial attitudes" (McLeod, 2007, p. 44). He sees the Catholics from a vantage point and is very much critical of them, their manners and behaviours. When he is introduced to the readers for the first time, he is described as having a "craggy face with its accurately clipped moustache and broken nose" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 20). The "broken nose", which is a key identifier of his personality bears a

connection with his anti-Catholic and anti-native traits. Farrell focuses on his broken nose while describing his personality:

The broken nose, for example, was the result of having boxed for Trinity in a bout against the notorious Kelvin Clinch, a Roman Catholic and a Gaelic speaker whose merciless fists had been a byword in those days. The savage Clinch, mouthing incomprehensible oaths through his bleeding lips, had got as good as he gave, until he had finally succeeded in flattening "Father" (Edward) with a lucky punch. Time and again the elder Spencer had been battered to the canvas, time and again he had risen to demonstrate English pluck and tenacity against the superior might of his Celtic adversary. (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 20)

The "broken nose" of Edward is a trope used by Farrell to acquaint the readers about the latter's anti-Catholic nature, the aspect which hinges throughout the novel. In fact, Edward's identity which is established by the description of his physical appearance, in the early pages of the novel works as an appetizer for the readers who are going to encounter Edward's aversion to the native Catholic Irish in details, further in the novel.

Edward is a staunch Protestant with least sympathy towards the Catholics. He is a man of principles and cannot violate it, even for his son. He shudders at the thought of his son's marriage with Maire, when her father, Mr Noonan, comes to meet him to talk about the wedding. He is against their relationship because Maire is a Catholic. He believes that the difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is like

an unbridgeable chasm, for he hates Catholic manners and practices. Farrell depicts his inner conflict in the following words:

Edward's thought turned to the main and unbridgeable chasm, the Roman Catholicism of the Noonan's: the unhealthy smell of incense, the stupefying and bizarre dogmatic percepts, the enormous family generated by ignorance . . . he absurd, squadron of saints buzzing overhead like chaps in the Flying corpse supposedly ever ready to lend a hand to the blokes on the ground, the Pope with all his unhealthy finery, the services in a gibberish of Latin that no one understood, least of all the ignorant, narrow-minded and hypocritical priests. (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 121)

Edward's thought about Catholicism in the above quote has a similar tone to that of the Palesman, Tremayne and Sidney, the early settlers, who had regarded Catholicism as vile and the priests as papists in their treatises.

Later in the novel, Ripon runs off with Maire; marries her and lives in some other place reluctant to come back to his father. When Major inquires about Ripon's homecoming, Edward shows a willingness to accept him but with conditions. He can forgive him once, going against his wishes, for soiling his name and reputation by marrying a Catholic, the "other", but he cannot accept his grandchildren to be brought up in Catholic way. He says, "I don't want grandchildren of mine to be brought up believing all that unhealthy nonsense they teach them" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 159). This aversion to Catholic faith and manner in Edward is not simply because of the difference in religious

beliefs and practices, rather it is the result of his "delusive superiority", a sense that he has inherited from his colonial predecessors. The narrative that had been set by them seems to form his sensibility because of which he is not ready to assimilate with the native Catholics. Farrell writes, "such thoughts do not actually have to occur by a process of thinking; they run in the blood of the Protestant Irish" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 121).

Edward's sense of religious superiority does not allow him to recognize the Catholics as equal. He believes that there is an "impossibility of making progress in a country ridden with priests, superstitions and laziness" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 68). The Catholic faith of the natives is at the centre of his criticism when he is making such a disparaging remark. His attitude towards the natives is similar to that of the earlier colonial-settlers/masters who considered their subjects as inferior, uncivil, and savage. His perception is the result of the perennial stigmatizing of the Irish as barbaric, by Sir John Davies and others, to justify the imperial initiatives of the Crown. It is also an observable point that Edward Spencer's name is similar to the poet, and secretary to the Governor of Ireland, Edmund Spenser, who, as discussed earlier, had presented a bigoted view of the Irish in his treatise *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. There are marked similarities between the opinion of the two on the Irish people. In this regard, John McLeod (2007) noted, "By aligning the fictional Edward Spencer with an Elizabethan personage, Farrell subtly links events in 1919-1921 with a much longer history of Anglo-Irish conflict that dates back at least to Elizabethan period" (p. 44). Such significant

linkages consolidate an implicit relationship between Edward's attitude and his colonial predecessors. Farrell appears to be convinced with the perpetual presence of the biased view of the Protestants for the Catholic Irish by aligning Edward with Edmund.

The Protestant superiority of Edward acts as an Ideological State Apparatus for the native Catholics. It interpellates Sarah and other minor Catholic characters in the novel. "Quality" becomes a characteristic that differentiates the Anglo-Irish from the Gaelic-Irish or native Irish. The Anglo-Irish have the "quality" while the Gaelic-Irish lack it. A member of "quality" bears characteristics like English parentage, Protestant faith, sophisticated lifestyle, conspicuous display of money and clothes, elitism, etc. However, among all "faith" is of utmost importance for qualifying to be a member of "quality". Sarah is interpellated by the ideology that she belongs to a category which lacks "quality", and therefore she is categorized as the "other". She bears it consciously that the Protestants would never accept her as equal for the fact that she is a Catholic.

Spivak (1985), in her essay about Rani of Sirmur, had identified at least three primary forms of "othering" by the British of Indians based on race, class, and gender. Unlike colonial India, where the "othering" of the subjects has also been done through caste (Rani & Kumar, 2020, p. 6), the case in colonial Ireland relates more to religion. The notion of "Catholics" is so loathsome to the Protestants that even its mention is considered an ignominious act. When Major meets Sarah for the first time and says that he knows few things about her (Angela had mentioned about her in her letters to Major)

Sarah's "interpellated being" conjures up. She says that you missed the important thing, "The fact that I'm a Catholic. Yes, I can see that she told you but that you regard it as a fact too shameful to mention. Or perhaps you regard it as good manners not to mention such an affliction" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 28). Sarah's bitter experiences with Edward, who calls the Catholics "fish-eaters" and "Holy Romans" and so on in a sarcastic manner, pollutes her mind to such an extent that she even adjudges Major, a recent arrival from England, through the same lens. But when he clarifies her that he is not so bigoted and has not abandoned his reason, Sarah suspects him and predicts that he, too, will develop a prejudiced opinion like the Spencers over a period of time. She says, "So will you, Major, when you're among the "quality". In fact, you'll become a member of the "quality" yourself, high and mighty, too good for the rest of us" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 29).

Murphy is another character who is a victim of the bigoted view of Edward. Edward's notion regarding the Catholics as slavish encourages him to treat Murphy inhumanly. He conducts his biological researches on him and tries to indemnify his acts by offering the poor with some quid. In his first experiment, he forces Murphy to swallow a balloon while in his second experiment on thirst, he fires at Murphy just to observe him in a frightened state. The dehumanizing nature and the mechanical approach of Edward are apprehensible in the lines below, where it becomes clear that he is more concerned about attaining success in his experiments rather than the life of Murphy:

For a moment, I was afraid he was going to pass out, which would have ruined the

whole thing. I had to keep him talking for a while so that he could get a grip on himself . . . but not too much of a grip. Told him the first thing that came into m' head . . . that is his service had been unsatisfactory and so forth, and that he had to be dealt with. Then I pulled both triggers. It made one hell of a noise . . . even scared me . . . Anyway, I dropped the gun and got him to spit out what saliva he could manage into the measuring glass. D'you realize that he could only produce four c.c.? It's incredible! Here, have a look. It may seem a bit more than that because I'm afraid a few drips of rain got into it before I realized what was happening. (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 313)

After his experiments, Edward tries to mollify Murphy by giving him some quid. He thinks that he is obliging the poor by making a payment. But this act is persuasive evidence of two things; first, the prevalence of exploitation of the native poor by their rich masters in the Irish Ascendancy and second, their inhuman nature, blinded by money. When Major asks about the firing, Edward crassly says, "I gave him a couple of quid, so I don't suppose he has any complaints. He will be as right as rain in an hour or two" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 312). Another instance of his bestial treatment of Murphy is seen when Edward organizes a ball in the Majestic. Murphy, the "uncouth old manservant," is instructed to keep himself out of the way until the guests depart, for Edward fears that his cadaverous appearance would upset the ladies.

The lens through which Edward sees the natives provides no opportunity for a contestable

opinion. The difference in religious faith, language and culture (Kitishat, 2019, p. 2521), motivates him to inculcate antipathetical view. The natives are not only denigrated as inferior in all aspects of life; they are also thought incapable of self- governance. He is a stereotypical colonialist for whom, the "others" are subjects and need to be mastered always because they cannot govern themselves. He complies with "White Man's burden *for the whites*" (Kipling, 1998, p. 311; my italics) and believes that it is his responsibility to take care of the native Gaelic-Irish who are vulnerable. Here, Edward shares a similar stance with the Collector in Farrell's second novel of the trilogy, *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973/2007), who is the "stereotype of a nineteenth-century English man in India, and a believer of British colonial policies and of the white man's burden" (Kalpakli, 2009, p. 12). Asserting his role in the amelioration of the native peasants, Edward said:

I lease them the land at a price that's so cheap they laugh at me behind my back. I mend their roofs for them and give them seed corn and potatoes in return for a miserable percentage of their crop. I send them the vet when their cows get sick. I help them make ends meet when they spend all their money in the pub. (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 60)

Later on, when Major informs Edward about Dr Ryan, a native Irish, badmouthing about him and his policies towards his tenants, he exasperatedly retorts, "I only lease them the land because I have to; they'd starve if I didn't" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 61). The idea of self-reliance has been projected as very far from the

reach of the native Irish peasantry. Poverty and hunger among the Irish has become a common trope to describe them. Gustave de Beaumont reverberated the same when he said:

I have seen the Indian in his forests and the negro in his irons, and I believed, in pitying their plight, that I saw the lowest ebb of human misery; but I did not then know the degree of poverty to be found in Ireland. Like the Indian, the Irishman is poor and naked; but he lives in the midst of a society which enjoys luxury, honours and wealth. The Indian retains a certain independence which has its attraction and a dignity of its own. Poverty-stricken and hungry he may be, but he is free in his desert places; and the feeling that he enjoys this liberty blunts the edge of his sufferings. But the Irishman undergoes the same deprivations without enjoying the same liberty, he is subjected to regulations: he dies of hunger. He is governed by laws; a sad condition, which combines the vices of civilization with those of primitive life. Today the Irishman enjoys neither the freedom of the savage nor the bread of servitude. (qtd. in Gibbons, 1991, p. 98)

Farrell presents a stark contrast between the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and the native Catholic peasants. To use Marx and Engels' (1848/1967) terms, the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is the "bourgeoisie" class while the native Irish peasants are the "proletariats". The Majestic (a Big House) and the "wretched stone cottages" present the two contrasting world of the two classes in the novel. The former is the house of the members of "quality" while the latter

accommodates the "other". The conflict between the two classes is manifested in the novel when the peasants refuse to work in the farmland of Edward and try to arrogate the lands on which they work. This unexpected act of the peasants disturbs Edward who has been living in an illusion that he is doing an act of philanthropy by giving them work on his land, which ironically, is the land of the natives usurped by the Ascendancy. He is disappointed by the fact that the beneficiaries (his tenants) instead of being grateful are creating troubles for him. At one point he gets frustrated with the happenings around him and submits, "I certainly wouldn't choose to be a landlord in Ireland. One gets no thanks for it" (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 62).

The sense of superiority in him is not only because of his Anglo-Irish identity but also because he has done service to His Majesty, the King. He proudly shows his battle mark, to Major, which he has received while fighting from the King's side. Two things that Edward seems to expect from the native Irish are, first, Protestantism, and second, loyalty to the Crown. The absence of the former in the natives minimizes the possibility of the latter. Although it is a fact that hundreds of Catholic Irish have served in the British Army, Edward refuses to consider them as loyal subjects. He does not acknowledge the claim made by Dr Ryan that the Irishmen have also fought from the British side in many wars in defence of the Empire. He ruthlessly refutes the claim, by saying that, those who fought and died, were from the Unionist families, clearly defending his staunch belief and prejudices, against the native Irish people.

Edward is not only anti-Catholic, but he is also against the Sinn Féin and their

nationalist proclamation of free Ireland. His imperiousness blinds him from looking at the natives as capable of self-rule. In this regard, it is pertinent to quote Joe Cleary (2004) who says, “the Irish, like other colonized peoples, had been dually constructed, both as a virile, military race, exercising its natural martial qualities in the wars and adventures of Empire, and as an essentially emotional, irrational, and feminized people incapable of self-government” (p. 261). Although the Crown deploys them in military exercises, it refuses to acknowledge their manhood when it comes to independence and self-rule. Edward mocks at the natives by saying, “education is what these people need. And they think they’re fit to govern a country” (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 121).

One instance in the novel proves that he does not want the Crown to lose the colonial grip over Ireland. We see that he is very protective of the statue of Queen Victoria, which is installed in front of the Majestic. When the unrest in Kilnalough increases, he puts a notice written in bold, “TRESPASSERS FOUND TAMPERING WITH THE STATUE OF QUEEN VICTORIA WILL BE SHOT ON SIGHT” (Farrell, 1970/2009, p. 399). This act of protecting the statue of Queen Victoria takes us to a broader picture of the mechanism working behind it. James Murphy in his book, *Abject Loyalty: Nationalism and Monarchy in Ireland during the reign of Queen Victoria*, notes, “To Queen Victoria, all Irish nationalists who called for self-government were implicitly rebels, without political legitimacy” (Murphy, 2001, p. xv). Edward’s protection of Queen’s statue; a symbol of authority and governance of the Crown in Ireland, establishes the fact that he was

of no different opinion than her regarding the Sinn Féin. He fears that the grip that the Empire has on Ireland till now will loosen if the natives were given the opportunity to freedom. In that case, the existing power relations will turn upside down, that nobody in power wishes to lose.

CONCLUSION

Troubles portrays the religious tension existing between the Anglo-Irish Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, which continues even in the present times. Through the character of Edward, this article has tried to probe into the reasons for such disruption. It can be said that the ideological construction of the Irish as pagan and subhuman, by the settlers as well as later British intellectuals, as discussed in this paper, has played an important role in framing the sensibilities of the contemporary British and Anglo-Irish Protestants; of whom Edward Spencer is a representative. He is enmeshed in fallacious colonial episteme that stigmatizes the native Catholics as “others” who ought to be subjected to dominion by the members of “quality”. The article also shows that religion acts as a basis of “othering” the natives. It also reveals that Edward’s attitude/behaviour towards the Catholic echoes the bigoted view of the settlers which is not sudden, instead, it is an outcome of the long tradition of the British colonial fallacy about the native Gaelic-Irish.

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