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Introduction

This research originated from the combination of two main personal interests: a strong concern for the literary Gothic and a profound passion for Ireland, which led to the study of an author who merges both these elements in his life and especially in his work *The Snake's Pass.*

While I learnt Gothic literature at university, I had the opportunity of seeing Ireland with my own eyes, thanks to a one-year scholarship as an Erasmus student. A few years later, on another visit to Ireland in 2016, I had the chance of witnessing the commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising Centenary held in Dublin, during which I could visit the exposition at the GPO Witness History museum, which impressed me a lot with its memorial garden to the children killed in the rebellion. Saying that I felt overwhelmed and petrified does not quite render the idea. From the beginning, Ireland fascinated me in a number of aspects; for instance, I enjoyed its gorgeous landscapes and appreciated its warm and easy-going inhabitants. Yet, what impressed me most was the feeling that Irish people continually retain and recall their troublesome history, as if it still was an omnipresent and indisputable memory, something that always stands: whatever happens and whatever a person's mood is, the Irish always keep their historical heritage in mind. Starting with this idea, this study made me understand whether my impression was real or imaginary, as well as deepen how culture could - and can - leave a mark on the personality of a person. In addition, the actual concern about Brexit renders these issues more relevant than ever, since it is likely that the struggle between the English – with the Northern Irish – and the Irish might be renewed, restoring the ancient animosity and leading to further conflicts.

As proved by the title of this thesis, my research is based on a sort of matryoshka structure, in the sense that my inspection initially started from the analysis of a broad theme, namely the Gothic; it later focussed on Ireland and Stoker; and eventually reached the core of this analysis, namely Stoker's novel *The Snake's Pass.* Indeed, the first chapter analyses the Gothic in literature, from its origins to the period in which Stoker lived; the second chapter explores Ireland, in its historical and geographical features; the third chapter examines Stoker's life and personality in relation to Ireland

and England; the fourth chapter investigates *The Snake's Pass* and put it in comparison with all the elements and aspects mentioned in the previous chapters.

Finding and collecting the material for this study was not always an easy task, insomuch one can find a great deal of texts about the Gothic, Ireland, and Stoker; while there is little documentation about boglands and especially about *The Snake's Pass.* This may be due to the fact that Stoker's reputation mainly comes from his masterpiece *Dracula*, which appears to surpass all his other works, thus moving *The Snake's Pass* to the background as a minor text, like a sort of experimental draft preceding his future masterpiece. For instance, *The Snake's Pass* was translated into Italian only once in 2007, and the publishing company Palomar has later stopped printing it; while there are plenty of translations of *Dracula* which are still published. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that, in almost all the critical documents concerning *The Snake's Pass,* there is not even the slightest mention to *Dracula.*

In the first chapter, I analyse the Gothic starting from all the definitions that this term can incorporate depending on the context. Successively, I focus on the literary Gothic and its subgenres, investigating all the common features that render a text predominantly Gothic, such as a setting in the distant past, the uncanny, the Other, the sublime, the supernatural, and all the binary oppositions that are simultaneously complementary and contrasting. Far from attempting to give a definite characterisation of Gothic fiction, I aim at listing what readers can find in a Gothic text, with the awareness that any of the elements mentioned are accompanied by variants and nuances. Subsequently, I focus on Gothic prose and, after hinting at the difference between romance and novel, I proceed with the first records of Gothic novels in England and in Ireland, in an effort to counterpose the same narrative genre in these two countries; indeed, British Gothic literature consistently differs from the Irish one, due to the incontrovertible fact that literature inherently incorporates national identity and culture. My analysis ranges a period starting in the 1760s and ending in the 1860s, as this was the time lapse that provided Stoker with the Gothic tradition from which he drew upon his fiction, as well as the period in which he lived. As concerns England, I examine Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1777), Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* (1796). As regards Ireland, I explore the anonymous *The*

Adventures of Miss Sophia Berkley (1760), Thomas Leland's *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (1762), Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram-Haugh* (1864).

In the second chapter, I inspect Ireland by focusing on two fundamental aspects: its history and its geography. I introduce the history of this country from its original inhabitants that came there from Scandinavia in 6500 BC, and proceed until the 1910s, the decade in which Stoker died. My purpose is to give a short summary of all the struggles and the troubles that Ireland - and the Irish - has had to deal with and face from its first occupation; conflicts that still nowadays are not properly solved and, I dare say, may be fomented by a new situation of instability and change, like Brexit, for example. As a point of reference for the study of Irish history, I mainly refer to the book *Ireland* (2014), by Joseph Coohill.

Ireland endured several invasions: the first one occurred by the Indo-European people of the Celts, in 700-500 BC, which retained control for over one thousand years. Later, Ireland was conquered by the Vikings in 900 AD, and by the Normans in 1066, who were the authors of the very first time in which England got control over Ireland. Indeed, in 1171, the English king, Henry II, managed to submit Ireland to English power. Hence, from the twelfth century onward, Ireland began to witness a long period of troubles, domination, revolution, and challenges of all kinds, which mainly consisted in the conflict for power between Ireland and Britain. Initially, native Irish and Anglo-Irish (the descendants of the Normans) co-existed peacefully and even intermarried until 1494, when the Poynings' Law was passed, namely a formal distinction between the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic Irish, which proscribed the use of Irish customs and laws. Further on, the reign of the House of Tudor, (1485-1603), above all under Henry VIII and Mary I, was the author of Catholics persecution and introduced the system of plantation: a practice that dispossessed both Anglo-Irish and Gaelic Irish tenants of their land, and designated English and Scottish settlers as landlords in their places. Later, the rule of the House of Stuart, (1603-1714), precisely under James I of England, dramatically changed the question of landownership: Catholics lost a great deal of the land they had owned before. From the late seventeenth to mid-eighteenth century, a series of measures were passed to restrict Catholic worship and limit Catholics' right to buy any land. This was the period when Catholics increased their request for land

reforms, independence from Britain, and Catholic Emancipation (the right to sit in the Irish parliament). In 1793, the British government granted Catholics the right to vote. In 1801, the Act of Union officially proclaimed the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. While Ireland was experiencing the Great Famine (1845-1852), caused by the potato blight, a number of associations were established to achieve Home Rule for Ireland, namely independence from Britain, and an Irish Parliament consisting of Catholic Irish, which would reduce rents, stop landlords' evictions of tenants, and redistribute land. This was the time when Stoker was born. In 1916, Irish revolutionary struggle peaked with the Easter Rising, when about two thousand revolutionaries seized the General Post Office in Dublin and other strategic buildings in the city, proclaiming the Irish Republic. However, the British Army quelled the rebels in six days. The Easter Rising was a huge massacre: roughly five hundred people were killed and more than two thousand six hundred people were wounded. Successively, after various negotiations between the House of Commons and the Irish Parliament, the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed: it established the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion and the Province of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

In sum, Irish history was mostly concerned with fights about political and economic control over land issues, namely land ownership and management. Ireland has been unfortunate in its history and in its topography as well, given the high percentage of bogland over its soil, precisely one-sixth of the whole Irish country. I concentrate on this ecosystem and describe it, since it symbolically represents Ireland, apart from being the main character of *The Snake's Pass.* The study carried out by Derek Gladwin was essential for this part of my investigation, as he explored representations of the bog in Irish literature and provided an exhaustive description about this environment. History, geography, and literature are intertwined in culture to the extent that bogland retains Irish history and culture, which in turn is stored in the Irish mind, provoking tension, frustration, and resentment. Indeed, the biological features of bogland – a squishy landmass in part liquid, in part gas, and in part solid – carry out a continuous anaerobic chemical process, which renders it a repository of culture:[1] it preserved not only objects - such as butter, oaks, golden or bronze relics of battles and valuables - but also human bodies. Some of them belonged to people who were misled by the firm surface of bogs,

[1] D. Gladwin, *Bogs and the Irish Postcolonial Gothic, 1890-2010*, University of Alberta: Department of English and Film Studies, 2014, p. 49.

but eventually sunk in the ground and died by asphyxiation; while some other belonged to kings who were sacrificed, as they were considered responsible for natural disasters, such as poor weather or poor harvests. Furthermore, bogland represented a crucial concern for Ireland's strife, as in the past it was drained and reclaimed by the English, causing the dispossession and marginalisation of Catholic inhabitants who lived near or on it, in order to increase agriculture production and produce benefit for Protestant and Anglo-Irish landowners. Moreover, bogland retains lore and tradition, insomuch many Irish legends and folk beliefs concern it, attempting to give explanations to natural phenomena. For instance, the "Bog Sprite" explains the occurrence of *ignis fatui*, or "will-o'-the-wisps", the lights that spontaneously appear over bogs: when the gases produced below the surface by the process of decomposition enter in contact with oxygen, they combust and finally create flickering lights. Another example is given by the legend narrated in *The Snake's Pass* about St Patrick and the King of the Snakes, which explains the morphology of the landscape: a chasm in the hill of Knockcalltecrore was created by the King of the Snakes, while escaping from St Patrick; the shifting bog, which owes its crawling movement to the presence or absence of rainwater, incarnates the King of the Snakes, which changed its shape to hide from St Patrick. Shortly, for all these considerations, bogland embodies not only geography, but also history and culture, serving as a national emblem for Irish identity.

In the third chapter, I describe Stoker's life, first by his personal data, and later by few characteristics of his personality, in order to possibly define his conception about national identity, politics, economy, and life in general. At last, I cannot reach a definitive characterisation of the author's beliefs and thoughts, as it clearly emerges that his way of thinking was characterised by ambivalence. Further on, I analyse various aspects such as his view of nationalism and his way of considering fiction as a guideline to follow in order to reach a compromise or a solution to political and economic difficulties.

Few scholars, such as Nicholas Daly and Lisabeth C. Buchelt, consider Stoker a personality in constant conflict, as if he had a double identity: he was Irish in his origins and youth studies, yet English in his adult life and professional career. He was both attracted and removed from both nations, as proved by his strong nationalism for Ireland along with his attachment for Britain. On Stoker's own admission, he was a

"philosophical" Home Ruler.[2] Allegedly, notwithstanding his support to Irish Home rule and his opposition to British imperial rule devolution, he did not take a public political stand. I do not totally agree with this affirmation, insomuch I claim that, in *The Snake's Pass,* Stoker's political commitment is quite evident: Ireland has many resources to offer and the English "scientific and executive men",[3] together with the Irish "industrious spirit",[4] will allow a process of modernisation and development. Stoker strongly believed that land redistribution was the only action that would allow the progress of Ireland and was convinced that Ireland's landownership system needed to be significantly reformed by the help of the government. Hence, Stoker did not maintain exclusive power for one country or another, yet a cooperation between the two, in which Ireland will benefit from the science and organisation of England, and vice versa, England will benefit from the mineral and land resources of Ireland. During his life, Stoker had the opportunity of getting in touch with many prominent people, such as the Wildes, Sir Henry Irving, William O'Brien, William Gladstone, and Michael Davitt, who undoubtedly influenced his vision. Nevertheless, I contend that the political vision he envisaged in his novel is very close to that of the politician John Bright, whose ideas appear to be the core of Stoker's proposal for the development of a small nation: a sort of devolution of Ireland in which his native country would not be completely independent from Britain.

In the fourth chapter, I analyse Stoker's *The Snake's Pass,* his only novel settled in Ireland. After having summarised the plot, I introduce some critical points of view recently discussed by several scholars - Lisabeth C. Buchelt, Nicholas Daly, David Glover, Joseph Valente, Luke Gibbons, William Hughes, Mark Doyle, Christopher Morash, Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch, Stephen D. Arata, and Derek Gladwin - who examined the novel and interpreted it in turn as either an imperial romance, an EcoGothic text, a national tale, an adventure romance, an Irish colonial novel, or a work ascribed to the Irish Literary Revival. Eventually, I conclude that *The Snake's Pass* blends few narrative genres. Further on, I explore all the topics of the novel that render it a Gothic text: the supernatural, catastrophe, transgression, haunting, anxiety, and

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[2] B. Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving,* p. 263.

[3] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 53.

[4] B. Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin: How There Has Risen on the Site of the Old Donnybrook Fair a Great Exhibition as Typical of the New Ireland as the Former Festival was of the Ireland of the Past", in *The World's Work*, IX, Special Irish Number, London, May 1907, pp. 570-576, cit., p. 571.

suspense. Later, I investigate how doubleness is a key point around which the plot revolves, particularly in such dichotomies as past/present, Irish/British nationality, femininity/masculinity, villain/hero, modernity/tradition, human/non-human, civilised/barbaric. Subsequently, I investigate how the plot incorporates history, especially the Anglo-Irish conflict, thus presenting Stoker's point of view on colonialism and nationalism. The protagonist of the novel seems the alter ego of Stoker; therefore, his agency probably represents what the author wished to be realised in his time. To sum up, by means of *The Snake's Pass,* Stoker made an appeal to readers, encouraging them to become aware of the Irish situation and strive to do something.

The Gothic literary tradition and Ireland blended in Stoker's experience and allowed him the creation of a novel that, more than any other classification, is primarily autobiographical. The author proved a master in merging Gothic elements with the history and geography of Ireland, along with his personal thoughts, insomuch that many correspondences between these elements are constantly evoked in the novel. For instance, the Gothic tropes of the uncanny, the supernatural, and the Other are represented by the material shifting bog in Ireland as well as the fictional bog in the novel; the Gothic motif of the sublime is bestowed on the Irish landscape; the Gothic theme of transgression is embodied by the unscrupulous landowners - who evicted tenants and benefited from the poor farmers thanks to the plantation system implemented by British colonialism - and are depicted in the novel by the villain Murdock; the Female Gothic and the New Woman are incorporated in the figure of Norah, a woman who is both feminine and strong; the Male Gothic is recalled in the sufferings that Murdock produces in Norah; the Gothic reference to the past is exemplified by the presence of Irish lore and tradition, encoded in the novel by the legends recounted by the storytellers, the cave with Ogham writing, and the Irish language spoken by the locals; the Gothic theme of anxiety is attributed to the Angst of the Anglo-Irish or the Protestant Ascendancy, who were threatened by the Land League and the Irish Home Rule movements, and is embodied in the novel by Arthur, who in turn exemplifies Stoker; the Gothic element of revenge is evoked by the Irish battles and uprisings, which are recalled in the novel by mentions to the 1798 Irish Rebellion, the Maamtrasna's murders, and the Moonlighters; the Gothic subject of catastrophe underlies the historical tragedies occurred during the Anglo-Irish conflict, and is

exemplified in the novel by the bog slide, which destroys and changes the landscape, taking away everything that it finds in his path; historical conflicts for the possession of land are constantly recalled in the novel through the various buying and selling between Murdock, the Joyces, and Arthur; historical information like the agency of British colonialism is favourably depicted in the novel by Arthur and Dick's project about the reclamation of the bog and the modernisation of Irish rural landscape; the historical event of the 1801 Act of Union between Britain and Ireland is symbolically represented in the novel by the happy marriage between Arthur and Norah, which implies that Irish desire for Home Rule and independence from Britain is unrealisable without the help of the latter.

These are only a few examples of the many cross-references that Stoker skilfully inserted in *The Snake's Pass.* It is quite surprising to me that such a work has remained almost unexplored until nowadays; more than that, what is inexplicable to me is that this novel has been considered as a minor text, unworthy of proper consideration. As a matter of fact, the main reason that prompted me to realise this research is re-evaluating this work and giving it the suitable attention and honour that it deserves.

Chapter 1

Un-categorising the Gothic

Defining and classifying the Gothic is quite a complex enterprise, and, given the ongoing dispute that is still involving many scholars, it is perhaps an objective too ambitious for a university student of foreign languages. Anyway, in this chapter I aim at giving a general overview of what the term "Gothic" implies or does not imply, even though I will be far from giving a well-defined demarcation between the two characterizations. Further on, I will treat some issues about early cases of English and Irish writings during the second half of the eighteenth century, since I am more interested in what came before, rather than in what came after, the time of Bram Stoker's production, that is the focus of this thesis.

The term "Gothic" finds expression in a wide range of fields - such as literature, architecture, art, typography, music, cinematography - and has extended over the last 250 years across history, from its initial renderings to contemporary forms. This adjective was first introduced in architecture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the appellation acquires different meanings according to the geographical, historical, and sectoral context of reference.

The first stage in the definition of the term "Gothic" is the search of this entry in dictionaries. After a survey and analysis of various dictionaries, I deem that the most exhaustive and precise explanations are those found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and in the *Merriam-Webster*; they sometimes present a similar meaning, while some other times they add new information. I found also interesting the consultation of the Italian dictionary *Treccani*, since its definitions of the term are more detailed and deepened than those found in the English dictionaries mentioned before. By mingling the information given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Merriam-Webster*, the entry "Gothic" is as follows:

> **1.** relating to the Goths or their extinct language, which belongs to the East Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family. It provides the earliest manuscript evidence of any Germanic language (4th-6th centuries AD); it is synonymous of Teutonic, Germanic; medieval; uncouth, barbarous; **2.** relating to the style of architecture developed in northern France and spreading through western Europe from

> the middle of the twelfth century to the early sixteenth century (and revived in the mid-eighteenth to early twentieth centuries), characterized by the converging of weights and strains at isolated points upon slender vertical piers and counterbalancing buttresses, pointed arches, rib vaults, together with large windows and elaborate tracery; **3.** relating to a style of fiction written in the style popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which described romantic adventures and is characterized by the use of desolate or remote settings and macabre, mysterious, frightening, or violent incidents; **4.** belonging to or redolent of the Dark Ages; portentously gloomy or horrifying, as 'nineteenth-century Gothic horror'; **5.** (of lettering) derived from the angular style of handwriting with broad vertical downstrokes used in western Europe from the thirteenth century, including Fraktur and black-letter typefaces, that German countries employ still nowadays in the press; **6.** relating to rock music marked by dark and morbid lyrics; **7.** relating to a person who wears mostly black clothing, uses dark dramatic makeup, and often has dyed black hair.[5]

The Italian dictionary *Treccani* adds more details and expands the designation of the term "Gothic" to other sectors, such as masonry, embroidery, and figurative common sayings:

> **1.** *Dei Goti, lingua gotica,* […] *nota soprattutto da una traduzione della Bibbia compiuta nel 4° sec. dal vescovo ariano visigoto Ulfila.* [The language of the Goths was principally identified thanks to a translation of the Bible by Ulfilas, an Arian Visigoth Bishop, in the fourth century]. *In partic.:* **a.** *Arte gotica, denominazione* […] *coniata dagli artisti del Rinascimento con intenzione spregiativa, e rimasta nell'uso nonostante i tentativi degli storici dell'arte di sostituirla con altri termini più specifici (ogivale, archiacuto)* [the denomination as Gothic art was first coined by the artists of the Italian Renaissance with pejorative sense; however, despite art critics attempted to substitute the term Gothic with other more specific words (for example, ogival or archiacute), it remained in use]; […] *architettura caratterizzata da una nuova tecnica costruttiva, basata sullo sfruttamento di elementi architettonici già noti (l'arco acuto e la volta a costoloni), ma per la prima volta coordinati allo scopo di dare una maggiore elevazione e slancio verticale all'edificio* [the style of architecture characterised by a new innovative building technique, based on the use of old architecture elements (such as the pointed arch and the ribbed vault), but coordinated for the first time in a new way, in order to create buildings with greater soaring heights]; *stile gotico,* […] *l'ultima fase dell'arte gotica, dall'inizio del sec. 15° alla metà del 16°, in cui l'architettura perde in gran parte l'antica semplicità e razionalità, e la decorazione diventa sfarzosa, ma più rigida e meccanica* [the late period of Gothic art, from early fifteenth to mid-sixteenth century, during which architecture largely loses simplicity and rationality, and decoration becomes more lavish, yet rigid and mechanic]; […] **d.** *Nelle costruzioni murarie, tipo di muratura* [type of masonry technique] […] **e.** *Linea g., la linea difensiva stabilita dai Tedeschi durante la Seconda guerra mondiale lungo l'Appennino, dalla zona a sud di Viareggio alla zona di Rimini (agosto 1944-aprile 1945)* [the defensive line established by the Germans during the Second World War along the Apennines, from the southern area of Viareggio to the zone of Rimini (August 1944-April 1945)]. **f.** *Punto gotico, punto di ricamo* [stitch of embroidery] […] **2.** *fig.* **a.** *Di scrittura difficilmente decifrabile* [referring to a hardly decipherable handwriting] […] *di lingua o pronuncia scorretta* [referring to a wrong pronunciation or way of talking] **b.** *Strano, stravagante, bizzarro* [weird, extravagant, bizarre].[6]

As regards the chronological evolution of the etymology of the term "Gothic":

[5] OED online, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/gothic_1?q=gothic, (27/07/2019); Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Gothic, (27/07/2019).

[6] Vocabolario Treccani Online, http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/gotico/, (27/07/2019).

in the 1610s it related to the Goths or their civilisation, from Late Latin *Gothicus*, from *Gothi*, Greek *Gothoi,* French *Gothique,* while Old English had *Gotisc*; from the 1640s it referred to the art style that emerged in northern Europe in the Middle Ages (which has nothing to do with the historical Goths), originally applied in scorn by Italian architects of the Renaissance; from 1757 it was used as the language of the Goths as "Germanic, Teutonic" […]; in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was used to mean 'not classical' (i.e. not Greek or Roman) […]; from late seventh-century typography it was used as a typeface based on medieval handwriting […]; in early nineteenth century it was extended to literary style that used northern European medieval settings to suggest horror and mystery; from 1856 it was used for Gothic revival in reference to a style of architecture and decorating; in 1983 the word was revived as the name for a style of music and the associated youth culture…[7]

At first glance, therefore, the definitions given here incorporate various meanings that are pertinent to a wide variety of fields. Furthermore, the chronological adaptation of the term "Gothic" to different connotations denotes how its meaning varied and changed throughout the centuries, anticipating the difficulty of precisely identify a univocal designation.

In general, therefore, the first signification of the term "Gothic" is related to the Goths. These peoples were a rude and savage Scandinavian Germanic tribe coming from the Baltic, divided in many separate ethnic groups, with two major branches standing out, the Visigoths in the West and the Ostrogoths in the East. Their actions subverted the power of the Western Empire, since they fought against the Roman Empire during the Gothic Wars, a long series of conflicts between the years 249 AD and 554 AD. The Gothic period in Italian history, therefore, is the time stretching from the fifth century, when Visigoths sacked Rome (410 AD) and contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire, until the Renaissance. In the early Italian Renaissance, there were no historical accounts about the Goths, and, if it were, they were few, obscure, partial, and fragmented records. This was mainly due to the lack of the Goths' literature and because the past connected to their actions in Italy reminded to the disastrous fall of Rome. Only in 1776, the historian Edward Gibbon published his book *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, contributing to transmit a great deal of information about the Goths. Consequently, Renaissance Italians had little information about the Goths and preferred to address their attention to a classical revival of the Romans, considered as their real heirs. This is probably the reason why, in mid-sixteenth century, Giorgio Vasari was the author of a mistaken interpretation of the Goths: he offensively associated the architecture of the post-Roman and pre-Renaissance period with the

[7] Etymology online, https://www.etymonline.com/word/gothic, (27/07/2019).

architecture of the Goths, describing it as a monstrous, barbarous, confused, lawless, and disordered style.[8] Successively, in the 1640s, "Gothic" started to be employed with the generalised meaning of "Germanic, Teutonic", precisely referring to the medieval period in Western Europe. The Gothic period in English history, instead, extends from the Old English time to the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the definite break with Catholicism, roughly from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Given that "Gothic" was largely used in architecture, it cannot be connected to Britain before the Norman conquest in 1066, when the style of buildings was first Saxon and later Norman or Romanesque. In 1611, the term appeared in the preface of *King James Bible's Version* to refer to the *Gothicke* language, namely the language "of the Goths". Successively, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Alfred Longueil associated the term "Gothic" to two meanings: one is "barbarous" and the other one is "medieval".[9] He contended that it was considered a synonym of "uncouth" since it referred to the Renaissance vision of the middle ages' ignorance, savageness, and harshness. But later, it acquired the meaning of "medieval" and "ceased to have a wholly derisive implication", since literature started to view medieval time as a suitable source for literary thought about decorum and imagination.[10] With regard to the latter aspect, the customs of the medieval period were examined and elaborated in two important works about literary history: *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* (1754) by Thomas Warton and *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) by Richard Hurd. In their literary studies on literature, both fostered the manners of chivalry and supernatural elements of the medieval romance as allegories of feudal social reality. They probably contributed to overturn the characterisation of what was considered as "ancient, classical" from Greece and Rome to medieval Europe. Hurd, indeed, listed the distinguishing characteristics of genuine Chivalry as follows:

> … the passion for arms; the spirit of enterprize; the honour of knighthood; the rewards of valour; the splendour of equipages; in short, everything that raises our ideas of the prowess, gallantry, and magnificence of these sons of Mars. […] Their romantic ideas of justice; their passion for adventures; their eagerness to run to the succour of the

[8] R. Sowerby, "The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic", in D. Punter, (ed.), *A New Companion to the Gothic*, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012, pp. 25-37, p. 33.

[9] A. E. Longueil, "The Word "Gothic" in Eighteenth Century Criticism", *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 38, No. 8, December 1923, The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 453-460, p. 453.

[10] A. E. Longueil, *op. cit.*, pp. 455-456.

> distressed; the pride they took in redressing wrongs, and removing grievances are further characteristics. [11]

When speaking about literature, as is my focus, the Gothic concerns a literary phenomenon that has generally been considered as a post-medieval and even a post-Renaissance genre, that originated in England in the late eighteenth century, when the text commonly credited as the first British Gothic novel was published, *The Castle of Otranto: A Story* (1764). By consequence, while the association of the term "Gothic" to the literature of terror and horror is quite a recent and modern labelling, originally it had almost nothing to do with this categorization, since it referred to the Goths. Initially, therefore, the adjective "Gothic" was employed to identify a period of barbarism, cultural ignorance, superstition, and vandalism. The Goths had neither written nor oral literature and when they had invaded Europe, they burnt the libraries of Athens and Rome, thus destroying cultural records of classical knowledge. Hence the denomination "Gothic" implied a derogative and pejorative juxtaposition to the Roman or the classical. In other words, this term signified irrationality, medieval customs, and supernatural beliefs. Successively, the adjective "Gothic" has been reinterpreted and revaluated, and the Germanic tribes were associated to a sense of virility, fierceness, and freedom as an alternative system to the absolutism of church and state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Further on, the eighteenth century brought forth the Age of the Enlightenment: a period of political, economic, and social upheaval that witnessed a process of shifting transformations in many aspects of the individual and the society. Consequently, if on the one hand the Enlightenment outlined cultural, industrial, and social revolution in the present, on the other hand it reflected anxiety and fear produced by the rejection of the past. The term "Gothic" signified referring to the past from a peculiar point of view. More than refusing the past, the Gothic reconstructed the mores and values of medieval age by distancing from them and subverting the elements that were characteristic of that philosophy. What is different from the previous designation of the word "Gothic" is that it modified its connotation of the past referring to an ancient setting for political virtue and liberty. Indeed, medieval backgrounds and feudal orders were rewritten and revaluated: ruins and decaying settings were perceived as picturesque and sublime spaces, while the economic system based on land ownership

[11] R. Hurd, *Moral and Political Dialogues with Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, Vol. 3, 1762, London: W. Boyer, J. Nichols, pp. 203-204.

proved to be the first step throughout the path leading to commercial liberalism. In this way, the past was no more seen as something to be ashamed of, but rather something that, by contrast with the present, enabled reflection and transformation toward the amelioration of social, economic, and political system. Indeed, Siobhán Kilfeather sees the Gothic as "a response to modernisation, a mode of registering loss and suggesting that new forms of subjectivity are necessary to deal with the new forms of knowledge and power that are conquering past systems and beliefs".[12] In addition, Jarlath Killeen describes the Gothic as "a product of a society that is seeking to heal itself from a terrible wound self-inflicted at the moment of modernity".[13] The recourse to the past provided, therefore, a device by which British society could imagine a prestigious inheritance derived from the Anglo-Saxons tribes, who, despite their primitivism, were considered as the forerunners of modern British society. Implicitly, it was also a means to critique eighteenth century governmental and political policies.

The first literary occurrence of "Gothic" appeared in the 1765 second edition of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. The work was previously published in 1764 under the title *The Castle of Otranto: A Story*, but then reedited with an addition: *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story.* However, this appellation is mentioned nowhere in Walpole's text, except in the title. In the late eighteenth century, the word "Gothic" was rarely used in literary writings, except in another significant work of that period, *The Old English Baron* (1777) by Clara Reeve*,* who defined her novel as a "Gothic Story" in the preface. Over the years, the peculiarities of Gothic writing have been altered, modified and varied, thus nurturing an intense debate, that still continues nowadays, among scholars who have been trying to clarify the blurring of its aspects - be they religious, social, psychological, natural, philosophical, or stylistic. Indeed, as the title of this chapter suggests, the definition of what constitutes Gothic writing is a disputable and contested issue. This is probably the main reason why the huge field of Gothic literature has been distinguished in various subsets: sometimes on a chronological level, such as Pre-Gothic Gothic, the Original Gothic, Gothic Shakespeare, Victorian Gothic, Gothic in the 1790s, Gothic in the 1890s; and other times on a geographical scale, such as European Gothic (Irish, Scottish, French, and Russian Gothic), and American Gothic.

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[12] S. Kilfeather, "The Gothic Novel", in J. F. Wilson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 78-96, p. 83.
[13] J. Killeen, *Gothic Ireland, op. cit.,* p. 18.

Moreover, Gothic fiction employs different genres, such as romance, novel, ballad, poem, and drama, and even cinematography (thanks to twentieth-century films release). In addition, Gothic works which are published in the same period or in the same geographical area draw on different motifs and features, rendering the delimitation of boundaries quite a difficult task. Therefore, the fragmentation and differentiation in Gothic writing implies resistance to canonization. Scholars contend divergent yet complementary suppositions, for instance, David Punter appears contradictory in noting that "what constitutes Gothic writing is a contested site"[14], while Gothic literature seems to be unequivocally recognizable.[15] Robert Miles contends that "the Gothic emerged in the mid-eighteenth century and since then has hardly changed"[16] and that the "plots, motifs and figures are [continuously] recycled"[17] in text after text. He claims that the first writers experimenting the Gothic novel (Walpole, Reeve, Radcliffe, Lewis) established the parameters that hardly changed: the presence of the supernatural and the sublime, medieval Catholic settings, and live burial experienced by a troubled heroine who seeks release from the imprisonment of a depraved and tyrannical male family member.[18] Both Punter and Miles maintain that, if initially the literary Gothic seems homogeneous, closer inspection reveals a very disparate collection of works. This is due to variations in Gothic writing, and the Gothic's tendency to infiltrate all genres, texts, and traditions of literary production (poetry, drama, short fiction), even though many scholars assume that the literary Gothic is primarily fictional in nature and consider the novel as the Gothic literary form *par excellence*.

Nonetheless, given the assumption that Gothic fiction is pliable and malleable, some parameters recurrently appear, thus permitting to identify a work as predominantly Gothic. For first, the location where the fiction takes place is an antiquated space or an environment that reminds to previous generations, for instance a castle, a graveyard, a primeval island, a decaying building, etc. Secondly, the presence of the past, be it recent or remote, is inherent to this kind of location. Thirdly, the past is almost never relieving,

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[14] D. Punter, "Introduction: The Ghost of a History", in D. Punter (ed.), *A Companion to the Gothic,* Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, pp. 8-14, p. 8.
[15] D. Punter, *op. cit*., pp. 8-14.
[16] R. Miles, "Introduction: What is 'Gothic'?", in R. Miles, *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Genealogy*, Second Edition, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 1-27, p.1.
[17] *Ibidem*.
[18] C. Morin & N. Gillespie, "Introduction: De-Limiting the Irish Gothic", in C. Morin & N. Gillespie Niall, (ed.), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 1-12, p. 3.

but rather menacing, and haunts the characters, either psychologically and physically, as it is shaped in the form of a monster, a ghost, a vision, or anything that can be associated to a supernatural threatening presence. This entity reveals and brings to the surface some unresolved conflicts that can no more be ignored. For instance, Horace Walpole's novel encompasses many of these features: the feudal setting, the ghostly manifestations, and the work of antiquarians (in the preface the author explains that the story dated back to the time of the Crusades and was printed in Italy in 1529). Through these elements, Gothic fiction mixes, confronts, and juxtaposes conventional reality and supernatural abstraction, crossing any limit that was supposed to exist.

Another common feature of the Gothic is the uncanny, that can take various fictional forms, such as a ghost, a spectre, a monster, an unknown or deviant "other", or anything preternatural and otherworldly. In his 1919 essay, *The Uncanny*, Freud explicitly investigates what can be incorporated in this designation. He defines it as "what is frightening", "what arouses dread and creeping horror", and "coincide(s) with what excites fear in general"[19]. By analysing some translations of this term and some instances of literary fictional evidence, he eventually assumes that the uncanny, far from being anything that is solely unfamiliar, unknown, and uncertain, it is also a "hidden, familiar thing that has undergone repression, and then emerged from it".[20] Consequently, in Freud's interpretation, uncanniness is produced by the simultaneous connection and opposition of both familiar and unfamiliar elements, "as soon as something actually happens in our lives which seems to support the old, discarded [or repressed] beliefs". [21] In this regard, Gothic fiction illustrates the inner depths of the self by enacting the "other" - in the form of deviation, aberration, or abnormality - as something that is not different or extraneous to individuals, but rather something that is part of ourselves. Through narrative, the Gothic comes up with some potential options to approach the "other" and distance from it, or ultimately destroy it. In her *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick confirms Freud's vision and adds that Gothic writing typically develops some conventions about:

[19] S. Freud, "The "Uncanny"", in J. Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, Hogarth Press, London, 1955, (1919), pp. 217-256, p. 217.
[20] *Idem*, p. 247.
[21] *Idem*, p. 250.

> … the position of the self to be massively blocked off from something to which it should normally have access. This something can be its own past, the details of its family history; […] Typically, however, there is both something going on inside the isolation (the present, the continuous consciousness, the dream, the sensation itself) and something intensely relevant going on impossibly out of reach. While the three main elements (what's inside, what's outside, and what separates them) take on the most varied guises, the terms of the relationship are immutable. The self and whatever it is that is outside have a proper, natural, necessary connection to each other, but one that the self is suddenly incapable of making. The inside life and the outside life have to continue separately, becoming counterparts rather than partners, the relationship between them one of parallels and correspondences rather than communication. This, though it may happen in an instant, is a fundamental reorganization, creating a doubleness where singleness should be.[22]

Gothic fiction, therefore, constantly synthesizes the self's experience of being denied access to the unconscious: a secret and repressed element that causes alienation of the self from the self. Both Freud and Sedgwick concurred on identifying the uncanny as something that is part of the self but lies beneath. However, I think that Freud focused on the concept of the "other" as a "double", whereas Sedgwick concentrated on the "veil" that covers the self. The themes that Freud pointed out are:

> … the idea of a 'double' in every shape and degree, […] persons who are to be considered identical by reason of looking alike; […] [the] self becomes confounded, or the foreign self is substituted for [one's] own - in other words, by doubling, dividing, and interchanging the self. And finally, there is the constant recurrence of similar situations, a same face, or character-trait, or twist of fortune, or a same crime, or even a same name recurring throughout several consecutive generations.[23]

While the topics that Sedgwick underlined are:

> … an oppressive ruin, a wild landscape, a Catholic or feudal society, […] the trembling sensibility of the heroine and the impetuosity of her lover, […] the tyrannical older man who is going to imprison and try to rape or murder them, […] found manuscripts or interpolated histories […] the priesthood and monastic institutions; sleeplike and deathlike states; subterranean spaces and live burial; doubles; the discovery of obscured family ties; affinities between narrative and pictorial art; possibilities of incest; unnatural echoes or silences, unintelligible writings, and the unspeakable; garrulous retainers; the poisonous effects of guilt and shame; nocturnal landscapes and dreams; apparitions from the past; Faust- and Wandering Jew-like figures; civil insurrections and fires; the charnel house and the madhouse. […] The barrier between the self and what should belong to it can be caused by anything and nothing; but only violence or magic, and both of a singularly threatening kind, can ever succeed in joining them again.[24]

In her book *Powers of Horror* (1980), the philosopher and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva resumes Freud's vision of the uncanny as the manifestation of the repressed familiar. However, she goes farther by associating the uncanny to the concepts of

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[22] E. Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, New York: Methuen, 1986, pp. 12-13.
[23] S. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", *op. cit.,* pp. 8-9.
[24] E. Kosofsky Sedgwick, *op. cit.,* pp. 9-10.

"abjection" and "abject". Literally, these terms mean "being cast off, being thrown off". Kristeva claims that, when a person experiences ambiguity and ambivalence while distinguishing between what is "self" and what is "other", the individual rejects all that is "in-between" and incoherent, as it prevents the person from shaping a consistent and definable identity.[25] In other words, anything that is betwixt-and-between threatens the realisation of one's existence; it has therefore to be processed and separated from the self. The primordial experience of this process is at the moment of birth, when the baby is both inside and outside the mother, not yet an independent individual but still connected to the mother.[26] Through this metaphor, the process of abjection is comparable to the cutting of the umbilical cord. In Gothic fiction, abjection occurs when the characters deal with the ambivalences and oppositions of their existence by casting them off on uncanny figures or spaces - such as Dracula, Frankenstein, or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde - thus considering them as incompatible with the society's established standards of normalcy, while concurrently experiencing both fear and attraction.

Connected to the concept of the uncanny is the idea of the sublime. This concept was introduced in a classical text, the treatise *On the Sublime,* attributed to Longinus, probably dating to the first century. This work was successively translated into French in 1674 and influenced the literary works of the time with reference to the "grand style" of writing, which causes strong emotions in the reader. Thanks to the concept of "mimesis", namely the imitation of nature, together with the inclusion of the fantastic, writers stimulate the sensation of "transport", which makes readers enjoy the narrative, a sensation that Longinus considers essential in a writing. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the issue about imagination was treated by Edmund Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Not only does he interpret the sensation of imaginative transport as a desirable characteristic that readers look for, but he also considers it as a fundamental necessity for the reading audience. He outlines that familiar beauty produces positive pleasure on the one side, yet it also originates a sort of mental torpor on the other side. For Burke,

[25] J. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror, An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 10-31, p. 4.
[26] *Idem*, p. 13.

the sublime can be synthesised by a special kind of discomfort related to delight, as stated in his explanation:

> … whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger; […] whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; […] it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. […] the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure. […] the torments which we may be made to suffer, are much greater […] than any pleasures which the most learned voluptuary could suggest, or than the liveliest imagination, and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body, could enjoy.[27]

The philosopher thus contends that the sublime is evocated by a mix of terror and danger, rather than by pleasure. Burke sustains that "terror is in all cases whatsoever […] the ruling principle of the sublime"[28] and that "whatever is fitted to produce […] terror, […] must be a source of the sublime, though it should have no idea of danger connected with it."[29] It is noteworthy that the philosopher pinpoints how the sublime derives from an unconscious misjudgement of the terror, in that neither danger nor risk are perceived. He goes further and connects the concept of astonishment to the sublime, asserting that "the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror."[30] He argues that imagination has to be elaborated to a suitable degree by ideas of the terrible sublime. Gothic fiction, therefore, by way of its artificial, unreal, and boundless images, perfectly manages to lead to the sublime. In conclusion, Gothic permits to blunt its dreadful representations by sublimating, and thus making them unthreatening, what consciousness would consider as unacceptable, therefore leading to "safe" imagery.

Furthermore, in the same treatise, Burke attributes the sublime to God's power, which instils a healthy fear of the divine. He posits that "true religion has, and must have, so large a mixture of salutary fear; and that false religions have nothing else but fear to support them."[31] Even though Burke's work was published during the Age of Enlightenment, when only rational explanations were allowed and religion was removed from any possible understanding of the world, he does not question whether or not the

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[27] E. Burke, "*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful with an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste and Several Other Additions",* Thomas McLean, Haymarket, London, 1823, (1757), p. 45.
[28] *Idem,* p. 75.
[29] *Idem,* p. 194.
[30] *Idem,* p. 73.
[31] *Idem,* p. 95.

numinous exists, yet he focuses on the assumption that religion is the source of the sublime. In his vision, empiricism complicates the relationship between humans and religious beliefs; faith no longer supports morality and ethical behaviour; therefore "salutary fear" takes its place. Writers have to find some strategies to accomplish this objective, and thus they make use of the supernatural: fear is based on a sort of abstract truth that will eventually lead to a sense of justice. The sublime is hence originated by the divine fear derived from the rationalization of religion. Supernatural elements and occurrences inspire fearful suspense, since the awe of God has been eradicated from religion and substituted by the agency of dreadful forces which act beyond any rational explanations. As an example, if beforehand Gothic cathedrals' raising towards the sky inspired men to look upwards towards God, now they stimulate a sort of demonic fear of the supernatural hidden underneath the divine. As Empiricism developed, all that remained of the numinous was the frightening supernatural element that the church originally inspired. On the issue of the supernatural, the philosopher David Hume contributed to define the notions of "evidence" and "miracles" in the section *Of Miracles* in his *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748). He designates a miracle as:

> … a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent. […] Nothing is esteemed a miracle, if it ever happen in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man, seemingly in good health, should die on a sudden: because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle, that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed in any age or country.[32]

He also posits an interesting issue that will render the recourse to the supernatural in Gothic literature successful: people are often too credulous and prone to accept the unusual and incredible, because it stimulates surprise and wonder.[33]

Moreover, a constant characteristic of the Gothic genre is dualism, or binary oppositions: past/present, natural/supernatural, resignation/rebellion, death/life, organic/immaterial, human/non-human, rejection/desire, repression/rebellion, probable/improbable, etc. The generalisation that Gothic texts only include exaggerated forms is utopian, since only extreme fiction comprises them; whereas the most part of writings presents variations, alterations, and shades. Given that, Gothic symbolic

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[32] D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding; and Selections from a Treatise of Human Nature,* La Salle, Ill. Open Court Pub. Co, 1907, (1748), p. 120.

[33]*Idem,* p. 123.

mechanism can be cast in the conditions of any century or period, as the pattern of contradictions can be modified depending on the ongoing social, economic, and political transitions. For instance, "classical Gothic" concerns dynastic disorders during feudalism. The main motifs are inheritance, usurpation, vengeance, and occult presence. The victims are usually females who are eventually saved; the antagonist is unmasked; the supernatural phenomena are uncovered and resolved. When variations occur, the resulting genre may be: "fantastic Gothic" with an emphasis on the supernatural element; "romantic Gothic" with a stress on the philosophical and religious dimensions; "historical Gothic" with a focus on the historical background; "artistic Gothic" with a concentration on art or music, and so on and so forth. The Gothic is likely to have lasted until nowadays because its tangle of oppositions can continuously be adapted to modern conditions, for example transforming spectres into aliens. In addition, the peculiarity of Gothic is that all the oppositions treated in its narrative cannot be completely separated from one another, in the sense that each element exists because it relates and concurrently stands against its counterpart, thus reinforcing the interdependency between the two terms.

Stylistically speaking, the Gothic genre combines both "high culture" (epic, romance, tragedy) and "low culture" (comedy, folklore, prose), as Walpole posits in *The Castle of Otranto*'s preface: his work "was an attempt to blend the two kinds of Romance, the ancient and the modern";[34] in other words, he blended both the medieval chivalric romance, appreciated by the aristocracy, and the comic novel, preferred by the emergent middle-class. As a matter of fact, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gothic works mainly dealt with the changes in the social class system, namely how the middle class was rising from its extremes: on one side, the high and refined aristocracy; on the other side, the low and ignorant working class. This is confirmed by characters such as Lewis' monk Ambrosio, Maturin's Melmoth, Stevenson's Mr. Hyde, Wilde's Dorian Gray, Stoker's Count Dracula, etc., who render the text an indeterminate interplay between "serious" and "popular" literary work.

In the same way, Gothic narratives oscillate between "revolution" and "conservatism", in the sense that they do not totally incline towards one or the other. Viewed from one perspective, works like *The Monk* or *Frankenstein* might be defined

[34] H. Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, (1764), 1765, p. 18.

revolutionary in their characters and fiction; while, from another perspective, the above-mentioned writings might be interpreted as conservative, in that rebellion is condemned as degeneration of a declining social order. More often instead, other texts leave the matter open, like Ann Radcliffe's heroines who eventually get economic independence but remain excluded from politics. In sum, Gothic fiction stands out among all literary genres for its provocative treatment of possible revolution - about gender, sexuality, race, class, ideology - without really solving the question whether it leads to positive or negative consequences. Significantly, the "other", be it deviant or repressed, can be either eliminated, distanced, or remain unchanged.

Another distinction in the Gothic genre is made between works of female Gothic and those of male Gothic, whose main representatives are respectively Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, posing the juxtaposition of feminine/masculine. Over many years, Gothic fiction has been culturally concerned with gender distinctions, gender definitions, and gender boundaries. Starting from Walpole, indeed, women tend to be represented as the most likely characters trapped between opposed impulses and sensations. They often appear under the oppression of a dominating father or of a lascivious man, both of whom consider them as a property or a tool for procreation. Ann Radcliffe contributed to bring some changes into this kind of depiction: her heroines are active agents who undertake a journey which will finally lead to acquisition of power and property by their own. Nevertheless, the constant setting in Gothic fiction is a patriarchal society which confines and represses women because they are considered voluble, unruly, and uncontrollable. In this respect, Gothic appears to be used as a tool which shows that the culturally accepted distinctions and conventions about gender are nothing more than representations of femininity as "other". Women are responsible for the individual's confusion originated by the separation between the self and the non-self. As previously affirmed, this "other" has to be denied, since women and mothers were the source of the blurring and multiplicity inherent to each individual, and therefore they were guilty for the contemporaneous fear and desire that everyone experiences. It is no wonder that Gothic fiction is quite consistent in making abject figures deal with the feminine or the maternal sphere, like Victor Frankenstein, for example. Even male-Gothic writings show their heroes as harassed by the threat of and the longing for their mothers, who were the first to inflict an identity crisis on them.

1.1 The Gothic novel: early British and Irish cases

Typically, Gothic writing takes the form of prose fiction, even though it can extend to poem or drama. From mid-sixteenth to late-seventeenth century, the earliest Gothic writings were defined "romances", indeed the expression "A Romance" was the most common subtitle among works in the Gothic period. The novel instead spread in the first half of the eighteenth century, in reaction to romance tradition. The first formulation of the expression "Gothic novel" occurred in 1760-1780. By the end of the eighteenth-century, the publication of novels was in decline, and therefore the romance returned on the scene. The main reasons were the search for novelty and originality along with the new requirements of the publishing industry. The 1780s were quite an inactive period for the romance, before its revival in the 1790s. The debate about the origins of the romance confronts divergent theories. Some critics assume that the development and spread of romance were the result of migration, while some historians (for example, Hurd) think they were the outcome of social structures; the eastern theory argues that romances derived from eastern tales imported to Europe at the time of the Crusades or earlier (Warton and Warburton); the northern theory locates instead the source of romance in the Norse lands, with the Normans as propagators (Percy); Evans surmised a Celtic theory.[35] Anyway, in the juxtaposition between novel and romance, each term needs the other to measure in what extent they equal or differ, and consequently the dividing line is not clear at all. At the time, different literary movements arouse above all on the basis of the role of literature, namely, whether fiction had to be more imaginary and entertaining or more realistic and instructive. Romance was synonymous of fantasy, while the novel, literally meaning "the new", was more credible. The originality of the novel stands in opposition to the outdated romance, characterised by unreality, artificiality, and idealism. Fiction therefore was a vehicle for instruction or moral improvement in life only if it was true. The first English Gothic writers are commonly identified in Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve. Even though they approached narrative by different ways, they agreed on the distinction between the two genres. Walpole explained that the novel copies nature by strictly adhering to common

[35] E.J. Clery, "The Genesis of 'Gothic' Fiction", in J. E. Hogle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 21-39, p. 34.

life.[36] Reeve codified the romance as "a story, like those of the Middle Ages, composed on chivalry, love and religion."[37] She was an expert in romance writing, and summarised her studies in *The Progress of Romance* (1798), in which she clearly defined the romance as "a heroic fable, staging fabulous persons and things" and the novel as "a picture of real life and manners and of the time in which it was written"[38]. She considered the two literary types along a line of progress and assumed that the present improves upon the past. Both the works of Walpole and Reeve deal with the concept of probability as the degree of what is considered believable because it is guaranteed by what commonly happens and is thus ordinarily observed. This corresponds to the key concepts that Aristotle thought as essential in the narrative: probability and truth make the representation of action, time, and place, all framed into a coherent contextualization. In the Aristotelian logic, probability is a "plausible and a generally approved proposition".[39] Aristotle contended that writers have to follow the principle that "the impossible which is plausible is preferable to the possible which appears implausible".[40] In other words, skilled writers manage to create real life stories by making impossibility seem realistic and probable, otherwise their works would appear false and improbable. Reeve, indeed, confirmed that the aim of the new Gothic novel is to provide readers with "a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic to engage the heart in its behalf."[41] This vision might justify Walpole when he stated that his story was "faithful to the manners of the time".[42] Indeed, both Walpole and Reeve presented traditions and beliefs belonging to medieval people insofar their works include supernatural in the form of ghosts, apparitions of the past, animated objects, miracles, and prophesies, etc… as devices employed by God to testify against a guilty party. This exactly represents the medieval faith in the manifestation of Providence in the natural world. People living in the Middle Ages

[36] H. Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, (1764), 1765, p. 9.
[37] C. Reeve, "The Progress of Romance", in S. Regan (ed.), *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: A Critical Reader,* Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), 2001, pp. 13-22, p. 14.
[38] *Ibidem.*
[39] E. H. Madden, "Aristotle's Treatment of Probability and Signs", *Philosophy of Science,* Vol. 24, April 1957, No. 2, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 167-172, p. 167.
[40] M. P. Futre Pinheiro, "Thoughts on Diēgēma (Narratio) in Ancient Rhetoric and in Modern Critical Theory", *Literary Currents and Romantic Forms: Essays in Memory of Bryan Reardon*, Vol. 26, 2018, pp. 19-32, p. 28.
[41] C. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, (1777), 1778, p. 5.
[42] H. Walpole, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

believed that evil is intrinsic in humankind, and it must be corrected by divine guidance. Divine justice functions by purging evil from the world. In this respect, they considered nature as connected to divine intervention: things happen because they are caused by God's will; divine mediation is enacted in humans' affairs to ensure justice. Medieval judicial systems employed trials and ordeals to determine whether someone was guilty or innocent in case of doubtful behaviour. Despite the Church outlawed these practices in 1215, popular belief in God's action in worldly life remained strong: judicial battles continued in England until the end of the fifteenth century, and duels persisted until the eighteenth century. It was common thinking that, when someone wins a battle, it is because God helped him to prove his innocence. Nevertheless, Walpole and Reeve spent their life during the age of Enlightenment, that, together with progress in science, questioned the existence of God and challenged divine intervention as God's will to obtain justice. This might explain why they both focused on past beliefs and past habits: they needed to rely on some divine order on which to base morality. Not wanting to use theology, they drew out a combination between the displacement of the numinous and the presence of supernatural, in which justice will finally triumph.

Horace Walpole was a rich and educated English nobleman. He was interested in many and varied fields: reading, writing, antiquarianism, politics (he became the fourth Earl of Orford). He was also keen on architecture, indeed he purchased a castle in Twickenham, later called the Villa of Strawberry Hill after Walpole had reconstructed it in Gothic style. He modified both the exterior and the interior. Externally, he created an extensive and well-kept garden; he remodelled battlements and towers; he also rebuilt the windows by adding stained glass pieces. Internally, he organised a library with a huge collection of materials including historical prints and collections of poems and plays; he created a gallery of antiquities and works of art; he added a star chamber, an armoury, and an oratory, all of which were filled with his eclectic collection of furnishings. As if that was not enough, Walpole started his own printing press there. Inspired by his construction of the Gothic castle and a nightmare he had had, Walpole wrote the first Gothic work *The Castle of Otranto*. The novel is about the story of Manfred, lord of the castle of Otranto, and his family. The lordship of Otranto is linked to an ancient prophecy: "The castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the

present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it”.[43] Manfredi, prince of Otranto, is father of two children: Matilda and Conrad. This latter is supposed to marry the princess Isabella, the daughter of Frederic, the Marquis of Vicenza. The novel starts precisely on their wedding day. Inexplicably, Conrad is crushed to death by an enormous helmet that falls on him from the sky, a helmet similar to that of Alfonso’s statue, a former ruler of the lordship of Otranto. Manfred is confused and worried that his lineage will end with Conrad’s death, since Hippolita, his wife, has failed to bear him male heir. He then resolves by divorcing his wife and asking Isabella to marry him. Even though she rejects his proposal, he tries to rape her, but she escapes. With the help of Theodore, a peasant who is in love with Matilda, Isabella manages to flee through a secret passageway in the basement of the castle leading to the Church of St. Nicholas. There, she finds shelter in the cloister, under the protection of Father Jerome. In the meanwhile, Manfred is distracted by several mysterious occurrences: some feathers of the giant helmet wave backward and forward at the height of the windows; the portrait of his grandfather floats in the gallery; the arms and legs of a giant in armour appear in the great chamber of the castle. The following day, Father Jerome, the priest of the church, informs Manfred that Isabella has been found in the monastery. Manfred then condemns Theodore to death. Later, when the peasant goes to church to confess his sins to Father Jerome before his execution, the priest recognises Theodore as his own long-lost son. Jerome begs for his son's life, but Manfred tells him that, if he wants to save Theodore, he must bring Isabella back to the castle. They are interrupted by the arrival of a host of knights carrying a giant sword and guided by Frederic, the Marquis of Vicenza, who wants to bring Isabella back home, as well as to obtain the lordship of Otranto, since he is the closest known relative of Alfonso, the former lord of Otranto before Manfred’s grandfather took power. In the meanwhile, Isabella escapes from the cloister, and therefore both Frederick and Manfred race to find her. Meanwhile, Matilda takes the opportunity to free Theodore, whom she believes looks like Alfonso, the former ruler. Theodore finds Isabella in a cave and, while protecting her, wounds a knight, later identified with her father, Frederic. The marquis is then taken back to the castle to recover and, when he sees Matilda, he falls in love with her. Frederic explains that he

[43] H. Walpole, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

came to Otranto because, after being captured by infidels in the Crusades, he had a vision warning him that his daughter was in danger. The vision led him to a forest, where a hermit led him to a giant sword buried in the ground. An inscription on the sword reported a prophecy: Isabella can be saved only by Alfonso's blood on the site where the giant's helmet, that matches the giant's sword, is found. After Frederic finishes his story, Manfred arrives and suddenly notices the remarkable resemblance between Theodore and Alfonso. He then questions Theodore's origins, and the peasant reveals that when he was a child, he was kidnapped and enslaved by pirates. He knows no more, except that Jerome is his father, as proved by a document that his mother left him. After Christians freed him, he went to Otranto to search for his father and to find a job. The following day, Manfred suggests Frederic a deal about marrying each other's daughters: he will marry Isabella and Frederic will marry Matilda. At first, Frederic accepts, but later the ghost of the hermit appears again and haunts him for his lust and greed. Consequently frightened, Frederic refuses the proposal of the double marriage. Meantime, one of Manfred's spies informed him of a secret encounter between Theodore and a lady in the church. The lord immediately suspects that Isabella is having an affair with the peasant and goes there to check. When Manfred arrives, he sees the peasant with a woman and, believing she was Isabella, he felt rejected, got furious, and stabs her. A moment later, he discovers that it was Matilda, instead. After she dies, the walls of the room fall down and the image of Alfonso appears among the ruins, declaring that Theodore is the true heir of the lordship of Otranto. Only at this time, Manfred, defeated by sorrow and remorse, reveals that his father had usurped the throne from Alfonso, and that Theodore is Alfonso's grandson. He then abdicates and retires to the convent; Hippolita does the same; Frederic renounces his claim to the lordship of Otranto and offers Isabella's hand in marriage to Theodore; eventually, Theodore becomes king and marries Isabella.

The first edition was published anonymously in 1764, and the author defines the text as a counterfeiting in the subtitle: "*The Castle of Otranto: A Story. Translated by William Marshal,* Gent. *From the Original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas at Otranto"*. The author then specifies that the text is a translation of a manuscript written by an Italian Renaissance priest, and that it probably derives from a former story written at the time of the Crusades, when the story is set. In

the 1765 and subsequent editions, instead, Walpole confessed his authorship. The first edition received good reviews, it was indeed considered as an efficient translation of medieval fiction concerning the time of the Crusades (between 1095 and 1243). However, after Walpole's admission of authorship, the work was re-evaluated by criticism as absurd, bland, or even immoral. In the second edition, Walpole presents his work in the preface as:

> … an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. […] The actions, sentiments, and conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days, were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.[44]

In so doing, Walpole condemns romances of being improbable and modern fiction of being too probable. Yet, he thinks it is:

> … possible to reconcile the two kinds. [The author] is desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak, and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions.[45]

Nonetheless, it seems that the author was quite controversial: he aimed more at the pleasures of the imagination, rather than at the instruction of a dignifying moral, as he explicitly indicates in the preface to the first edition: "that the sins of the fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation."[46] In his text, indeed, he deployed divine punishment - in the forms of a ghost and a giant - to castigate the heir of a usurper, with the objective of proving that the sins of the fathers are transmitted and redeemed to sons and grandchildren. In this way, Walpole merged unreal occurrences, typical of the romance, and realistic characterization, peculiar of the novel, thus creating a new form of narrative, shaped by both realism and sentimentalism. The author proved to be exemplary in his fusion of the probable and the improbable. Furthermore, Walpole was probably influenced by Warton and Hurd in the way he treated the relation between the medieval setting and the manifestation of the supernatural. The two history critics, indeed, were persuaded that modern times had gained civility, yet had lost imagination, something that Gothic had to take back. This is the innovation prompted by Walpole: he

[44] H. Walpole, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[45] *Ibidem.*
[46] *Idem*, p. 6.

was the progenitor of a new fictional style that paradoxically looks back to the past and depicts it in a different way.

Another important aspect of Walpole's choice of blending romance and novel is given by his religious beliefs: he was by no means Catholic. Since Catholic Church dominated in medieval times, ancient romance was associated to this creed, thus explaining why Walpole dismissed this genre and opted for the novel as an expression of Protestant vision. As a matter of fact, in the preface to the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole pretends to be the novel's translator, and insists that the story takes part in a Catholic strategy to reinforce belief in miracles. Miracles are the evidence of God's will and intervention in reality insofar they control the outcome of events. Indeed, Walpole claims that the novel was originally written by a Catholic monk, as in opposition to Luther. It was actually the sixteenth-century Reformation of Walpole's time that brought to light disbelief in the occurrence of miracles; in other words, it aligned superstitious Catholics against more rational Protestants. However, the author's depiction of medieval supernatural beliefs is quite ambivalent: sometimes he expressed spoof and parody, while other times he underlined integrity and redemption.

Furthermore, Walpole was influenced by Burke's work: he employed terror in his text as the guiding principle of the sublime, as he confirmed in the first preface: "Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions."[47] It was a period during which the reading audience was bored of past literature and looked for artificial excitements and novelty.[48] Walpole accepted the challenge and employed the terror sublime and the hybridisation of two literary forms in order to create an original work.

At the end of the eighteenth century, when the quest for novelty and originality reached its peak, Clara Reeve decided to follow Walpole's initiative and in 1778 wrote *The Old English Baron.* The novel was first published anonymously in 1777 under the title of *The Champion of Virtue*. In medieval judicial system, the "champions" were those individuals who fought one-on-one against an opponent in order to prove their baron's or their king's innocence. The *Old English Baron* might be considered as a direct descendant of *The Castle of Otranto*. As Walpole had previously done, originally

[47] H. Walpole, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[48] E. J. Clery, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Reeve presented the story as the mere transcription of an old manuscript she found. However, the editor of the second edition recommended her to remove this information from the preface, even though some textual references to its authenticity have been left throughout the novel. Reeve therefore wrote in the 1778 preface:

> This Story is the literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto,* written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel, at the same time it assumes a character and manner of its own, that differs from both; it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic Story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners.[49]

The story follows the adventures of Sir Philip Harclay, (namely, the champion of virtue mentioned in the title of the first edition). After a long journey abroad, Sir Philip returns to his native medieval England of the mid-1430s. He discovers that his best friend, Lord Arthur Lovel, was killed on his way home from a battle and that his pregnant wife died for grief. Arthur's cousin, Lord Walter Lovel, inherited the castle and estate, but successively sold all the properties to his brother-in-law, Lord Fitz-Owen, namely, the old English baron. Sir Philip is shocked and astonished by the events; he cannot accept what happened, and his doubts are confirmed by a dream in which his old friend informs him that his properties were usurped. In addition, the servants report him that the castle is haunted by the ghosts of Lord and Lady Lovel: they occasionally appear in their apartment in the east wing, that is now wholly shut up. Moreover, it seems that Lord Walter has sold the estate because he could not sleep at night in quiet. Sir Philip, therefore, decides to clarify what happened and starts to investigate. He discovers that the baron's household consists of his two sons; his daughter Emma; several nephews and cousins; and Edmund Twyford, the son of a peasant family, who has been brought to the castle to be educated as the attendant of the baron's sons, when they embark a military career. At the beginning, Lord Fitz-Owen's sons and nephews accept Edmund as their equal and admire him for his talent and temper, even though he does not belong to aristocracy, but later the eldest son of them, Robert, becomes jealous and, with the help of his cousin Richard, try to get rid of Edmund. When Sir Philip meets Edmund for the first time, he immediately likes him, because of his superior qualities and, probably because he reminds him of his lost friend Arthur. Sir Philip, then, proposes Edmund to become part of his family, as he has no children; but Edmund refuses, he prefers to live

[49] C. Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, cit., p. 8.

with the baron. Anyway, they make a deal: whenever Edmund is in trouble and needs the help of the Sir Philip, he will help him. Afterwards, Robert and Richard persecute Edmund in order to undermine his credibility and reputation, but uselessly. Richard is particularly aggressive because he is in love with his cousin, Emma, but she loves Edmund, and so does he (even though it is a forbidden love, being it between a peasant and a noble woman). Slowly, the attacks on Edmund do finally begin to ruin Lord Fitz-Owen's opinion of him. He then decides to test Edmund's bravery by challenging him to spend three nights in the disused and haunted wing; Edmund accepts. During the first night, he has a weird dream: he sees a warrior in armour holding his lady by hand, they approach the bed and recognise him as their child. The baron is impressed by Edmund's courage, but, although he knows that Robert and Richard slandered him, he decides to send him away for the sake of peace. He promises, however, to provide Edmund with a respectable life and a military career. On his second night in the east wing, Father Oswald, the family's confessor, and Joseph, one of the servants, meet Edmund to inform him about some strange circumstances about the Lovels' death. Lady Lovel's ghost was seen wandering in that area and crying out in pain. She was expected to give birth at the time of her husband's death, but she died, even though her death was not caused by her labour. Moreover, before her death, Lord Walter, Arthur's cousin, was overheard to offer marriage to the widow. Both Oswald and Joseph are suspicious about the Lovels' death and finish their report by ascertaining Edmund's likeness to Lord Arthur. Suddenly, they hear the fall of something heavy in the lower room and go to check. They find the portraits of the Lovels, which witness Edmund's resemblance to Arthur. There is also a locked closet, which can be unlocked only by Edmund's hands. Inside, they find Lord Lovel's bloody armour and his ring. Looking at the floor, Edmund discovers some loose boards, hidden by a table. At that moment, they hear a dismal groan coming from underneath the floor. Frightened, they can do nothing but kneel and pray. After recovering, they visit the Twyfords, Edmund's family, in order to get more information. They thus learn that Andrew Twyford discovered Edmund by a river in the forest, next to the dead body of a rich lady. He then brought the baby home, but buried the woman in the woods, afraid of being blamed for her death. Hence, Edmund decides to seek help from Sir Philip Harclay and, on his third night in the rooms, he slips away and goes to the Lord. After he learns the real occurrences about

the Lovels' death, Sir Philip challenges the false Lord Lovel to combat and defeats him. Believing that he is going to die, Lord Walter Lovel confesses he murdered his cousin, and that he hid his body beneath the floorboards in the east wing. Afterwards, when he does not die, the false Lord tries to retract his confession, but in vain. In the end, Edmund restores his rightful position as the proper Lovel's heir and eventually marries Emma Fitz-Owen.

Clara Reeve perfectly managed to combine the ancient romance with the modern novel, blending real life and passions. Her story is quite similar to that of Walpole, yet she reduced the supernatural account, extended the narration of everyday life with minute details and intensified the description of the different relationships among the characters. She represented chivalric western England from a patriotic view by portraying justice, gallantry, and virtue; however, she did not pay much attention to historical detail, as Walpole instead had done. Moreover, Reeve's account of supernatural agency appears only in her characters' prophetic dreams, by giving the readers a hint of what would come later in the novel, as if she refused to create suspense. By limiting supernatural occurrences, she developed a more realistic fiction than that of Walpole. As outlined in her *Progress of Romance*, indeed, she was preoccupied with the risk of instilling absurd or illogical ideas in her readers. She did not want to present events beyond the limits of probability, but rather, she wanted to conform fiction to reality as much as possible. In this regard, she was more interested in depicting virtue and moral in order to inspire readers to be noble and heroic. In synthesis, according to E.J. Clery, she developed her narrative technique to "aim at moral improvement, … [even though] terror and sublime were sacrificed".[50] In sum, *The Old English Baron* was published as a revision of *The Castle of Otranto*, but the novel is a more detailed and less fanciful work than it.

At the end of the eighteenth century, two contemporaneous yet totally different English writers contributed to vary the Gothic genre: Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Gregory Lewis. They were influential Gothic novelists and fundamental representatives of respectively the Female Gothic and the Male Gothic. The question whether these terms can be regarded as genres on their own or as sub-genres is still unresolved; however, on many occasions, the Male Gothic is considered as the "true Gothic", while

[50] E. J. Clery, *op. cit.,* p. 33.

the Female Gothic is sub-categorised by different terms, such as "women's Gothic", "feminine Gothic", "lesbian Gothic", etc. Notwithstanding, they are both generally viewed as Gothic subgenres which differ in their motifs, in their plot, and in their narrative technique. Indeed, when the works by Radcliffe and Lewis are compared, several antitheses are generated: sensibility/sensationalism, terror/horror, poetic/ironic, explained/unexplained supernatural.

In 1976, Ellen Moers first coined the term "Female Gothic" referring to texts written by women for women.[51] Later, in 1983, Juliann Fleenor edited *The Female Gothic,* a collection of essays which offers divergent points of view about this genre. Anyway, the denomination refers both to the (female) gender of the writer and to the main issue treated in these texts: women's discontent due to patriarchal repression of their feminine and maternal dimension. In general, Female Gothic writers use their narrative as a device to symbolise women's struggle for the acknowledgement of their political and sexual rights. Clara Reeve might be considered the very first author in line with Female Gothic writing. Her stories did not focus on women characters, but they are explicitly addressed to female readers. Moreover, given that Reeve's narrative adhered to reality, she presented women's role and position in society as truthfully as possible. Furthermore, Reeve's writings enhanced medieval times and the code of chivalry, a period during which women were idealised as superior beings. Within Gothic literature, female roles are mainly associated to two figures: the dangerous "predator" and the vulnerable "victim". Ann Radcliffe went beyond this clear distinction; she combined these contrasting roles in her heroines, a motif which would become typical of Female Gothic works. Radcliffe's fiction concerns the vicissitudes of persecuted heroines - such as orphans, mothers, or aunts - who confront and fight against the oppression of patriarchal power; finally, they find relief in marriage, but only if their beloved agrees to recognise their economic wealth and their social freedom. More than that, Robert Miles claimed that Radcliffe's heroines incorporate the need for expressing her identity as a female writer.[52] Her most famous novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho, A Romance* (1794), is set in southern France and northern Italy at the end of the sixteenth century. The story focuses on the difficult situation of Emily St. Aubert, a young French girl, who is the

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[51] R. Miles, "Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis", in D. Punter (ed), *A New Companion to the Gothic,* Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012, pp. 93-190, p. 95.
[52] *Idem*, p. 98.

only child of a family of landowners now facing some economic troubles. Daughter and father are very close because of their shared love for nature and, when the mother dies, their bond grows deeper. They went on a travel through the Pyrenees and, during the journey, they meet Valancourt, a young respectable man who is fond of nature, too. Emily and Valancourt rapidly fall in love. Unfortunately, Emily's father falls ill and dies after a long convalescence, forcing the now orphaned girl to live with Madame Cheron, her aunt. They share no interests and Madame Cheron does not show much affection to her. Her aunt marries Signor Montoni, a scoundrel who masquerades as an Italian nobleman. He is rude and often harsh to Emily, who supposes him to be the captain of *banditti*. Montoni wants Emily to get married with his friend Count Morano, but, after discovering that the Count is financially in trouble, Montoni imprisons Emily and Madame Cheron in his remote castle of Udolpho. Emily is therefore separated from Valancourt and fears they would never meet again. Count Morano tries to help the young girl to escape from the castle, but she rejects his aid because of her love to Valancourt. Nonetheless, Montoni discovers Morano's plan; he then wounds him and chases him away. Successively, Montoni threatens Madame Cheron violently, in order to force her to sign over her estates in Toulouse to him, which would otherwise be due to Emily upon her aunt's death. Montoni's cruelty makes Madame Cheron fall ill and then die, however, she does not resign her wealth. Afterwards, a series of frightening and dreadful events occur at the castle, but Emily eventually manages to flee, thanks to another prisoner and two servants. After having come back to her aunt's estate, Emily retrieves the property and is finally reunited with Valancourt.

As evidenced in this text, in all her works Radcliffe opted for the novel of sensibility and poetic realism: she intensively employed the sublime and the picturesque in her extensive descriptions of exotic landscapes and Gothic spaces, along with the references to Shakespeare and contemporary British poets in the epigraphs (perhaps as an evidence of her nationalism as a Whig). In addition, she is centrally concerned with the issue of legitimacy, especially when it is related to property and possession inheritance. Furthermore, Radcliffe introduced the device of the "explained supernatural": in her fiction, the supernatural appears as the product of natural phenomena of the mind - similar to sudden madness - experienced when repressed thoughts arise, often stimulated after the discovery of a secret.

Another important acquisition obtained by Radcliffe, is her distinction between horror and terror in Gothic literature. In her essay *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826), she drew upon Edmund Burke's explanations to characterise terror as an abstract and supernatural fear caused by obscurity or indeterminacy; instead, to her horror corresponds to a material and physical danger induced by threat or atrocity. In this sense, when Radliffe's characters react to fear, they can experience either terror or horror: the first incorporates anxiety and dread, but simultaneously makes the reader experience the sublime as a deepen expression of life; the latter comprises dissolution and anti-conformism, and contemporaneously makes the reader feel annihilation and ambiguity, since the characters violate conventional accepted norms to provoke astonishment and rebellion. By means of this definition, Radcliffe's works adhere to terror, while those of Lewis are connected to horror.

Lewis' writing genre adheres to the Male Gothic, defined as a man's conflict with authority,[53] and is mainly interested with the issues of gender and class identity.[54] Horace Walpole, William Beckford, and Lord Byron are writers also associated with the Male Gothic. Their works are drawn from the author's experience and, since they were overtly or covertly homosexual, their fiction specifically treats deviation from a normative gender pattern, namely heterosexuality. In her book *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (1995), Anne Williams characterised the Male Gothic, defining it as a text about an insatiable villain/hero, baseless supernatural agency, and horrifying crimes that cause women suffering and, occasionally, male pleasure derived from female victimisation; women are almost always represented in a negative way, generally regarded as the unnatural and artificial "otherness", responsible for the weakness and irrationality of the masculine-self facing temptation. From the patriarchal point of view, any woman who becomes an object of the male gaze, may never be anything else but an object, and a focus of unconscious resentments against the feminine.[55]

Differently from Radcliffe, Lewis' works include eroticism and sensationalism, similar to those of Marquis De Sade, and adhere to Gothic horror. While Radcliffe explored legitimacy, Lewis depicted illegitimacy. For instance, *The Monk* (1796), well-

[53] R. Miles, *op. cit*, p. 96.
[54] *Idem*, p. 97.
[55] A. Williams, *Art of Darkness, a Poetics of Gothic,* The University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 102-105, 108-109.

known as his masterpiece, contains illicit passion, unnatural occurrences, insatiable desire, erotic obsession, and unspeakable vices, all connected by depravity. The novel mainly concentrates on the story of Ambrosio, an orphan who becomes monk of The Order of Friars Capuchin. He lives in Madrid and pursues an exemplary life without either sin or temptation. He makes the acquaintance of Rosario, a young novice, and they soon become best friends. After some time, Rosario confesses to Ambrosio that he is actually a woman, Matilda, who is in love with him and chose to take vows in order to live near him. Ambrosio is very confused, as he should reveal the outrage, but at the same time he does not want to hurt Matilda/Rosario. The monk eventually decides to keep the secret, even though this choice makes him vulnerable to temptation, and he finally breaks his vows of chastity yielding to lust. Ambrosio's erotic desire is yet insatiable, and he is now attracted by Antonia, an innocent young girl. Matilda helps him to satisfy his lechery through sorcery: she invokes Lucifer and provides the monk with a magic myrtle bough: it will unlock any door and make Antonia fall asleep, thus giving Ambrosio the opportunity of abusing her. However, when the monk is on the point of raping her, Elvira, Antonia's mother, enters the room and threatens him to expose the fact to the Spanish Inquisition. Ambrosio then murders Elvira and flees. Nevertheless, he does not renounce his plan and, once more helped by Matilda, he poisons Antonia with a concoction that induces in her a sleep as deep as death. After the doctor declares Antonia dead, Ambrosio takes her body to the crypt of the monastery and rapes her. Some soldiers discover and arrest him and Matilda, but without having the time to stop him from stabbing Antonia. The Spanish Inquisition tortures the two and condemns them to be burnt. Ambrosio is desperate and wants to repent, as he trusts in the mercy of God. However, he is too frightened about the execution and signs a contract with Lucifer: he sells him his soul in exchange for salvation. Lucifer then rescues Ambrosio and brings him on a cliff, informing him that the contract previewed he would rescue him from the Inquisition, but this did not mean that he would save his life. Lucifer continues to reveal Ambrosio some baffling information: Elvira was his mother (adding matricide to his crimes); Antonia therefore was his sister (making him guilty also of incest); Matilda was a demon whom Satan sent to seduce and corrupt Ambrosio. Last, but not least, Lucifer tells the monk that their contract was useless, hence the Inquisition would have pardoned him. Lucifer than drops Ambrosio on the

rocks below, letting him suffer for six days, and at last die alone and damned for eternity. This is a short summary of the story about the monk Ambrosio, but the plot follows other sub-stories about the vicissitudes of various characters who are all connected in some way to each other: Antonia and her mother Elvira; Lorenzo, a wealthy nobleman who is in love with Antonia; Agnes, Lorenzo's sister, who is a pregnant nun and has a love story with Don Raymond.

Unlike Radcliffe, Lewis opted for irony and unexplained supernatural. This latter occurs throughout the story by many devices: evil spirits, nightmares, the ghost of the Bleeding Nun, magic mirrors and potions, wizardry. The novel was immediately very successful, even though success came along with scandal and criticism: Lewis intensified delicate topics to excess, as in the case of transgression, rape, matricide, incest, sibling murder, and presence of evil spirits. The author had therefore to publish a revised work in 1798, in which he censored the most scabrous scenes. It is notable that Lewis showed identity as something provisional and changeable depending on the situation, confirming that nothing is what it seems. For instance, the real identity of Rosario/Matilda - whether it is a man or a woman, and whether it is a human being or an evil spirit - remains unresolved. The reader has to speculate on the distinction of what is natural, real, and acceptable from what is unnatural, imaginative, and unacceptable. In addition, in the beginning, the text itself is presented as a plagiarism of pre-existing material that was ironically collected. Irony might result in satire or worse, as some scholars claimed. For example, Robert Miles argued that Ambrosio's punishment can even be regarded as blaspheme, as it is a parody of Genesis (the Monk undergoes torture for six day, before resting [dying] on the seventh).[56] From another point of view, some scholars considered the punishment by divine justice as a homosexual allegory, with Ambrosio disguised as a sodomite who is culprit and thus executed. In any case, I conclude that the text deals with psychological insight and, on the whole, invokes morality, showing one man's decline from grace up to his abjection through greed, violence, and lust.

The best-known Gothic writers in England were Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Gregory Lewis, Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, and the Brontë sisters; while in Ireland they were Regina Maria Roche, Maria Edgeworth, Sydney

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[56] R. Miles, *op. cit*, p. 106.

Owenson, Charles Robert Maturin, Sheridan Le Fanu, Bram Stoker, and Oscar Wilde. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Gothic fiction reached a central role in the British publishing world. However, while in Britain publishing houses were prolific in the publication of Gothic novels, Ireland was less productive and receptive of this genre. When British copyright laws were extended to Ireland through the Act of Union, Irish publishing underwent a significant decline.[57] It seems therefore that, while Britain was mainly interested in Gothic fiction, Ireland was not that concerned. By consequence, literary studies on British Gothic fiction usually overlook that two Irish Gothic novels were published before *The Castle of Otranto*: *The Adventures of Miss Sophia Berkley* (1760) by an anonymous author, and *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (1762) by Thomas Leland. According to Christina Morin, early Irish Gothic fiction was set aside by British literature criticism since scholarship concentrated in literary genres such as the regional novel, the national tale, and the historical novel, generally thought to arose after the Act of Union in 1801.[58] Scholars, hence, focused more on categorising and defining these three types of novel, rather than paying attention to Irish literary production as a whole. In doing so, early Irish Gothic fiction remained unexplored, until roughly the 1980s, when the term "Irish Gothic" was introduced.[59] The debate over the origins and development of Irish Gothic literature is as insightful as that over Gothic literature as a whole. In fact, Gothic literature was underestimated and undervalued as the lowest of genres, considered as a mere sideshow of Romanticism.[60] Walter Scott even dared to call Gothic writers as "hack writers who write solely for gain".[61] In any case, Irish Gothic literature is as resistant to canonisation as Gothic literature in general. Scholars, indeed, assumed divergent yet similar interpretations, due to the overall inability of defining the Gothic. Given the assumption that literature is a cultural filter which mirrors the contingencies of the time; thereby the Gothic reflects the changing and evolving conditions over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; likewise Irish Gothic is the product of a particular modality of thinking originated by Irish

[57] S. Kilfeather, "The Gothic Novel", in J. F. Wilson (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 78-96, p. 79.
[58] C. Morin, "Forgotten Fiction: Reconsidering the Gothic Novel in Eighteenth-Century Ireland", *Irish University Review*, Irish Fiction, 1660-1830, Vol. 41, No. 1, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011, pp. 80-94, p. 81.
[59] C. Morin & N. Gillespie, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
[60] C. Morin, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
[61] M. Gamer, "Gothic Fictions and Romantic Writing in Britain", in J. E. Hogle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction.* Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 85-104, p. 91.

geographical, temporal, and cultural background. In this sense, Irish Gothic literature represents a cultural form to express reality. Late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century scholarship has generally considered Irish Gothic literature as the expression of the repressed fears, anxieties, and desires produced by the minority of Anglo-Irish population in Ireland.[62] In this respect, Anglo-Irish literature is viewed as distinct from Irish literature written in English and can be identified as the literary production of the social, economic, and political caste of the Protestant Ascendancy, who dominated Ireland under British rule. Starting from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the English Crown had confiscated land holdings belonging to native Roman Catholic landowners in Ireland and sold them to English and Protestant soldiers and traders, who thus became the new ruling class, namely, the Protestant Ascendancy. The Anglo-Irish, therefore, were a local aristocratic class who based its ruling legitimacy on English power in Ireland. The Protestant Ascendancy imagined an Anglo-Irish tradition which was progressively broken and fragmented by political changes and conflicts, which undermined their unity and stability over time. They aimed at empowering and legitimate their hybrid and ambivalent cultural status by supporting and defending an invented Anglo-Irish tradition. In doing so, they also influenced literature. Anglo-Irish writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shared Protestant confessionalism and the vision of colonial history as afflicting, which are presented in their works via Gothic themes, settings, and motifs.[63] Anglo-Irish Gothic literature was thereby used as a political vehicle to spread anti-Catholic polemic and to condemn a violent colonial past. Anglo-Irish Gothic writers were privileged because of their Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, however, they experienced fear and anxiety due to "a sense of displacement, a loss of social and psychological integration, and an escapism motivated by the threat of a takeover by the Catholic middle classes."[64] In the aftermath of Anglo-Irish Union (1801), indeed, the Protestant Ascendancy was increasingly under threat by a growing

[62] C. Morin, "Theorizing 'Gothic' in Eighteenth-Century Ireland", in C. Morin & N. Gillespie Niall, (ed.), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 13-33, p. 13.

[63] J. Killeen, "Irish Gothic: A Theoretical Introduction", *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies 1*, October 2006, pp. 1-10, p. 2.

[64] R. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History*, London: Penguin, 1995, p. 220.

Catholic middle class and an ongoing campaign for Catholic emancipation.[65] Over the course of the nineteenth century, indeed, the political and cultural scenario of the relationship between England and Ireland underwent crucial changes, leading to two opposite inclinations: on the one side, Irish Roman Catholics demanded enfranchisement from Britain; whereas, on the other side, British Protestants established a policy of integration and assimilation of the Irish into the British state. Even though this unionist strategy was considered as an essential step for the evolution of Irish population from barbarism to civilization, the Anglo-Irish were haunted by preoccupations and anxieties: they feared that assimilation would provoke the debilitation of their British purity and descent. In their vision, integration did not equal reconciliation with the native Irish, but rather the disintegration of their British distinctiveness. Anglo-Irish were simultaneously dependent on an English distant centre of power, yet alienated from the surrounding Irish background. In his *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1866), Matthew Arnold illustrated the ambivalences inherent to the British policy of assimilation and how Anglo-Irish writers dealt with it in their literary production. The critic was pro-integration; hence he advocated an Irish local control system that would allow a peaceful political union with England. In addition, he believed that not only the Irish would benefit from integration, but also the English would take advantage of this union.[66] He actually judged Celtic identity as inferior to the Saxon one, but he viewed it as a complementary part of British nature. He went further by connecting the Celtic spirit with femininity and the Saxon essence to masculinity. In his mind - and in the preconceived mentality of his nineteenth-century contemporaries and successors - the Celts were incapable of self-government, unstable, and unbalanced as females; while the Saxons were rational, steady, and balanced as males. Starting from this presumption, a symbolic marriage between Britain and Ireland is the consequent reconciliation of their complementary affinities. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most part of Anglo-Irish writers included the marriage plot in their texts: sometimes as an optimistic and stimulating union between the feminine Celt and the masculine Saxon; more often as a perilous misalliance to be avoided. Anglo-Irish

[65] V. Kreilkamp, "The Novel and the Big House", in J.W. Foster (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to the Irish Novel,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 60-77, p. 66.
[66] W. E. Buckler, ""On the Study of Celtic Literature": A Critical Reconsideration", *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Spring 1989, West Virginia University Press. pp. 61-76, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4000231 (29th August 2019).

tended to deal with issues about gender, sexuality, and union as agents of corruption rather than harmonious and romantic integration. Most of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish Gothic works were narratives about external threat, internal corruption, and preservation of pure lineage. Indeed, not only Protestant Ascendancy was jeopardized by the British policy of assimilation, but it was also weakened by internal vices such as greed, absenteeism, extravagance, etc. The danger of a possible disintegration of the Anglo-Irish class came therefore both from inside and outside their caste, producing a deeply fragmented and corrupted sense of tradition and identity. In conclusion, post-Union and pre-Famine nineteenth-century Ireland was deeply unsettled and experienced a deeply sectarian Irish politics; literary Gothic was not used to terrify, but rather to speculate on political, social, and cultural issues; Anglo-Irish authors were involved in explaining, rationalizing, celebrating, or lamenting the contemporary or past historical situation.

Current scholarship has questioned these assumptions. For instance, Jarlath Killeen contends that Irish Gothic literature incorporates a variety of authors with different political creeds. He claims that it is not a Protestant response to the loss of social power associated with the Anglo-Irish Union; it does not aim at impeding Catholic emancipation. In Killeen's opinion, Irish Gothic literature originated in earlier times, namely in the mid-seventeenth century.[67] Likewise, Christina Morin disapproves the exclusivist notion of Irish Gothic literature as the mirror of Protestant Ascendancy's preoccupations. She claims that it pre-existed before Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and accommodated itself to a multiplicity of constituents according to class, gender, and religion.[68] Siobhán Kilfeather argues that "before 1798, the Irish Gothic was close to the English Gothic in terms of its interest in history, ghosts, and sensational terrors. […] After 1798, Irish Gothic became more realistic in depicting contemporary life in Ireland."[69] Niall Gillespie adds that the multi-generic approach of Gothic literature was caused by what genre would best facilitate political propaganda. As an example, he posits that the Irish Jacobins did not employ the Gothic genre to express unreality, but rather they used it to describe the very real occurrences of that period.[70] Similarly,

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[67] J. Killeen, *op. cit.,* p. 3.
[68] C. Morin & N. Gillespie, *op. cit.,* p. 6.
[69] S. Kilfeather, *op. cit.,* p. 81.
[70] C. Morin & N. Gillespie, *op. cit*., p. 7.

Anglo-Irish writers had to adapt their works to satisfy English market's requirements - since they economically depended on it - that demanded the representation of Irish political concerns through an implicit and encoded form. Last but not least, Siobhán Kilfeather makes an exhaustive list concerning the variety of texts that are included in Irish Gothic fiction: those written by Irish writers and set in Ireland; those written by Irish writers but principally not set in Ireland; those written by English writers and set in Ireland; those written by Anglo-Irish writers, set or not set in Ireland, which evoke the author's Irish identity and heritage; finally, those derived from the translations into English and Irish of Gothic works.[71] In few words, Gothic literature in Ireland incorporates a wide and nuanced variety of works that withstands canonization. In conclusion, Gothic literary production as a whole, either British or Irish, consists of various texts that allow variable readings and approaches.

In general, Gothic literature registers a sort of cohesiveness in its tropes, thus enabling to identify a text as a Gothic work.[72] At the end of the eighteenth century, for instance, Edmund Burke provided a list of conventions that can be ascribed to the Gothic novel, even though Gothic fiction is essentially hybrid and any Gothic text is unique by definition. In *A Philosophical Enquiry*, the philosopher enlists:

> Take –
> An old castle, half of it ruinous.
> A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
> Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.
> As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
> An old woman hanging by the neck; with her throat cut.
> Assassins and desperados, "quant. suff."
> Noises, whispers and groans, three-score at least.
> Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering-places before going to bed.[73]

Even though eighteenth-century Irish Gothic literature embraces all of these motifs or most of them, it actually fails to adhere to the parameters attributed to the British Gothic novel because of two main aspects: it does not employ Catholic remote continental settings and it does not embrace nostalgia for the past. Indeed, British Gothic novels (except Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron,* in which the story is settled in England) use distant European Catholic environments as the expression of superstition, irrationality, and primitivism. Britain, instead, is viewed as a rational, modern, and

[71] S. Kilfeather, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
[72] *Idem*, p. 81.
[73] E. Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

secure place. In this regard, early Irish Gothic novels are diametrically opposed: Ireland and England become as threatening as France, Spain, or Italy. The whole Continent itself is thus identified with Gothic horror. At the same time, Irish Gothic writings vindicate Ireland insofar they dissociate it from misfortune and atrocity. They reverse the contemporary English view of Ireland as atavistic and primordial, thus celebrating an Irish, not British, national identity. Nevertheless, Ireland is an unsafe place because it is haunted by the spectres of the past. In this respect, the past acquires a new and different signification from British Gothic tradition. Actually, British Gothic novels represent the past from two contrasting directions: works like Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* view the past as nasty and limiting individual liberties; whereas writings like Reeve's *The Old English Baron* celebrate an idealised past, that is nostalgic of medieval times. On the contrary, Irish Gothic fiction depicts the past as dreadful. Not only there is no reason of associating history with melancholia, but also the past is memory of destruction and tragedy, and interrupts the present with painful consequences. All Irish Gothic writers shared the traumatic, violent, and bloodshed events sprang from the 1798 Irish upraising and the 1801 Act of Union, which led to a devastated and sectarian Ireland. It is no wonder that most of Irish Gothic works incorporate plots that are allegories of the dramatic historical reality of the time. In sum, Irish Gothic literature cannot be considered, as some scholars have done in the past, as an offshoot of the eighteenth-century literary tradition, but rather as a literary current of its own. In fact, Irish Gothic texts play a fundamental role in the development of the Gothic novel since they revise what was commonly attributed to the Gothic novel in eighteenth-century Britain. Early Irish Gothic works such as *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* and *The Adventures of Miss Sophia Berkley* not only evidence that Irish literature does not primarily consist in the national tale, the historical novel, and regional fiction; but also confirm the different interpretation about the past, national identity, and environmental setting that Irish writers maintain by comparison with British authors.

The novel *The Adventures of Miss Sophia Berkley* (1760) starts with two tragic episodes: Sophia's groom Horatio is seemingly killed on the eve of their wedding day, and her father dies of illness. Sophia is therefore forced to leave her childhood home in Ireland, because of both the grief of her losses and her father's debt on the family property. Hence, she moves to London, where she meets Castilio, a depraved man who

attempts to seduce her. Since Sophia refuses him, he imprisons her in his country mansion, but she manages to escape. Later on, she incidentally meets again her supposed-to-be-dead groom, who was not murdered, but taken prisoner instead. Sophia and Horatio finally get married and settle in England.

As Thomas Leland subtitled his work *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (1762) with the definition *An Historical Text*, the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review* praised it because of its historical truth (combined with poetry and imagination);[74] indeed, the novel concerns actual facts and many of the characters were real people (William Longsword was actually William Longespée, and other characters were existing figures: Longsword's wife, Ela, King John, King Henry III, Hubert de Burgh, etc.). The novel deals with the events occurred to William Longsword, the third Earl of Salisbury and illegitimate son of king Henry II. In 1225, after having battled in the wars in France, he comes back to England, his homeland. During his return journey, he experiences various trials and troubles, such as a shipwreck, an imprisonment, and an assassination attempt. When he finally arrives home, he finds his estate usurped by the dishonest Raymond, the nephew of the king's advisor Hubert, who has spread rumours about Longsword's presumed death. Raymond wants also to marry Longsword's wife, Ela, but she repeatedly refuses him. Raymond therefore first imprisons her in the castle; then sends her to a nearby monastery, where Raymond's brother, the monk Reginhald, helps him with his devious machinations. Eventually, Longsword arrives just in time to stop the marriage; he reunites with his family and takes care of his wife, who has become almost insane for her sufferings; consequently, he regains control of his property.

By analysing the two novels, some similarities arise and confirm what previously said about Irish Gothic fiction diverging from the British one. For first, the main and recurrent trope is the past, which is featured by violence and crime, and haunts the characters' lives by its intrusion into present. Secondly, both the heroines do not feel secure at their own home, which is pictured as a disturbing and distressing place, where they suffer imprisonment and estrangement. Thirdly, both the heroes are believed to have been killed, but finally come back from the land of the dead and vindicate their lover. Lastly, the conclusion of both texts includes a happy ending and suggests that the return of the past rehabilitates the present, thus enabling victory over past oppression

[74] C. Morin, "Forgotten Fiction: Reconsidering the Gothic Novel in Eighteenth-Century Ireland", cit., p. 84.

and strife, and prompting a happier future. However, both narratives do not grant that the past will not invade the present again, above all through the characters' memories of past atrocities. What is additional in *The Adventures of Miss Sophia Berkley* is that the author, by depicting Sophia's loyalty to her Irish lover and her simultaneous rejection of the English pretender, highlights the value of national loyalty.

Moving further throughout Irish literary production, literature is increasingly intertwined with religious and political issues, as evidenced by the works of Maturin and Le Fanu.

Charles Robert Maturin (1780-1824) descended from a family of Huguenots and became a clergyman who professed Calvinism. He was a staunch Irish nationalist, so much that he dreamt of an idealised Ireland which retrieved its ancient culture and tradition. Indeed, although being Irish by birth, he felt disconnected from contemporary Irish community. Not only did he feel estranged from his compatriots, but he also lived isolated from metropolitan life. He was quite eccentric, extravagant, and liked dressing up and participating to masquerades. He enjoyed telling stories, even about his family origins, as confirmed by the various versions he recounted about his birth and childhood, which proved nothing but uncertainty about his family history. He thus created in his life a sort of split identity between what he showed in public and what he was in reality. It was a sort of self-division that touched also his confessionalism: he was hostile both to Anglo-Irish Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. His writings present mixed genres, such as the national tale, the Gothic novel, the family romance, and the historical romance, and most of his works can be viewed as a readjustment resulting by a concoction of previously published texts. His recurring themes include rootlessness, deracination, displacement, and inauthenticity. Maturin's best-known works are *The Wild Irish Boy* (1808), *The Milesian Chief* (1812), and *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). All of them contain a gothic connotation, even if the proportion of gothic elements changes in each work: in *The Wild Irish Boy* the Gothic is marginal; in *The Milesian Chief* the Gothic is equally mixed with the national tale; while in *Melmoth the Wanderer* the Gothic is dominant. All of these three stories concern Irish political issues, however the first two are not set in Ireland, while the third is plenty of references to Maturin's native country.

Considered the last of the "classic" Gothic romances, *Melmoth the Wanderer* tells the story of a student, John Melmoth, who visits his dying uncle. Through his uncle's will, he finds out the existence of a long-dead relative, named John Melmoth like him, but nicknamed "the wanderer", since he was seen in different places throughout Europe long after his death. During the following days, John makes the acquaintance of a few people who tell him stories about the wanderer. He then learns that his ancestor sold his soul to the devil in exchange for a prolonged life. In the meanwhile, however, the wanderer occasionally appears to John, and finally reveals that, during the additional hundred and fifty years granted by the devil, he travelled in search for someone who could free him from his Faustian pact. He asked people to sell their souls, but no one had ever accepted. He is now exhausted and wants to end his wanderings. The day after his confession, the wanderer disappears and the only remaining trace of him is a scarf near the seaside cliff, the place from where he apparently jumped off.

In *Melmoth the Wanderer,* the Gothic tradition is expressed by a superb representation of the sublime and the perverse, along with emotional intensity, which channels a vein of romanticism in his work. In particular, the story incorporates Gothic claustrophobia and Calvinist pessimism.[75] All the settings, such as catacombs, crypts, and underground passages, are enclosed and interior spaces. The backgrounds of the story adhere to the Gothic tradition: a haunted site which gives the characters a feeling of entrapment and live burial. The action in the narration is minimal, as Maturin provided the story with a complex structure of narratives within narratives, which frames the plot into separated tales. He dedicated long paragraphs to describe the characters' mental mechanisms, usually accompanied by pessimism. The protagonists, indeed, are always concerned with misery, suffering, and danger; they never feel secure, even when they are at home, and experience a sense of dislocation and displacement. Irish Gothic in Maturin's works deals with the motifs of Gothic tradition, such as usurpation and illegitimacy, but differs from it insofar Maturin attributed special attention to the psychology of despair and the torments of religion. In doing so, he tragically depicted the triumph of trauma over the characters' lives. Moreover, *Melmoth the Wanderer* refuses the happy ending of the marriage plot in each of the tales that are

[75] R. Miles, "Charles Robert Maturin; Ireland's Eccentric Genius", in J. M. Wright (ed.), *A Companion to Irish Literature, Vol. One & Two*, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, pp. 345-360, p. 354.

comprised in the novel. This choice might be interpreted as an allegory, since it expresses the way Maturin filtered his opinion about a resolution of the political and religious tensions of a fragmented Ireland: the union between Ireland and England would not improve the Irish plight.

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-73) lived during the first years of the Tithe Wars and his family was resented by native Irish population. He was politically committed and defended his conservatism as a Tory, believing that Anglo-Irish aristocracy was threatened by Whig mercantilism. He was trained as a lawyer but became interested in writing and journalism. Hence, he consequently bought the *Dublin University Magazine* (*DUM*) in 1861 and controlled its content until 1869. Many of his short stories were serialised anonymously in the *DUM* and formed the basis for his future novels. After his wife died, he became a recluse in Dublin, completely alienated and isolated both physically and ideologically from contemporary Ireland. He is praised by criticism for being the father of the Victorian ghost story, above all because his originality consists in presenting ghosts that are physically real, in the sense that they are far from being transparent revenants, but rather they are incarnated by material figures such as thugs, exhausted families, bankrupt individuals, etc. In the major part of his works, indeed, it is the protagonist who is evil, haunted not by metaphysical phantoms, but by the various projections of otherness within their personality. In general, Le Fanu’s works focus on both external sources of horror and internal threats derived from a psychological “other”. Indeed, his recurrent narrative motifs are domestic interior, the doppelganger or double, and otherness as a buried past that comes back into consciousness. Like Maturin before him, he drew upon the motif of the Faustian bargain, and connected it to the psychological and political nightmare of Anglo-Irish. In his similar vision to Maturin, the past is merciless, violent, and continuously encroaches on the present. The past is both personal and historical, and leaves traces in the world, or in the characters’ perception of the world. It is impressive how Le Fanu questioned the concept of the self and that of reality in his writings. He used folklore material as allegories to deepen the contemporary assumptions about the psyche, in order to explore states of discontinuity, psychological strangeness, and in particular the fragmentation of the self. However, he did not provide with any explanations about the question of the origins of psychological upset. In fact, he frequently gave a plurality of explanations, which cancelled one

another out, producing nothing but indeterminacy. It is probably this indeterminacy that best represents his own vision about the current cultural and political situation. In this regard, Le Fanu aimed at asserting firm morality in his own fiction. To do this, he merged Gothic and historical fiction (in the tradition of Walter Scott) by exposing those ghosts that frustrated the Protestant Ascendancy's doomed attempt to consolidate their declining cultural and political power.

His best-known work is the Gothic romance *Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram-Haugh* (1864). Le Fanu called it a "tragic English romance" and made it clear that the novel investigates "incident, death, crime, and mystery in the same way and with the same moral aim of Walter Scott's stories, though being clearly inferior in execution to them."[76] The novel is an expanded version of one of his earlier short stories, published anonymously in the *DUM* under the title *Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess*, and successively reprinted as *The Murdered Cousin,* with some minor changes. In her introduction to the reprint of the romance, Elisabeth Bowen said that it is "an Irish story transposed to an English setting"[77]. Indeed, the Irish background of the original text was modified into an English one. Le Fanu made this change because of his English publisher, who prohibited him to use Irish settings in order to accomplish English market demands. Moreover, also the happy ending in *Uncle Silas* was not present in the original short story, again because of English readers' preference. The novel follows the vicissitudes of the young girl Maud Ruthyn, who lives with her father Austin in their mansion at Knowl. She learns the existence of her father's brother, Silas Ruthyn, an uncle whom she has never met: he is portrayed as a villain and a gambler, who now has completely changed behaviour thanks to his faith in Christianity. She also learns about a suspicious occurrence in her uncle's past: a man, who had lent Silas a huge amount of money for gambling, committed suicide at her uncle's mansion at Bartram-Haugh. Maud's father believes in Silas's innocence, while the girl is quite sceptical. After her father dies, Maud finds out through his will that she has to live with uncle Silas at his residence until she comes of age; if she dies while she is still a minor, her father's estate of Knowl will pass to Silas. Before moving, several episodes which

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[76] J. S. Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram-Haugh,* (1864), 1899, London Macmillan, https://archive.org/details/unclesilastaleof00lefauoft/page/n6, (29/08/2019), p. 9.

[77] E. Bowen, "Introduction", in *Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram-Haugh,* London: The Cresset Press, 1947 (1864), p. 8.

threaten Maud's life occur, but eventually fail. Maud's life at Bartram-Haugh is not particularly disagreeable, yet odd: her uncle and his servants are malevolent and unkind to her. Silas married a lower-class Irish woman, and he is father of two children, the uncouth Dudley and the uneducated Milly, who later will become Maud's best friend. During her stay, Dudley attempts to court Maud several times, but she rejects him on each occasion. Meanwhile, Silas repeatedly suffers from catatonic attacks, that his doctor attributes to his massive consumption of opium. Numerous and ominous events start to take place at the mansion, but Maud and Milly cannot manage to flee from the estate. Meanwhile, Dudley proposes Maud to marry him; when she discusses the issue with Silas, he persuades her to accept. She thus finds out that her uncle wants to force her to marry Dudley in order to get her heritage. Afterwards, it emerges that Dudley is already married, and then Maud is relieved. However, time goes by quickly and Maud will soon be of age; Silas's plan of marrying his son with Maud failed, therefore he resolves to use less diplomatic strategies to achieve his goal. He decides to send Milly to a boarding school in France, with the promise that Maud will soon join her. Again, some mysterious happenings occur, but now Maud is totally aware of Silas's conspiracy to murder her. He then imprisons Maud in one of the mansion's rooms, under the surveillance of Madame de la Rougierre, one of Silas's accomplices. In a turn of events, Madame falls asleep on Maud's bed; Dudley comes to the bedroom to kill Maud, but murders Madame by mistake; Silas enters the room to check if his son was successfully in his mission; Maud slips out the room undetected and, with the help of Milly, manages to escape from Bartram-Haugh. The following day, Silas is found dead after an opium overdose, and there is no trace of Dudley. In the end, Maud comes back to Knowl, repossesses her heritage, and gets happily married to a noble gentleman. The story ends with Maud's consideration:

> This world is a parable - the habitation of symbols - the phantoms of spiritual things immortal shown in material shape. May the blessed second-sight be mine - to recognise under these beautiful forms of earth the angels who wear them; for I am sure we may walk with them if we will, and hear them speak![78]

Le Fanu proved great expertise in reproducing historical accuracy in the narrative, setting his novel in the declining stage of established Protestantism, between Catholic emancipation on the one side, and a proliferation of radical dissent on the other. In

[78] J. S. Le Fanu, *op. cit.,* p. 462.

Uncle Silas, Le Fanu projected all his fears about the fate of the Protestant Ascendancy. Silas's mismatch with a lower-class Celt suggests the decline of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy derived from the sexual corruption of English and Irish union. Silas' son incarnates the family degradation, even though Silas thinks he is a perfect model of English gentleman. In addition, the contrast between corruption and purity is also present in the figures of the gambler Silas and the righteous landlord Austyn. It is also noteworthy how Le Fanu treated the role of gender and sexuality in the text: Maud incarnates Celticness and femininity, drawing upon Matthew Arnold's ideas. Maud is ignorant about her family's tradition and heritage; she is uncomfortable with her femininity; she is hysterical, nervous, uneducated, unstable, and unreliable. In so doing, Le Fanu associated dangerous femininity with Irish corruption. Maud's last words explicate the fictional way Le Fanu employed to personify horror and threat: not by impalpable spectres, but by physical and immoral individuals. Maud associates the past to a parable: here is the writer's conception, similar to Leland's vision, of an intruding past that pervades the present. Furthermore, her last reference to angels seems like an invitation to recall ancestors and embrace tradition to cope with the threats derived from the oppressors, usurpers, and depraved of both the past and the present.

In this chapter I attempted to demonstrate that the Gothic is too vast an issue to be categorized, thus I extended my research - in order to un-classify it - by giving as much information as possible, whether complementary or contradictory, through various sources. Starting from the definition and etymology of the term to its connotation relevant to different fields - historical, political, architectural, literary, and cultural - what clearly resulted is the multi-generic and cross-sectarian nature of the Gothic. It is related to so many sectors and it has varied so much over the centuries that attributing a specific and effective definition to any case is almost vain. Afterwards, I focused on Gothic literature and, even though it is best defined by its indeterminacy, I dealt with those literary elements that can be considered as a common denominator in Gothic works: the uncanny, the sublime, the various binary oppositions, the supernatural, the recourse to the past, etc. Further on, I analysed few early Gothic works, some derived from the British scenario and some others originated from the Irish scene. The literary background of my analysis is pertinent to a series of historical shifts between around the 1760s and the 1860s, which affected both British and Irish society

through a wide range of cultural manifestations. I chose to begin from the origins in order to show the outset of Gothic literature and progressively encounter the variations that each author undertook, thus influencing other writers. The first to be investigate was Horace Walpole and his "experimental" genre of concoction between novel and romance; his revaluation of the term "Gothic" referring to a prestigious medieval era; his nostalgia for the past; his distant settings in continental Catholic Europe; his association between Catholicism and superstition; his attention to what can be considered as probable. I then concentrated on Clara Reeve, who followed her predecessor in many aspects, but aimed to a more realistic and moral literature through the reduction of the supernatural; moreover, she highlighted a nationalistic view of the noble origins of British and addressed her narrative mainly to women. Later, I presented the contrast between the Male Gothic and the Female Gothic, and that one between horror and terror. To do this, I examined the works of Ann Radcliffe, which focus on the picturesque and on mistreated women who finally take revenge of the injustices suffered, and those of Matthew Lewis, which enact eroticism and sensationalism. I then explored Irish Gothic literature, only to find out that it transcends the normative boundaries of generic identification as Gothic literature, as a whole, does. By contrast, Irish literature specifically undertook a political dimension to denounce historical conflicts and how they were perceived from the point of view of the author. The gradual decline of the Protestant Ascendancy hegemony; the vigorous self-assertion on the part of the middle classes; the violent process of colonisation; the contrast between Catholicism and Protestantism: all of these aspects are intertwined to Irish Gothic literature in a way that has no precedents. Further one, I mentioned two early Irish Gothic works, that, though chronologically antecedent to *The Castle of Otranto*, are generally overlooked by the scholarship of Gothic literature. I proceeded by the analysis of Maturin and his literary allegories to denounce a cruel past which evidences the improbable positive effects of Anglo-Irish union. Despite Maturin's works are generally considered the last writings pertinent to "classic" Gothic literature, I investigated Le Fanu's narrative in his similarities with him; in his psychological interest of the fragmented self; in his perpetuation of the prejudice about the connection between Ireland and femininity on one side, and England and masculinity on the other. I chose to

introduce Le Fanu since, in my opinion, some of his literary tropes and motifs will be reclaimed by Bram Stoker, the focus of the second chapter.

It is evident that the overview given here leads to the need of a more nuanced understanding of the Gothic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I contend that it is useless to define restrictions and delimitations, but rather it is worthy to leave indeterminacy and nuances in order to celebrate the multiplicity and complexity of the Gothic.

Chapter 2

Ireland as a challenge

Ireland is made up of four provinces: Ulster in the north, Leinster in the east, Munster in the south and Connaught in the west.[79] At present, it is politically divided between Eire, which means "Ireland" in Irish, and Northern Ireland. Eire is an independent country consisting of twenty-six counties (three in Northern Ireland and the rest of them in the four provinces). Eire is commonly called "The Republic", in order to distinguish it from Northern Ireland, which is under the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.[80]

Irish history was - and is, if we think about the present ongoing question about Brexit and the possible consequences that Ireland, especially Northern Ireland, would encounter - massively tormented and troubled. In this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the most significant events of Irish history starting from the prehistoric era and proceeding up to the 1920s.

The first inhabitants of Ireland probably came from Scandinavia around 6500 BC.[81] They settled mainly in the north-east of the country, where life was easier because of the more accommodating land and the more abundant food. Indeed, they lived on hunting, gathering, and scavenging. By 3000 BC, new settlers brought basic agriculture and farming.[82] In the Neolithic period, religion had an essential position, as testified by the megalithic monuments - such as huge burial chambers or passage tombs and dolmens (tripods of stone with a massive roof stone) - spread all around Ireland. As an example, Newgrange takes part of a group of megalithic tombs, also called "dolmen", known as *Brú na Bóinne*, located in the Boyne Valley in County Meath (42 km far from Dublin): the main ones are Knowth and Dowth, but there are other 35 smaller mounds in the area.[83] Newgrange is a passage tomb built by Stone Age farmers in 3200 BC (it is

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[79] T. D'Arcy McGee, *A Popular History of Ireland: From the Earliest Period to the Emancipation of the Catholics*, Vol. 1 & 2, 2012 (1860), Kindle Edition, Kindle position 232.
[80] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 178.
[81] J. Coohill, *Ireland: A Short History*, London: Oneworld Publications Ltd, 2014, p. 7.
[82] *Ibidem*.
[83] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 373.

thus older than Stonehenge and the Egyptian Pyramids of Giza).[84] It worked as a temple, namely a ceremonial place of worship. The mound covers an area of about one acre; it is 85 meters large and 13.5 meters high. A 19-meter passage leads into a chamber with three alcoves, and all of them are aligned with the rising sun at the Winter Solstice. Newgrange is surrounded by 97 engraved kerbstones. The amount of time and labour invested in the construction of Newgrange suggests a well-organized society with specialised groups responsible for different aspects of building.[85]

In 2000 BC peoples from the Middle East began to migrate to Europe, introducing metalworking and iron technology.[86] One of them was known as Celts. This term was recorded for the first time in 600 BC by a Greek geographer, who called one of the ethnic groups "*Keltoi"* (even if its etymology is unclear), from which later the word "Celts" derived.[87] Their geographical and cultural origins are indefinite and controversial; however, it is certain that they came into Ireland through two movements: one coming from Europe, probably from the Iberian peninsula, and settling in the west; the other one coming from northern Britain and settling in the north-east.[88] As a result, by the first century BC, they were well established in Ireland and mostly concentrated in the north-west area, in Ulster and Connaught. The pre-Celtic tribes living before the Celtic migration were Celticized: they shared a common language and culture, although they politically differed. By 600-700 AD, Ireland became a rural country divided in small kingdoms called "tuath", living on agriculture and rearing, and trading by barter with Britain and Europe.[89]

Christians were already present in Ireland in the 400s and 500s, thus before Saint Patrick's arrival. Unfortunately, there is no univocal information about when he arrived to Ireland, mentioning either the period 432-461 or 456-490. Much of what is known about him comes from his own writings.[90] He was a Roman Briton, who was captured by Irish raiders when he was 16 and forced to work tending sheep for six years.[91] While he was in Ireland, he became very religious, and after he escaped back to Britain, he had

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[84] Newgrange, https://www.newgrange.com/, (11/11/2019).
[85] *Ibidem.*
[86] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 8.
[87] F. Ritchie & D. Orr, *Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia,* University of North Carolina Press, 2014, p. 18.
[88] *Ibidem*.
[89] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 8.
[90] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 384.
[91] *Idem*, Kindle position 381.

a vision in which Irish people wanted him to come back to Ireland. He then returned there and started his missionary work, beginning from Northern Ireland. His influence was strong, in that he introduced two important religious structures into Ireland: the episcopal system, by which the country was divided into areas controlled by bishops, and the system of church monasteries, which made these places flourish in Ireland.[92] The monks worked to maintain the monasteries and studied religious texts. Students from Britain and Europe came to study in the monasteries, and, in turn, monks went abroad to study in foreign monasteries. Hence, there was an interchange of customs and practices. The education system was based both on the Latin written system of the monks' teaching and on the Irish oral system of memorisation of oral tales and stories. Over the years, these two educational methods started to share ideas and methodologies, thus connecting religion with tradition and literature, simultaneously preserving both of their heritages. Monasteries became increasingly powerful and they were not only religious and education centres, but also places of refuge. It is exactly in this period, around 800, that the well-known Book of Kells appeared.[93] Considered as Ireland's finest treasure and a masterwork of western calligraphy, this text is a manuscript book written in Latin, which contains the four Gospels together with several prefatory passages and tables.[94] It was created by Columban monks in either Britain or Ireland.[95]

At the beginning of the ninth century, the Vikings (or Norse) came from Scandinavia and invaded northern Europe.[96] Passing through western Norway, they repeatedly raided Ireland. The various Irish kings could not put up a proper and united defence, and in 841, the Vikings managed to establish a foothold at the mount of the Liffey, which eventually became Dublin city.[97] By the end of the ninth century, the Vikings settled more or less permanently in Ireland and began to intermarry with native Irish.[98] The Vikings influenced Ireland in many aspects: trade between the Irish country and Scandinavia increased and the east coast became a commercial centre; metalworking and craft augmented; Irish sailing improved; society stopped to exclusively be rural; stone carving (and the stone crosses that survived until today)

[92] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 9.
[93] *Idem*, p. 10.
[94] The Book of Kells, https://www.tcd.ie/library/manuscripts/book-of-kells.php, (27/11/2019).
[95] *Idem.*
[96] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 10.
[97] *Ibidem.*
[98] S. Gwynn, *The History of Ireland*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923, p. 55.

flourished.[99] A disadvantage was that they were pagan and were used to plunder, therefore monks brought many books and other valuable texts to the continent for safe keeping, thus enabling future preservation of Irish scholarship and tradition. Meanwhile, Brian Boru, an Irish king, was expanding his dominion over the towns of Limerick and Munster by defeating various Irish and Norse kings.[100] He lastly declared himself High King of Ireland and ruled the country from 1002 to 1014.[101] He was slain in the battle of Clontarf, even though his army was victorious. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, Ireland experienced a religious, cultural, and artistic flowering, which lasted until the end of the twelfth century, when invasion came again, this time by the Normans. Moreover, precisely during this period, the church was subjected to a significant reform: Ireland was divided into four archbishoprics, divided in turn into thirty-six bishoprics.[102] Therefore, the role of clergy, and consequently that of Irish Christianity, ceased to be solely based on writing manuscripts, educating, and recording Irish traditions, and began to be closely connected with local people. This meant that, although Ireland was not geographically well unified, its political and religious culture was strongly defined. This might be the reason why the Normans did not attempt to eradicate it.

The Normans came from Normandy, in the north of France, and originated from the Vikings that settled there in the early 900s. In 1066, they invaded England thanks to William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy.[103] A hundred years later, they settled in Ireland, thus establishing for the first time England's control over Ireland. Anyway, the Normans' invasion of Ireland was quite different from that of England: it all started with a dispute between two Irish kings who aimed at the total control of Ireland.[104] One of them asked the help of the English king, Henry II, to defeat his Irish adversary. Henry II took advantage of the opportunity, aiming at conquering Ireland both in religious and political terms. Thanks to the successful battles carried out by Strongbow, an Anglo-Norman earl and army chief, the Irish, the Normans, and the remaining Vikings submitted to Henry in 1171.[105] The English King, therefore, took control of

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[99] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 11.
[100] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1397.
[101] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 11.
[102] *Idem*, p. 12.
[103] M. Platt Parmele, *A Short History of England, Ireland and Scotland*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2010 (1907), Kindle Edition, Kindle position 257.
[104] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 13.
[105] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1469.

Dublin and the surrounding area, while Strongbow retained control over the County of Leister, and the rest of the country was given to various Normans.

At the end of the thirteenth century, in 1297, the Normans held the first Irish parliament, with representatives coming from the various parts of the country.[106] Nevertheless, the Norman conquest did not cover the whole country, indeed many remote zones were left untouched. The Normans were superior in weaponry and war strategies, but they were unable to, or not very interested in planning a proper conquest of the entire country, by unifying it under a Norman king.[107] They limited their action to suppressing Irish revolts and let most of native Irish people retain their land. Moreover, the English wars in Scotland and Wales required full attention by many great Norman warriors. Consequently, by 1300, there was a sort of stalemate between the natives and the settlers.

Although the bubonic plague arrived in Europe in 1348 and decimated about a third of the Irish population, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were peaceful times in which Gaelic art and culture prospered.[108] Native Irish and Anglo-Irish - namely, the descendants of the Normans - peacefully co-existed and even intermarried. This intermingling was not favourably seen by the English government, who viewed Gaelic customs as something to be extinguished, and thus it attempted to prohibit the marriage between the Anglo-Irish and the native Irish, though unsuccessfully.[109] In the meantime, Gaelic chiefs repeatedly tried to regain control over Ireland, but England was involved in the Hundred Years' War with France and could not send sufficient resources to quell the Irish uprisings.[110] This resulted in a general impossibility for the English forces to subdue the native Irish. Even though the King of England, Richard II (1367-1400), forced all the Irish leaders to submit to him in 1394, Irish chiefs continuously rose and finally managed to push the Anglo-Irish back to the area around Dublin, known as "the Pale".[111] This term derived from the boundary, consisting of a fortified ditch and rampart, which delimited the area where English rule was in power and thus protected

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[106] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 14.
[107] *Ibidem.*
[108] *Idem*, p. 15.
[109] *Ibidem.*
[110] *Ibidem.*
[111] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit*, p. 447.

Anglo-Irish from the Gaelic Irish's upheavals. From this first use onward, the word was also applied to various other English colonial settlements.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, England had to face the Wars of the Roses: a series of civil wars for the control of the throne, fought between two branches of the House of Plantagenet (which reigned from 1154): the House of Lancaster, associated with the Red Rose of Lancaster, and the House of York, whose symbol was the White Rose of York. At last, the wars eliminated the male lines of both families.[112] The conflict lasted through many sporadic episodes between 1455 and 1487. Broadly speaking, Irish chiefs supported the House of York, while the Anglo-Irish were loyal to the House of Lancaster.[113] The second half of the fifteenth century was concerned with a series of political successions both in England and in Ireland. An important figure of the time was Sir Edward Poynings (1459-1521), an English soldier and diplomat, who was sent to Ireland to bring the country into obedience.[114] In 1494, he passed a number of acts, known as the "Poynings' Law", which made a formal distinction between the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic Irish, and proscribed the use of Irish customs and laws.[115] The Irish parliament thus became subordinate to the British government and the English king, Henry VII (1457-1509), was recognised as King of England and Lord of Ireland. He descended through his mother's lineage from the Lancastrian House and was the first monarch of the House of Tudor, which ruled from 1485 to 1603.[116]

The Tudors fulfilled a more radical conquest of Ireland than that undertook by the Normans. King Henry VIII (1491-1547) proved to be essential in this process, since his aim was to create a homogeneous Irish population on social, religious, and political terms, so that it would become easier to conform - or subject - it to English customs and manners.[117] Consequently, he stopped the policy of separation between the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic Irish.[118] He installed a governing council in Ireland, led by a viceroy who was directly subordinate to him. In 1541, the Irish parliament declared Henry VIII King of Ireland, who created a split with the Roman Catholic Church and established the

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[112] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 15.
[113] *Ibidem.*
[114] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 5129.
[115] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit*, p. 481.
[116] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 528.
[117] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 21.
[118] *Ibidem.*

Church of England.[119] He declared himself "Supreme head on earth of the Church of England" through the 1534 Act of Supremacy, and, two years later, he also became the head of the Anglican Church of Ireland.[120] Nevertheless, despite his attempt and that of his successor, his son Edward VI (1537-1553), of anglicising the Irish country, Ireland did not adhere to the religious reform. After Edward's death, his sister Mary I (1516-1558) became queen. She was Catholic and restored the religion both in England and Ireland, and, since she persecuted Protestants and executed more than three hundred opponents, she acquired the epithet of "Bloody Mary".[121] She also introduced the practice of "plantation" into Ireland: a system that dispossessed both Anglo-Irish and Gaelic Irish tenants of their land, and designated English and Scottish settlers - the so-called "New English" - as landlords in their places.[122] On the contrary, Mary's successor, her Protestant sister Elizabeth I (1533-1603), sought to establish Protestantism throughout the two kingdoms; however, Ireland gave her a hard time.[123]

After Elizabeth's death, James I of England (1566-1625) succeeded. He was also King of Scotland, named James VI;[124] hence, both the English and Scottish crowns got unified in his person. He was the first monarch from the House of Stuart, which ruled from 1603 until 1714.[125] With him, the question of land ownership in Ireland dramatically changed.[126] During the reign of his predecessors, most of the land in the Irish country was owned by Catholics - whether Anglo-Irish or Gaelic Irish. During the reign of Elizabeth, native Irish earls refused to subdue to the English crown and initially fought against it, even if uselessly. They later found no other solution but sail to Europe - although it is not clear whether they wanted to ask for help to fight against England, or they chose exile as the best way of coping with their situation in Ireland. This event was later known as the "flight of the earls" and left a vacuum space at the government of Ulster.[127] This was a perfect opportunity for James I's aims: he confiscated land owned by Catholics, who were moved to areas circumscribed within defined boundaries, and

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[119] J. Coohill, *op. cit.,* p. 21.
[120] *Ibidem.*
[121] M. F. Cusack, *An Illustrated History of Ireland from AD 400 to 1800*, Kindle Edition, Kindle positions 6442-6443.
[122] S. Gwynn, *op. cit.,* p. 201.
[123] *Ibidem.*
[124] James I, https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-I-king-of-England-and-Scotland, (16/11/2019).
[125] *Idem.*
[126] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 468-469.
[127] S. Gwynn, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

gave it to Protestant English and Scots. In return, the settlers had to employ Protestant tenants to work the land. Nevertheless, also some native Irish had to work as tenants and labourers - as there were not enough settlers to cover all the land possessions - and they understandably felt resentment.[128] In comparison with the Tudors' project, that of the Stuarts was more systematic and well-organised: in 1660, Catholics could only hold land west of the River Shannon.[129] After James I died, many risings against English power took place, like in 1642, when the Catholic Army, a joined force between native Irish and Anglo-Irish, rebelled against the English parliament, but finally lost.[130]

In the same period, between 1639 and 1651, an intertwined series of conflicts took place in the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, known as the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, sometimes called also the British Civil Wars.[131] They later turned into the uprisings of the 1650s and lasted until the English Restoration of the monarchy under Charles II, in 1660.[132] The reasons for fighting derived from tensions over religious and civil issues, as well as questions of national conflict, since Ireland and Scotland rebelled against England's primacy within the Three Kingdoms. Among all the conflicts occurred during this period, the Civil Wars caused an indelible mark in English history: after a seven-year period of fights began in 1642, they resulted with the execution of king Charles I in 1649, and the abolition of English monarchy that was replaced with, at first, the Commonwealth of England (1649-1653), and later, with the Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell (1653-1658).[133] The ultimate victory of the English Parliament, which eventually managed to overwhelm the king along with the Irish and the Scots through Cromwell, contributed to establish the future of Great Britain and Ireland as a constitutional monarchy with the political power centred on London. In addition, Cromwell's cruelty poured out on Ireland: various massacres took place (just in 1649, at the Siege of Drogheda, nearly 3,500 people were killed) and over thirty thousand Irish migrated to the continent.[134] Still nowadays, Ireland depicts Cromwell as a butcher of Catholics. With regard to the issue of land, the Cromwellian Settlement

[128] S. Gwynn, *op. cit.*, p. 273.
[129] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[130] *Idem*, p. 24.
[131] The Origins of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/the-origins-the-wars-the-three-kingdoms/content-section-3.7, (16/11/2019).
[132] *Idem*.
[133] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[134] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 167.

activated the following dispositions: the rebellious Catholic landowners were dispossessed of their land and of the right to own land - and the new landowners were soldiers or officers in Cromwell's army; the rest of Catholic landowners, who had no rebelled, were moved to Connaught and County Clare (amongst the least arable places in Ireland) and given a portion of the total amount of land they had possessed before.[135] Again, Catholic Irish were submitted to the power of the English. Notwithstanding, the Cromwellian Settlement differed from the Stuarts' plantation system for an essential aspect: most of the soldiers who became landlords sold their estate to existing Protestant landowners and then returned to England.[136] Cromwell had no plan for settling Protestant communities where they had not existed before, but rather he aimed at changing land ownership. In so doing, he affected Irish social class structure by modifying the origins and the nature of the dominant class in Ireland.

In 1660, Cromwell's Commonwealth ended, and monarchy was restored with Charles II on the English throne.[137] Although his reign was relatively peaceful and brought some economic progress, the tensions between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland deepened, above all with regard to land issues. Indeed, before the civil wars, Catholics had owned roughly sixty percent of the land in Ireland; while after Charles II's restoration, and the land agreements - called the Acts of Settlement - they were left with only about twenty percent of the land in the country.[138] However, during Charles II's rule, the Catholic religion was tolerated to a certain degree, in the sense that Catholics could profess their faith, if they recognised the Protestant king.[139] Thanks to this and the economic growth that Ireland was experiencing by means of the more developed trade between England and Europe, a limited - but significant - group of Catholic professionals and merchants could improve its status, thus forming a new Catholic upper and middle class. When Charles II died and his Catholic brother, James II (1633-1701), became king, the Catholic upper and middle class aspired to have its land recovered and its religion recognised.[140] Tellingly, James II proved to satisfy Catholics' desires: for instance, he reorganised the Irish army by dismissing many

[135] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[136] *Ibidem.*
[137] S. Gwynn, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
[138] *Ibidem.*
[139] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[140] *Ibidem.*

Protestants and replacing them with Catholics; moreover, he appointed Catholics as judges and government officials.[141] These changes alarmed many Protestants, to the extent that, in 1688, a group of English parliamentarians invited the Dutch prince William of Orange (1650-1702) to invade England and help them to restore a Protestant monarchy. In 1688, the country was invaded by William's army and James II was forced to flee to France, seeking the protection of Louis XIV.[142] The conflict is known as the Glorious Revolution since it was quick and relatively bloodless (although many Irish Catholics were killed).[143] It lasted one year and finally resulted in the overthrow of James II, who was replaced by William of Orange and his wife Mary, the king's Protestant daughter, who were both crowned as joint monarchs of England through the 1689 Bill of Rights.[144]

After the 1688 revolution, pro-Stuart revolts occurred in Scotland and Ireland, while the Jacobite wars (so called because of the Latin form of the name James, namely *Jacobus*) persisted from 1688 to 1746.[145] Both of them wanted to restore a Catholic monarchy through James II and his Stuart pretenders. Politically speaking, between the 1680s and 1850s, two political factions began to contend for power: the Whigs and the Tories. On the one hand, the Whigs supported constitutional monarchy, were opposed to Catholic domination, and defended social tolerance and religious liberalism; on the other hand, the Tories - aligned to the Jacobites - advocated absolute monarchy, upheld the king, and professed Anglicanism as the only exclusive creed to be followed.[146]

The 1689 Bill of Rights was enacted by the Parliament of England and appointed William of Orange and Mary as co-rulers. Its original title was "An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown": the document thus asserted the specific rights and liberties attributed to either the Parliament or the King.[147] For instance, the Bill of Rights declared James II's flight from

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[141] M. P. Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 905.
[142] S. Gwynn, *op. cit.*, p. 351.
[143] Glorious Revolution, https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/glorious-revolution#section_4, (17/11/2019).
[144] Glorious Revolution, https://www.britannica.com/event/Glorious-Revolution, (17/11/2019).
[145] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 289.
[146] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 907.
[147] Bill of Rights, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bill-of-Rights-British-history, (25/11/2019).

England following the Glorious Revolution an abdication to the throne.[148] This was the first time in Europe that a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system was formed, and this confirmed the primacy of Parliament over the Crown: the first was in charge of the complete administration of the country, while the king essentially acted as head of state, with his power limited by law.[149] Moreover, the constitution established the rights and duties of its citizens.[150]

However, James II could not accept of have being ousted from the throne, therefore, he invaded Ireland to regain his power. He summoned the Irish parliament, came to a series of agreements, and offered religious equality, with the condition that both Catholics and Protestants would pay tithes to their respective church; notwithstanding, the Irish parliament would remain subservient to the English crown.[151] As a result, the war between James II and William of Orange began in Ulster, in 1689. The Huguenots (French Protestants), the Holy Roman Emperor, the Pope, and the Catholic king of Spain sided with William; while Louis XIV sided with James II.[152] The conflict lasted until 1691, when the Treaty of Limerick was signed:[153] many of James's soldiers were allowed to go in exile to France (where they were called as "wild geese"); Catholics were granted some lost property and rights, but the Protestant Irish parliament refused to ratify it, and all the agreements vanished.[154] Again, Catholics were unsatisfied, resentful, and mistrustful of English promises. Furthermore, the Parliament of England passed the Act of Settlement (1701) - in addition to the Bill of Rights - which settled the succession line to the English and Irish crowns on Protestants only.[155] Restrictions on Catholics remained in force until 1829, and religious prohibitions on the monarch's choice of spouse were retained until 2015.[156] Therefore, after the Treaty of Limerick, the Irish parliament became completely Protestant. In the meantime, England entered the War of the League of Augsburg - also called the War of the Great Alliance

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[148] English Bill of Rights, https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/english-bill-of-rights#section_2, (25/11/2019).
[149] English Bill of Rights, https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/english-bill-of-rights#section_2, (25/11/2019).
[150] *Idem*.
[151] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[152] *Ibidem*.
[153] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 9211.
[154] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[155] Act of Settlement, https://www.britannica.com/event/Act-of-Settlement-Great-Britain-1701, (18/11/2019).
[156] Glorious Revolution, https://www.britannica.com/event/Glorious-Revolution, (17/11/2019).

(1689-1697) against France,[157] and fought against some of the Irish soldiers (the before-mentioned "wild geese") who left Ireland after the Treaty of Limerick and were then in the French army under Louis XIV. It is no wonder, therefore, that Protestants in Ireland worried about a French invasion supported by native Irish soldiers. Consequently, the period starting in 1695 and lasting until 1728, was concerned with a series of measures: firstly, the Declaratory Act (1720) gave the British parliament the right to pass legislation binding on Ireland;[158] secondly, the so-called Penal Laws, which aimed at restricting Catholic worship. The Penal Laws prohibited Catholics from voting and from accessing some professional positions such as lawyers or army officers; they deprived Catholics of the means of educating their children at home or abroad; they prevented Catholics from buying any land and from taking any lease longer than thirty-one years, while obliging them to pay tithes to the Anglican Church of Ireland (this last duty remained valid until 1833).[159] Moreover, the Penal Laws ordered to swear an oath for all government and professional positions, which denied the creed in Christ, the virgin Mary, the transubstantiation, and other Catholic beliefs - considered as superstitious.[160] In so doing, Catholics were excluded from high-level positions, could not undergo any improvement in their economic condition, and they were shut out from all share in a Government which they were taxed to support.[161] By 1778, Catholics only owned five percent of the land in Ireland, and many landowners were forced to convert to the Anglican Church of Ireland in order to retain their estate and position.[162] In 1741, a terrible famine did not help the stagnant economy and the poor condition of the majority of the people. In spite of this, the Penal Laws were not universally applied; as a matter of fact, Catholicism was openly practised, and the English government tolerated it to a certain extent, perhaps because Catholic practises were quite respectful of English rule.[163]

In the second half of the 1700s, a small group of Catholics founded the Catholic Committee (1760) in order to re-establish a sense of Catholic and Gaelic identity in Ireland as well as to counter that Irish Catholics were constantly plotting to overthrow

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[157] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[158] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 146.
[159] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 9300.
[160] *Ibidem*.
[161] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1123.
[162] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[163] *Idem*, p. 29.

English rule.[164] They aimed at highlighting that Catholics were loyal to the English government and they did recognise its power. Indeed, during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), many Catholics sided with England against France, Austria, and Spain.[165] Meanwhile, a radical group of Catholics, called the Whiteboys, led an outbreak of agriculture violence in Munster and Leinster, which lasted until 1795.[166] The government reacted by passing a series of acts that made violent protest a capital offence. The American War of Independence (1775-1783) offered a turning point for Catholics.[167] Firstly, the government passed the Catholic Relief Acts between 1774 and 1793, which granted Catholics some political and economic rights; indeed, since France was an ally of the American colonies and declared war against Britain in 1778, England's worried of a potential French invasion helped by Catholic forces. Secondly, a huge volunteer movement - namely, the Volunteers - rose to defend the country, mainly formed by middle- and upper-class Protestants. Thirdly, the American War of Independence almost cut off Ireland's trade with the European continent. The Volunteers began to agitate for the degree of control that the British government had over the Irish parliament and asked for the repeal of Poynings' Law and the Declaratory Act.[168] Their leader, Henry Grattan (1746-1820), demanded independence for Ireland, yet with the retention of the British king as monarch of Ireland as well. In 1782, in order to appease this tumult, the British parliament repealed both the Declaratory Act and the Poynings' Law; it only preserved the right of veto over the Irish parliament through the lord lieutenant, namely the king's representative in Dublin.[169] In spite of this, the Volunteers continued to ask for reforms, but in vain, and the movement started to fade during the rest of the 1780s.

The political agitation surrounding the French Revolution (1789-1799) brought renovated conflicts between England and Ireland. Irish reformers began to promote the idea of the "purification" of Irish government: they aspired to the reduction of English members in the Irish parliament, since they brought corruption within it. However, Ireland itself was quite divided in terms of political ideas. For example, Protestant Irish

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[164] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[165] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
[166] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 9940.
[167] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[168] *Ibidem*.
[169] *Ibidem*.

were discontented in the same way their Catholic counterpart was. Accordingly, in 1784, a group called the Peep O'Day Boys together with the Orange Boys (a faction formed after the defeat of the Catholic James II by the Protestant William of Orange) attacked Catholics in Ulster.[170] The Defenders, a Catholic group, attempted to react to the battle, but they were finally overcome by the Orange Boys in 1795.[171] This led to the Orange Order, a Protestant association that will be politically active from now on.[172] Another instance that exemplifies how Ireland was ambivalent in his political views is given by the two different reactions that Ireland undertook when Spain attacked British fishing vessels off the western Canadian coast in 1789: on the one side, Grattan and the Volunteers wanted to support the English king; while, on the other side, some reformers led by Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) argued that Ireland was not obliged to help the British Empire.[173] Tone aimed at the total abolishment of the British control over Ireland and promoted a political union between Catholic and Protestant Irish to struggle for reform. Afterwards, the party of the United Irishmen was founded in 1791.[174] The Catholic Committee was still pressing for changes in the Catholics' participation to politics. As a result, the British government granted Catholics the right to vote in 1793, but they were still forbidden to become members of the Irish parliament.[175] The government also strengthened its control over Ireland by forming a state military force, which suppressed the Volunteers, and by passing the Convention Act, which prevented groups from assembling in Ireland, except for the Irish parliament.[176] Despite this, the struggle for Catholic Emancipation, as the right to sit in Irish parliament was called, proceeded and Irish reformers, including Tone, started to consider an alliance with France in order to reach their objectives. However, these plans were soon revealed by the British government, which forced Tone to emigrate to America in 1795. However, the following year, Tone left America and negotiated with France for an invasion of Ireland: in 1796, a French fleet of forty-three ships sailed for the island.[177] The British

[170] Martyn J. Powell, "Popular Disturbances in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Origins of the 'Peep of Day' Boys", in Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 34, No. 135, Cambridge University Press, May 2005, pp. 249-265, p. 249.
[171] *Ibidem.*
[172] *Ibidem.*
[173] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[174] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 9947.
[175] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[176] T. D'Arcy McGee, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 10489.
[177] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

navy was not ready for such an intrusion; the French expedition might have been successful, if it was not for a heavy storm that forced most French ships, which managed to arrive at Bantry Bay in County Cork, to return to France.[178] The British government counteracted by attempting to disarm the United Irishmen and the other militant groups of reformers through its own corps of volunteers in Ireland, and by imposing a curfew in many places as well.[179] The factions of agitators therefore decided to retreat from the public scene, yet they created an extensive network of secret societies to pursue Catholic emancipation and reform the Irish parliament in Dublin. Nevertheless, the British government managed to infiltrate them on several occasions and stalled various risings.[180] In 1798, a French force landed at Killala, in County Mayo, and defeated the British army at Castlebar, but they were eventually surrounded by the British forces at Ballinamuck, in County Longford, and were forced to surrender. France attempted another invasion, led by Tone, but the British fleet successfully reacted, and Tone was sentenced to execution. Albeit the 1798 Irish rebellion failed, the threat of future uprisings and the potential French invasion, induced the British Prime Minister, William Pitt (1759-1806), to take actions in order to solve the Irish question once and for all. He then proposed a union between the Irish and British parliaments; in this way, the corruption of the Irish parliament would be eliminated (which would satisfy Irish reformers' requests), and the English parliament would control the Irish one more directly (which would comply with British politicians' desires).[181] In addition, a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland would motivate the modernization of Irish trade and commerce, prompting economic development. Notwithstanding this, Pitt's proposal of allowing Catholic emancipation implied a political strategy: if Ireland turned into an independent country, Catholics would represent the majority of the population, even though their political rights would be limited; while, if Ireland united with Britain, Catholics would become a minority group which, although with increased political rights, could not threaten the Protestant majority.[182] Many Catholics supported this idea of union, whereas many members of the Irish parliament along with reformers and Protestants opposed it. Initially, therefore, Pitt's suggestion was rejected by the Irish

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[178] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
[179] *Ibidem.*
[180] *Ibidem.*
[181] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1721.
[182] *Ibidem.*

parliament. Eventually, however, it was accepted. In 1801, the Act of Union was passed and officially proclaimed the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland: a group of Irish MPs would sit in the British House of Commons, and free trade between the two countries would start.[183]

Hence, political power in Ireland was transferred to London. However, Irish MPs made up only one fifth of the total amount of MPs in the House of Commons, with great resentment on the part of Irish people, since they thought that the British parliament overlooked Ireland's issues.[184] This did not necessarily imply misgovernment of Ireland or indifference about its problems, although it caused a certain negligence by British MPs with respect to Irish concerns. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Union represented a contested question which affected various spheres - be they political, religious, or social. On the one side, there was who considered the Union as a worthy arrangement which would benefit the Irish; while, on the other side, there was who viewed it as a strategical imposition of British power over Ireland.[185] Moreover, as already occurred in the past, Pitt's promise about Catholic Emancipation turned out to need much time for its realization (indeed it took nearly thirty years to become real). It is no wonder that, in this scenario, Daniel O'Connell, a nationalist and constitutional Irish lawyer, attempted to get the Act of Union repealed, although uselessly.[186] Also Young Ireland, a separatist movement, rebelled.[187] Comparing the two of them, O'Connell's nationalism was more restrained, whereas that of Young Ireland was less diplomatic, because of the violence it employed to promote its cause.[188]

O'Connell was a member of the Catholic Committee, and, although this association was suppressed in 1811, he continued to insist on Catholic Emancipation. In spite of his fervour, historical and economic events made him realise that Ireland had new pressing troubles to solve, more compelling than his desire for complete independence. Indeed, in the post-war period of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), during which Catholics proved loyal to Britain, the population rose, but suitable farming

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[183] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[184] *Idem*, p. 40.
[185] *Ibidem*.
[186] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1742.
[187] *Idem*, Kindle position 1761.
[188] *Ibidem.*

land and methods were still missing, and rents increased. In addition, many companies were suffering from competition with British businesses; Catholics and Presbyterians still had to pay tithes to the Anglican Church of Ireland. Furthermore, the Great Famine (1845-1852) made ominous consequences on the Irish population. All of these concerns brought O'Connell to conclude that the only way to solve Irish problems was having Catholics to participate in the parliament.[189] O'Connell proved a great persuader in convincing people that this was the right path to follow. Until the 1820s, the campaign for Catholic Emancipation was exclusively an upper- and middle-class concern, yet O'Connell carried out his propaganda by introducing two fundamental innovations. In 1823, he founded the Catholic Association, a group which questioned Catholic issues and opposed the Orange Order.[190] Thus, clergy was involved in political issues for the first time. Besides, the subscription charge, the Catholic Rent, was much cheaper than in the past. In so doing, any Catholic and Irish citizen could become a member of the Association, whatever their economic status was. Consequently, O'Connell's group obtained a huge number of inscriptions, and eventually he became the best-known Catholic in Ireland.

Even though Catholics obtained the right to vote in 1793, it was limited to landowners who occupied estate of a certain value.[191] Hence, Irish Catholic tenants were used to vote along with their landlord's preference. The Catholic Association aimed at reducing this landlord influence. Priests, therefore, convinced tenants, either Catholic or Protestant, to vote for candidates who favoured Catholic Emancipation. If a landlord turned out tenants from the property because they had voted against his preferred candidates, the Association promised economic support for the dwellers. Moreover, the Catholic Association provided electors with transport, so that they could easily get to the polls. The first outcomes arrived in the 1826 elections, when pro-Emancipation Protestants were elected in the places of the candidates opposed to Emancipation.[192] Soon after, in the 1830s, although the government was against Catholic Emancipation, a little majority of MPs was in favour of it. Consequently, the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), and the Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850),

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[189] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[190] *Idem*, p. 42.
[191] *Idem*, p. 44.
[192] *Ibidem.*

worrying about Ireland's hostility, presented a Catholic Emancipation bill, which became law in 1829.[193] Finally, Catholics were allowed to sit in parliament and could be appointed to military and government positions.[194] However, the government raised the property qualification needed for voting in Ireland, therefore many lower-middle class Catholics lost their right to vote. O'Connell finally became a member of the House of Commons, he cooperated with the Liberals, and gained a number of significant reforms from then on. The Irish hailed him as the "Liberator".[195]

Another important objective of O'Connell was to get the Act of Union repealed and consequently get a new parliament for Ireland. In the 1840s, he founded the Repeal Association and collected subscriptions through the Repeal Rent, in the same manner that the Catholic Emancipation was organised.[196] O'Connell used a new strategy to get support: he organised huge meetings, the so-called "monster meetings", which counted on a great presence of people and were held in significant historical places.[197] Meanwhile, British politics changed: the Liberals had lost their power, which now was in the hands of the Conservatives, under Sir Robert Peel. In addition, Ulster was opposed to Repeal, too. In few words, although Repeal was widely promoted in Ireland, it had almost no support in the British House of Commons.[198] While few decades before the government gave a considerable consensus for the Emancipation, it did not sustain Repeal in the same way, in fact the House of Commons strongly believed that the Union benefited only Irish people. In order to block the incitement for Repeal, the Home Secretary undertook the political tactic of coercion and conciliation, likewise the following British governments would do until the 1920s.[199] This strategy consisted in allowing some Irish reforms along with strict laws limiting political agitation. Eventually, O'Connell and some of his followers were arrested for conspiracy, convicted, and imprisoned in 1844.[200] The Liberator died in 1847 without succeeding in his project for Repeal and, together with him, also the Repeal movement slowly faded away.

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[193] M. Platt Parmele, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1125.
[194] *Ibidem.*
[195] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[196] *Idem*, p. 46.
[197] *Idem*, p. 47.
[198] *Ibidem.*
[199] *Idem*, p. 48.
[200] *Ibidem.*

O' Connell with the Catholic Association first and then with the Repeal Association, paved the way to the movement of Young Ireland, a group active between 1842-1846. Its early leaders were the Protestant lawyer Thomas Davis (1814-1845), the Catholic journalist Charles Duffy (1816-1903), the writer John Blake Dillon (1814-1866); all together, they founded *The Nation*, a newspaper promoting O'Connell's Repeal movement, and produced a number of biographies and histories which would become a sort of handbook for future nationalists.[201] Other members who later joined Young Ireland were the lawyer John Mitchel (1815-1875), who advocated the use of physical force to accomplish with complete independence from Britain; the journalist James Fintan Lalor (1807-1849), who focused on finding solutions for the problems about landownership and landholding; the Irish MP William Smith O'Brien (1803-1864), who substituted O'Connell as head of the Repeal Association during his imprisonment (and would strongly influence Stoker's personal idea of nationalism).[202] All of these concerns would later be taken up by other nationalists such as Davitt and Parnell. In 1848, Young Ireland attempted to rebel, but the uprising largely failed because of its poor organisation and British massive military opposition. The rebels were then imprisoned and convicted of treason.[203]

Thanks to O'Connell, the first half of the nineteenth century was characterised by notable reforms for Catholics and the formation of a renewed Irish nationalism. His projects were obstructed by the ascendancy class, namely conservatives politically identified with Toryism and the Orange Order (even though the Orangemen were initially opposed to the Union). Irish Tories thus opposed Irish nationalists and, by 1860, they represented the majority of MPs in the British House of Commons.[204]

During this period, along with political changes, important modifications to the religious, social, and economic spheres occurred. Referring to religion in Ireland, the Catholic Church expanded, through the training of a bigger number of priests and the building of many churches and cathedrals.[205] It is noteworthy to underline that, in much of the country, Christian observance of religious functions was often accompanied by

[201] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 633-634.
[202] *Ibidem*.
[203] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
[204] *Idem*, p. 48.
[205] *Idem*, p. 54.

ceremonies connected to Celtic rites and superstitions.[206] Tellingly, these celebrations were not in opposition to one another, but rather they were held contemporaneously. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church attempted to limit Celtic practises, but it was quite a hard effort, since many Irish still considered them as the expression of local tradition and regional ancient heritage. Likewise, Protestant religion branches underwent similar changes.[207] Episcopalians, the members of the Anglican Church of Ireland, and Presbyterians increased their power. Evangelicalism also came over from England, and the Methodists became a distinct religious group in Ireland. In conclusion, if on the one hand Catholicism tried to reach a higher recognition by Great Britain, on the other hand Protestantism paralleled it in its attempt to increase awareness among Irish people. Speaking of Irish social structure, Ireland was broadly divided in three social classes: Protestant Anglo-Irish landlords, who owned the land and had political power; middlemen tenants, who rented parcels of land from landholders on long-term leases, and often sublet their property to smaller farmers, who in turn sub-divided the land among their sons and so on; Irish Catholic labourers, who had no rights and worked the land of both landowners and land tenants.[208] The rural population was mainly constituted by labourers, the poorest class. Notwithstanding, I admit that this distinction is too general, since within each category wealth and power were differently distributed. Just to list some of the variables, it depended on how vast the estate was, how many labourers worked it, and in which area the property was located. In terms of population, the rate of population growth in Ireland surpassed that in all other European countries in the early nineteenth century.[209] The causes of Irish overpopulation are still not well-defined, and they were attributable to various and disputable factors (one of these might be the increasing reliance on the potato crop, which initially contributed to better health conditions, high fertility, and inferior mortality rates, but later, in the second half of the nineteenth century, it generated huge losses of life). Talking about Irish economy, while most of Europe was experiencing a remarkable process of industrialisation between 1750 and 1850, Ireland instead remained a rural and agricultural country, mainly dependent on farming. The only modification to its subsistence system was that, from

[206] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[207] *Idem*, p. 55.
[208] D. Gladwin, *Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2016, p. 64.
[209] G. Smith, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1643.

the 1750s, pastoral farming, a method of farming consisting in various kinds of crops and livestock, shifted to tillage - or arable - farming, another system of cultivation concentrating on one type of crop, generally the potato.[210] Thanks to the Napoleonic Wars, Britain made an increasing demand for grain, and consequently agriculture prices in Ireland rose, bringing some prosperity; but when the wars ended, prices inevitably collapsed. Irish manufacturing industries, above all the textile one, suffered from competition with British businesses, along with the 1820 economic recession, which affected Britain as well.[211] Further, compared to Britain, Ireland did not possess large amount of minerals, such as coal, and thus did not trade internationally.[212] Briefly, Ireland was affected by massive unemployment, and many families lived on the verge of starvation.

All of these factors caused a deep resentment towards Britain and rural unrest, which sometimes turned into violence, and brought to the first big wave of nineteenth-century emigration, starting from 1815 onwards.[213] Instead, for those who remained in Ireland, the 1820s and 1830s were grim decades. In sum, Ireland was a poor country, in relation to the rest of Europe, and the disparity between the prosperous Great Britain and the impoverished Ireland was increasing.

As if it was not enough, a potato blight attacked the country in 1845 causing the Great Famine: a general food shortage, a huge loss of life, and an enormous emigration to other countries, mainly to Britain and North America, over the next seven years.[214] Before 1845, there had been bad harvests, but they were quite localised and brief. Although the origins of the blight are still mysterious and unclear, yet its effects are well-known and leave nothing to speculate on: one million people perished because of starvation and disease, and a further million emigrated.[215] When the Famine started, it was worsened by overpopulation, poverty, and subsistence reliance on the potato crop. Although some areas, such as western and southern counties, were mostly affected by the potato plight, the Great Famine seriously aggravated the already unstable conditions of many of the Irish. The conservative Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel established a

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[210] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
[211] *Idem*, p. 53.
[212] *Ibidem*.
[213] *Ibidem*.
[214] G. Smith, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1643.
[215] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

scientific commission to determine what was the blight and how it could be counteracted.[216] He attempted to limit the dire effects of the Famine: one hundred thousand pounds of maize was bought from the United States; a relief commission was set up to deal with starvation, disease, and unemployment; public works were planned to provide temporary work for the poor.[217] In 1846, the new government with the liberal Lord John Russell (1792-1878) as Prime Minister, undertook a less direct policy than Peel: some reforms to basic aspects of Irish economy were passed, so that Ireland would have been able to handle the necessary resources to recover and survive food shortages; however, the direct purchase of food was blocked and public works were closed.[218] In short, Russell's government appointed Irish landlords as responsible for relieving Irish plight. Yet, the real problem was that there were no further shortages. Indeed, during 1846 and 1847, the death toll increased ("Black 47" became the name of the worst year following the Great Famine in terms of disease and starvation, mass mortality and emigration).[219] In the same period, Irish members of parliament and landlords asked for bigger direct aid to the government. Russell and the other British politicians finally realised that their policy of "no direct intervention" was not working. Therefore, they concentrated on keeping people alive by temporarily setting the so-called "soup kitchens", where the poor Irish could count on a - small and low-quality - portion of soup to relieve their hunger.[220] Even though this proved to be a successful strategy, the soup kitchens were soon connected to religious conversion. This happened because few private soup kitchens granted food only for those Catholics who converted to Protestantism. The consequent association, that taking the soup equalled rejection of the Catholic religion, took the name of "souperism".[221] The people who converted were derogatorily known as "jumpers", an insult that would persist in the memory of the following twentieth-century generations.[222] Successively, although the government banned conversion from soup kitchens, the reputation of the relief work was irremediably tainted, to the extent that many Irish did not profit of the soup kitchens in

[216] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[217] *Ibidem.*
[218] *Idem*, p. 62.
[219] *Idem*, p. 64.
[220] *Idem*, p. 65.
[221] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 549.
[222] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

the fear of losing their faith.[223] During this time, the government passed the Poor Law Extension Act, a bill that included the costs for the Famine relief works in the Irish taxes, thus returning to Britain's past belief that it was the landlords who had to pay for what was considered their responsibility.[224] This measure did not work well, resulting in an enlarged amount of evictions for those who could not pay the increased rent, and in an augmented quantity of poor people. Even though 1847 was characterised as the apex of the Famine, 1848 was not better, perhaps even worse, since the blight returned and contributed to more losses. The death toll rose again, both in the workhouses - where the paupers could find accommodation, food, and employment - and in the countryside. It is estimated that roughly 2,500 people were dying each week.[225] In the following years, Russell and his government introduced several measures.[226] One was the rate-in-Aid plan, which constrained the less affected north and east of Ireland to pay higher taxes, in order to support the more devastated west and south. Another action was the Free Trade in Land policy, which rendered landownership open to general market, so that middle and lower-middle classes were allowed to buy land, thus breaking their dependency on landlords. However, these strategies did not achieve the desired effects: many landlords in the north and east of Ireland refused to pay taxes, and they sold most of the land to other landowners, rather than to middle class. Although the government destinated a fund of 300,000 pounds for Irish relief, the inexorable cycle of blight, starvation, disease, and death continued.[227] At last, in 1852, the potato harvest was successful, and Ireland slowly began to recover and rebuild itself. Nevertheless, the potato blight was not completely eradicated and successively returned in 1860, 1879, 1890, and 1897.[228] Eventually, in 1882, a cure for the *phytophthora infestans,* the microorganism which caused the blight, was discovered. Ironically, a similar curative treatment was found, and seemed to work, in south Wales in 1846, but it failed to attract the attention of the government commission in charge of the investigation of the

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[223] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[224] The History Place, Irish Potato Famine, https://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/ruin.htm, (21/11/2019).
[225] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[226] *Idem*, p. 68.
[227] *Idem*, p. 69.
[228] *Ibidem*.

problem; therefore, the question whether or not this cure could have prevented further losses is still open.[229]

Various interpretations and speculations have been drawn about how Great Britain dealt with the effects of the Famine in Ireland. History showed that the Irish country was in great trouble and could not face its plight by itself. Certainly, the recovery was very slow. Whether this was caused by Britain's inability or unwillingness to give Irish Famine relief is a question that still nowadays is subjected to investigation; yet here I prefer to not deepen the unknown, but rather to exclusively focus on objective facts.

The Great Famine killed roughly a million of people, mostly in the western counties of Mayo and Sligo.[230] Not only did it bring devastating effects as regards economic and social terms, but it also changed the way Irish people approached different aspects of life. The post-Famine Irish farmers mixed tillage and livestock, focusing more on the latter for income. There was no need for large families to work the land, so they became smaller than those in the past. Besides, land was no longer subdivided amongst sons, but rather donated to the eldest. Emigration to North America and Australia instilled the bitter idea that Ireland was a country of no opportunity. Resentment against the English deepened, mainly addressed to landlords. Folk memories reinvigorated this discontentment, and probably contributed to the demand for independence in the 1860s. Psychologically and culturally speaking, the Great Famine caused aggressive modifications in Irish mentality and tradition. Literature and folk customs were invested by songs, ballads, and writings which lamented the tragedy of the potato blight and blamed landlords and the British government. Unfortunately, the Famine contributed to the decline of the Irish language, since a lot of Irish-speaking natives died or emigrated, and because many people thought that the Famine resulted from an Irish backward society. By 1851, the total number of Irish speakers fell to about two million people.[231] However, it might be argued that this process started from the Act of Union of 1801, when fewer and fewer people began to learn Irish as their mother tongue language. With respect to religion, the post-Famine period experienced an increase in devotion and worship for both Catholic and Protestant sides. On the one

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[229] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[230] *Idem*, p. 70.
[231] *Idem*, p. 71.

side, the Catholics thought that they were the victims of British Protestant indifference and souperism; while on the other side, the Protestants believed they had been spared from starvation and death because of their faith.

Starting from the post-Famine period to the end of the twentieth century, the relationships between landowners, tenant farmers, and labourers changed.[232] Thanks to a gradual shift from tillage to pastoral farming, the quantity of farmers augmented, while that of labourers declined. The category of labourers was the one who did not see much improvement in its conditions. Landlords, instead, could enlarge their holdings by purchasing the land that other landowners were forced to vacate. Farmers as well improved their conditions, since they could count on bigger farm sizes and rising prices of agricultural goods. However, despite the fact that production increased between the mid-1850s and the mid-1870s, the unpredictability in the fluctuations of prices could not keep up with farmers' income.[233] They produced more yet earned less. By consequence, the tensions among these three classes became more acute. These preoccupations about earning a living, along with a sort of resignation resulting from the failure of O'Connell's Repeal movement and Young Ireland's rebellion, caused a general downfall in nationalist fervour. Notwithstanding, the split between those who supported the Union, largely Protestants, and those who opposed it, mainly Catholics, became increasingly deeper.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Ulster underwent an industrial revolution, above all concerning the sectors of linen, shipbuilding, and engineering; while the rest of the country did not experience it at the same extent.[234] This county differed from the others with respect to the tenants' right, called the "Three Fs": fair rent, free sale of a holding, and fixity of tenure. The aim was providing Irish farmers' security in their land. To achieve this goal, landlords were forbidden to increase rents above the tenants' possibility to pay, and special land courts were appointed to fix the amount of rents (fair rent); tenants were allowed to sell their estate to other tenants without any landlord interference (free sale); landlords' right of evicting a tenant, if he had not paid the rent, was cancelled (fixity of tenure).[235] In less than fifty years, the

[232] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[233] *Idem,* p. 80.
[234] *Ibidem*.
[235] The Three Fs, http://www.askaboutireland.ie/narrative-notes/the-three-fs/, (17/11/2019).

Three Fs would become the request of all the other tenants living throughout the country. At the time, several local tenant associations existed, but Charles Duffy, leader of Young Ireland, suggested a national network which connected all of them, and he formed the Irish Tenant League in 1850.[236] It aimed at having the Three Fs applied to the whole country, an objective that, in Duffy's mind, could be realised only when an independent Irish party in the House of Commons was created. Meanwhile, some Irish Liberals believed that Catholics' interests had to be protected in Ireland. Hence, in 1851, they joined together in the Irish Brigade -colloquially known as the Pope's Brass Band - and formed the Catholic Defence Association, making an alliance with the Irish Tenant League.[237] In so doing, an Independent Irish Party was created and, in the 1852 election, it was successful. But later its members got some divergences; hence they separated from the Tenant League and formed the Independent Opposition Party.[238] However, both the two groups gradually lost their power: the Tenant League held its last meeting in 1858, whereas the Independent Opposition Party allied with the British Liberals in 1866.[239] Although the Tenant League failed in concretising its goals, it was the first example of an association promoting a united agricultural community and represented a model for the more successful Land League of the 1880s.

A more revolutionist movement was that one constituted by the Fenians, a name derived from ancient Irish tribes.[240] The most remarkable group ascribed to it was the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), which was founded in 1858 by James Stephens (1824-1901) in Dublin.[241] It was a secret organisation whose main goal was to overthrow British Rule in Ireland and establish an Irish Republic. It could count on many members, since it appealed to all social classes and received support also from abroad, namely from Irish emigrants. IRB organised some uprisings in 1865 and 1867. The government soon realised that Fenianism was expanding, it thus promptly reacted to block its initiatives. However, the government's reaction obtained exactly the reverse effect: when, in 1867, three prominent Fenians were executed in Manchester for having

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[236] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 173.
[237] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
[238] *Ibidem*.
[239] *Ibidem*.
[240] G. Smith, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1792.
[241] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 284.

killed a policeman, Irish public opinion turned forthwith in favour of the Fenians.[242] Notwithstanding, Fenianism would not show itself publicly again for another generation. What is certain, is that the Fenians, like Young Ireland, contributed to reawaken the nationalist sentiment of Irish people.

The second half of the nineteenth century was concerned with a new wave of revolution, agitation, violence, reforms, and land acts. In 1868, the Liberals returned to power under Prime Minister of United Kingdom William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898).[243] His first intervention was disestablishing the Anglican Church of Ireland, which had to rely on its own resources from them on. Gladstone focused on land issues and began to bring about some reforms in favour of tenants.[244] For example, he passed the 1870 Land Act, which allowed farmers to borrow money more easily to buy more land.

Together with Gladstone, two influential men were the prominent political figures who changed Irish history during this period: Michael Davitt (1846-1906), founder of the Irish National Land League,[245] and Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891), one of the leaders of the Home Rule movement.[246] Michael Davitt was an Irish radical, son of an evicted tenant farmer in County Mayo, who initially joined the Fenians; he was imprisoned for gunrunning and released after seven years; he then adhered to the IRB; he moved to the United States, where he met John Devoy (1842-1928), with whom he devised the New Departure policy in 1878. The fundament at the basis of Davitt and Devoy's ideology was that both questions of land issue and national sovereignty were inextricably connected, even entangled. In their opinion, the British government would never grant land reform to help tenants, but only a native Irish government could successfully function to achieve it.[247] Initially, the IRB and Parnell disagreed with the New Departure's principles. Nevertheless, Davitt co-founded the Irish National Land League in 1879, and managed to appoint Parnell as president.[248] It was an association which mixed nationalists of different opinions: some were more moderate, whereas others were more extreme. Basically, the League's campaign aimed

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[242] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
[243] G. Smith, *op. cit.*, Kindle position 1775.
[244] *Ibidem*.
[245] Michael Davitt, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michael-Davitt, (25/11/2019).
[246] Charles Parnell, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/parnell_charles.shtml, (25/11/2019).
[247] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
[248] Land League, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Land-League, (26/11/2019).

at reducing rents, making land cheap enough for poor farmers to buy it, and finally at avoiding landlords' evictions of tenants.[249] The Land League's protest intended to improve the position of the disenfranchised Catholic tenants from the Protestant Anglo-Irish landlords, especially those who were absentee landlords (namely, non-resident landowners who owned and rented out a property).[250] In 1879, the first Land War broke out in County Mayo, expanded throughout the country, and lasted until 1882. After it, agitation continued to occur in the 1880s and 1890s.[251] Catholic nationalists requested to redefine the distribution of land by restoring Irish land to Irish farmers, so that Gaelic tradition could be preserved and full independence from British landlords could be accomplished. Land Wars did not consist of actual wars, but rather they followed a sort of pattern characterised by specific tactics: evictions were physically prevented by Land League's bailiffs; whenever an eviction occurred, public demonstrations were held at the property; new tenants of an evicted estate were blocked from taking it over; evicted families were given financial support; legal defence was provided by Land League's courts to adjudicate land disputes; eventually, landlords were socially and economically ostracised.[252] In 1880, for instance, Captain Charles Boycott, the supervisor of an estate in County Mayo, refused to reduce rents and to not evict tenants, but he incurred despicable consequences: Land Leaguers cut him off from labourers who could work his land, and people despised him by jeering and spatting at him in public.[253] Finally, Boycott hired fifty Protestant labourers from Ulster Orangemen, but he needed slightly less than a thousand of soldiers to protect these land workers.[254] From this on, the term "boycott" was coined to describe ostracism. In sum, the Land League employed a two-pronged approach to attain its objectives: on the one side, diplomatic action was carried out to force reforms through Parliament; while on the other side, direct agency was undertaken through strikes, boycotts, and court proceedings. The campaign therefore led to a prolonged period of civil unrest along with properties destruction, violent incidents, and murders. In 1881, Gladstone passed the second Land Act which granted the Three

[249] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
[250] *Ibidem.*
[251] *Idem*, p. 87.
[252] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
[253] Charles Cunningham Boycott, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Cunningham-Boycott, (30/11/2019).
[254] *Ibidem.*

Fs.[255] In addition, a Land Commission was established to review and reduce rents where they were clearly unpayable, granting an average reduction of 25% of the initial cost.[256] In the same year, Gladstone had Parnell and other leaders arrested, and outlawed the Land League.[257] This resulted in much more violence and agitation, until the Kilmainham Treaty (so called because Parnell was imprisoned at Kilmainham jail in Dublin): an agreement signed by Gladstone and Parnell, in which the first one agreed to pass further reforms for tenants and the second one agreed to put an end to violent protests.[258] Despite this, a renewed - but more diplomatic - phase of Land Wars started in 1886 and lasted until 1891, called the "Plan of Campaign".[259] Since agricultural depression continued to plague Irish farmers, particularly in the south and west, some MPs in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland - precisely Timothy Healy (1855-1931), Timothy Harrington (1851-1910), William O'Brien (1852-1928), and John Dillon (1851-1927) - conceived the Plan in order to help tenants whenever they could not afford the payment of the rent to the landlord.[260] Indeed, the Plan served to secure a reduction of rents and worked as follows: farmers would offer what they thought was a reasonable rent; if the landlord demanded a higher lease and threatened them with eviction, the tenants had to pay no rent at all, and the sum offered by the tenants would be placed in a fund used to assist all farmers in trouble. Moreover, the National League bolstered the fund when necessary. At first, the Plan seemed to work, yet landlords' resistance made it eventually fail. However, it was successful in showing to many landowners that the landlord system had to be definitely modified. In general, the Land League succeeded in most of its goals: reforms were realised through the Land Acts and the Land Wars drastically reduced the ascendancy of the Anglo-Irish landlord class, considerably shifting land ownership to the Catholic peasant class.

Contemporaneous to the Irish National Land League, the Home Rule movement was initially actualised by Isaac Butt, an Irish Protestant barrister, but gradually became

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[255] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
[256] *Ibidem.*
[257] *Ibidem.*
[258] *Ibidem.*
[259] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 468.
[260] *Ibidem.*

a serious parliamentary force, dominating Irish politics until the First World War.[261] Home Rule drew inspiration from O'Connell, the Fenians, and the Independent Irish Party. Essentially, it demanded the re-establishment of an Irish parliament and the repeal of the Union. In the 1870s, Butt began promoting a sort of federalism,[262] in which each country of the United Kingdom would follow its local rule - in few words, England, Scotland, and Ireland would have their own parliaments, while the British parliament would retain control of foreign affairs. In Butt's opinion, this was the only suitable way to lessen sectarianism and solve the conflicts among the different national identities within the United Kingdom. He firstly founded the Home Government Association in 1870, which later changed its name to Home Rule League, in 1873.[263] Although the Catholic Church and Protestant conservatives were opposed to it, Isaac Butt's Home Rulers were successful in the 1874 election.[264] They managed to obtain farmers and tenants' support together with the approval of both Catholics and Protestants, since the first were disappointed by Gladstone's 1870 Land Act and the second were frustrated by his disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Butt pursued his cause with moderation and, probably, the House of Commons did not pay much attention to him precisely because of his mild pressure.[265] Nevertheless, some members of Butt's party did not tolerate his lack of direct action and decided to employ an active policy of obstruction to parliamentary business. Charles Parnell, a Protestant MP, was among them. By consequence, the Home Rule party suffered from an internal split that resulted with the 1880 election of Parnell as president of the Irish Parliamentary Party.[266] During the Land War, he proved to be a skilled leader, often representing an intermediary between the British government and Land League radicals. He aimed at the supremacy of the Home Rule over the Liberals, and obviously, the Conservatives.[267] The 1885 election was a triumph for his cause.[268] In the following year, Gladstone introduced the first Irish Home Rule bill, which proposed a parliament in Dublin in charge of Irish domestic affairs, while the British parliament at Westminster would

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[261] Home Rule, https://www.britannica.com/event/Home-Rule-Great-Britain-and-Ireland, (27/11/2019).
[262] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
[263] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258.
[264] *Ibidem*.
[265] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
[266] *Idem*, p. 98.
[267] *Ibidem*.
[268] *Idem*, p. 99.

maintain control of imperial affairs and foreign relations.[269] Notwithstanding, he found strong opposition by both the Conservatives, who viewed the bill as a betrayal towards the loyal Protestants wishing to remain linked to Britain, and the Liberals, who worried that it would bring the break-up of the Union and its benefits. Consequently, Gladstone's bill was disapproved, giving a hard blow to Parnell.[270] In addition, most of British public opinion criticised both the Home Rule movement and the Irish Parliamentary Party, as they were presumed to be connected to terrorism and crime.[271] In spite of this, Parnell and his cause obtained much support both in Britain and in Ireland.[272] Yet, another event happened, this time a private and personal occurrence, which questioned again Parnell's credibility and political respectability. He had been having a love affair with the wife of a member of his party, Captain O'Shea, since 1880.[273] Even though the Captain was largely aware of it, he did not want to divorce his wife, as he could profit from the will of one of her aunts. The only thing that he did, was not voting for Home Rule in 1886. However, when it was clear that the Captain's hope was groundless, he started divorce lawsuit against his wife in 1889, thus making the whole affair public, and ultimately winning the case. Thereafter, the divorce trial became a public scandal; British conformists and Irish Catholics were shocked and strongly resentful towards Parnell. This caused a permanent split in his party: Parnellites on one side and anti-Parnellites on the other, each of them claiming to be the true Home Rulers.[274] Parnell married Katherine O'Shea in 1891, but he died soon after the same year, after campaigning in another election. Although the last years of his life were dramatic, even tragic, still nowadays he is remembered as a nationalist who carried out the work started by O'Connell and continued by Butt.[275] Unfortunately, although Gladstone continued his Home Rule efforts, the conflict within Irish Parliamentary party made it difficult for further reforms to be enacted. Indeed, Gladstone presented his

[269] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
[270] *Idem*, p. 100.
[271] *Idem*, p. 101.
[272] *Ibidem*.
[273] J. Jordan, "The Captain and the King: William O'Shea, Parnell and Late Victorian Ireland", in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 54, No 1, October 2011, pp. 133-134.
[274] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
[275] *Ibidem*.

second Home Rule bill in 1893, but the House of Lords rejected it; the Prime Minister then resigned.[276]

The period between the death of Parnell in 1891 and the partition of Ireland in 1921, which created the Irish Free State on one side and the separate Northern Ireland under British control on the other side, was characterised by several political overturns with the consequent economic, social, and cultural changes. As concerns economy, Ireland experienced implementation of agriculture techniques and methods.[277] The British government passed further land reforms which allowed over sixty thousand tenants to purchase the land they had rented to work. Despite this, agricultural labourers did not benefit much from the Land Acts and, between 1906 and 1909, they used violence to boycott graziers (the farmers who rented land to graze cattle). In 1898, William O'Brien attempted to end this conflict by founding the United Irish League, which demanded the redistribution of lands to small farmers, but in vain.[278] Although Ireland was still mainly a rural country, both rural and urban areas underwent technological innovation through a more extended railway network and an increased number of retail shops.[279] However, Irish industry declined because of the competition with more powerful British companies, except for Belfast that still excelled in linen production, shipbuilding, and engineering.[280] With respect to this city, it has to be pointed out that industry was mainly under the control of Protestants and unionists, whereas Catholics were still employed in low paid working positions. As regards social and cultural issues, about four million people emigrated between 1850 and 1914, mainly to the United States and Britain.[281]

In addition, this period was concerned with a Gaelic Revival, whose target was reinvigorating Irish national identity through a new Irish literary movement, the promotion and restoration of the Irish language, and the organisation of traditional Irish games and sports.[282] Firstly, a group of intellectuals led by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) spawned the Irish Literary Revival, a cultural movement aimed at elevating Irish literature to higher standards by creating a new national literature inspired to Celtic

[276] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
[277] *Idem*, p. 110.
[278] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 417.
[279] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[280] *Ibidem*.
[281] *Ibidem*.
[282] *Idem*, p. 112.

mythology and an ancient, pre-colonial Ireland. In 1891, Yeats founded the Irish Literary Society of London, and the following year he joined the National Literary Society in Dublin.[283] In 1904, Irish national drama started to be performed at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Secondly, Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) and Eoin MacNeil (1867-1945) founded the Gaelic League in 1893.[284] The movement's goals were retaining and supporting the Irish language where it was already spoken, while restoring it where it was less used, so that it would become the major spoken language in the country. The Gaelic League created a national festival, its own newspaper, and finally managed to introduce the Irish language as a compulsory subject in national schools. Thirdly, Michael Cusack (1847-1906) and Maurice Davin (1864-1927) founded the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884.[285] Its objective was promoting traditional Irish amateur sports such as Gaelic football, hurling, and camogie. Its members were banned from playing foreign sports and from serving in the British military or police forces. The association's ultimate aim was rebuilding the Irish male model, so much weakened by the Famine. It celebrated perfect physicality (its games were not only for playing but for spectacle): the GAA player was not only an athlete, but also an icon for his country, highlighting that the Irish were as muscularly advanced as their English masters.

After the resignation of Prime Minister Gladstone, the power of the British government passed from the hands of the Liberals to the Conservatives and vice versa through a succession of political changes.[286] The Irish Parliamentary Party was still divided by divergent political ideologies: Parnellites - with John Redmond (1856-1918) and John Dillon - on the one side, and anti-Parnellites - with William O'Brien - on the other. Politically speaking, this lack of stability resulted in an overall disinterest in Irish affairs. Indeed, even though some land and social reforms were allowed from 1887 to 1903, the main objective was placating Irish population, as well as assuring Unionists in Ulster and Great Britain that the United Kingdom would remain intact. In the meantime, other nationalist movements arose. Firstly, Sinn Féin was established by Arthur Griffith (1871-1922), who aspired to a completely independent Ireland under a shared monarch with Great Britain.[287] He promoted Irish economic protectionism to be supported by an

[283] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 334.
[284] *Idem*, p. 225.
[285] *Idem*, p. 222.
[286] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
[287] *Idem*, p. 117.

umbrella organization, the Cumann na nGaedheal, which coordinated the activities of smaller nationalist groups.[288] Secondly, an Irish labour movement was organised by James Larkin (1876-1947) and James Connolly (1868-1916), in order to implement the conditions of agricultural and rural labourers, still living in a situation of undernourishment, disease, and backwardness.[289] Connolly firmly believed that revolution was the only way to obtain an Irish workers' state, and therefore he began to create a Citizen Army to protect labourers. Thirdly, the Irish Republican Brotherhood was still active under Thomas Clarke (1857-1916) and strongly promoted the Gaelic League and the GAA.

In 1912, the Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith (1852-1928), introduced the third Home Rule bill, which reserved Britain control of foreign affairs, currency and tariffs.[290] The Irish Party and Sinn Féin were favourable to it, while the Unionists were strongly opposed. Ultimately, the House of Commons passed the bill in 1913, yet the House of Lords rejected it, therefore the bill would take two years to become law.[291] The Unionists and the Conservatives were outraged by such a possibility, and they gathered a private army, the Ulster volunteers.[292] In turn, also the IRB formed its Irish Volunteers.[293] The question was about to get out of control and, certainly, it sparked off a breaking point which led to a no-return path. The government considered to amend the Homer Rule bill by giving Ulster a temporary exclusion, but the First World War started, and Britain entered it in 1914. In the same year, in order to placate Irish revolutionary spirit, King George V allowed the bill, but added another bill as a concession to Unionists: the implementation of Home Rule would be delayed until the war was over.[294] The First World War split Irish nationalists in two factions: on the one hand, there were those who, like Redmond and other members of the Irish Party, wanted to support the allies; while on the other, there were those who, like Sinn Féin and the IRB, were greatly opposed to the war and any alliance with Britain.[295] These divergent ideas resulted in an internal separation within the Irish Volunteers: those who supported

[288] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
[289] *Ibidem*.
[290] *Idem*, p. 119.
[291] *Ibidem*.
[292] *Ibidem*
[293] *Ibidem*.
[294] *Idem*, p. 120.
[295] *Ibidem*.

participation to the war changed their name to National Volunteers; whereas those who opposed entry in the war retained the name Irish Volunteers.[296] Moreover, the IRB became more militant under Patrick Pearse (1879-1916), who strengthened the relationship with the Irish Volunteers.[297] They both agreed on the fact that a resurrection was the only impelling way to gain independence.[298] Few of them even argued that a blood sacrifice was needed, not only to reach full self-governance, but also to cleanse Ireland of its failed former attempts at Home Rule. Meanwhile, the British government was primarily concerned with the European war, therefore it did not pay much attention to Irish nationalist propaganda. At the beginning of 1916, Pearse, along with Joseph Mary Plunkett (1887-1916), Thomas James Clarke (1858-1916) and other members of the IRB, planned a rebellion for Easter Sunday, 23 April 1916.[299] They also convinced Connolly and his Citizen Army to join the insurrection. Although some members considered this idea as a fool suicidal revolt, they were overwhelmed by Pearse and the others. The nationalist Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916) went, at first, to the United Stated to raise money and, later, to Germany to recruit an Irish Brigade formed of Irish war prisoners and to provide arms for the rising. Unfortunately, the German ship providing the weapons cargo, supposed to land on Kerry coast on 20 or 21 April, was intercepted by the British navy and its captain was forced to scuttle it. Casement was arrested, accused of treason, and executed in August that year. When Eoin MacNeill, the Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Volunteers, heard of the German ship and Casement, he stopped the plans for the rebellion. Yet, it was postponed on Easter Monday: Pearse's Volunteers and Connolly's Citizen Army, reaching a number of about 1,800 revolutionaries, seized the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin and other strategic buildings in the city, including the Four Courts, Liberty Hall and City Hall. At the GPO, Pearse proclaimed the Irish Republic.[300] The British Army and its reinforcements counterattacked. On 27 April, they fired and shelled the GPO and the Four Courts, forcing Pearse and his rebels to surrender; eventually, they were captured the following day. The revolt was then subdued in six days. Roughly 500 people were killed in the Easter Rising - the most part of them were civilians - and more than 2,600 people were

[296] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[297] Patrick Pearse, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Patrick-Henry-Pearse, (29/11/2019).
[298] *Ibidem*.
[299] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
[300] *Idem*, p. 122.

wounded.[301] In May, fifteen leaders of the rebels, including Pearse and Connolly, were executed, and other participants were arrested and jailed.[302] Ultimately, Irish people did realise that the idea of a blood sacrifice became real. Notwithstanding, the rebellion finally made the British government find a way to reach a compromise with Ireland, in order to avoid further troubles. Hence, the imprisoned rebels were released and the new Liberal Prime Minister, David Lloyd George (1863-1945), proposed Home Rule, with the temporary exclusion of six Ulster counties (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone, which still nowadays are the counties of Norther Ireland).[303] Redmond, now the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, rejected this offer, along with the leader of Sinn Féin, Eamon de Valera (1882-1975), and the Irish Volunteers, who did not want a partition of the country.[304] In 1918, Redmond suddenly died, and De Valera was arrested and imprisoned.[305] In the same year, Sinn Féin won the election. Since it did not accept the authority of the British parliament and refused to sit in the House of Commons, it set up an Irish parliament, *Dáil Eireann*.[306] It worked as a full government, establishing its own court system, land bank, and other institutional offices. The following year, De Valera escaped from jail with the help of two *Dáil Eireann*'s members, Michael Collins (1890-1922) and Harry Boland (1887-1922), and returned to Dublin as President of the new government.[307] In the meantime, Collins strengthened the *Dáil*'s connections with the IRB and the Irish Volunteers in order to build up an Irish guerrilla army. The Irish Volunteers changed its name in Irish Republican Army (IRA) and started a fight against British government in Ireland, the Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921).[308] Although Britain quickly responded to the attack, the IRA was successful. In 1920, Lloyd George suggested a new solution for Ireland: he proposed two parliaments, one for the six Ulster counties, and another one for the rest of the country.[309] Again, the Prime Minister's offer was refused, and the Anglo-Irish War continued. In 1921, a general truce was called: Lloyd George offered Eamon de Valera

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[301] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
[302] *Ibidem*.
[303] *Idem*, p. 123.
[304] *Ibidem*.
[305] *Ibidem*.
[306] S. J. Connolly (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[307] J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
[308] *Ibidem*.
[309] *Idem*, p. 125.

dominion status within the British Empire.[310] The *Dáil* did not agree, but accepted treaty negotiations and an Irish delegation - constituted by Griffith, Collins and other members of the *Dáil* - was sent to London to discuss them with the British cabinet.[311] The negotiations were difficult and proving: Ulster counties aspired to self-rule, British public opinion wanted to reach peace, republicans aimed at a total Irish Home Rule. Eventually, the Prime Minister offered a partitioned Ireland (with a boundary determined by a special commission), which provided southern Ireland with dominion status in the British Commonwealth.[312] Once more, the *Dáil* in Dublin rejected the proposal, yet some of its members realised that the offer sounded like an ultimatum.[313] As it turned out, Lloyd George threatened the Irish delegation with a war which would lead to a definitive Irish failure (the Ira was indeed running out of resources and men); therefore, the *Dáil*'s members reluctantly signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921.[314] It established the Irish Free State and the Province of Northern Ireland as two separate political entities. Nevertheless, the *Dáil* initially rejected the Treaty, but lastly ratified it, with the withdrawal of De Valera and other members.[315] The Irish Free State remained in the British Commonwealth until 1948 and Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom until nowadays.[316]

Stoker was born in mid-nineteenth century and lived until the 1910s, witnessing a long and troubled resurrection period. He was well aware of all the challenges that Ireland had to face, starting from its original formation and throughout all its history. Unfortunately, he missed what was the first real significant success for Irish nationalists, namely the proclamation of the Irish Free State, although it was a partial achievement. The years that came after his death are not of this thesis' interest, yet the events that occurred in the twentieth and, I dare say, in the twenty-first century as well, only confirm an extremely troubled history, which seems to avoid an ultimate peace and political equilibrium, so as to express a national Irish identity that corresponds to the geographical territory marked in the maps. Irish people appear to have no rest in dealing with a definite status, since the population was, and is, too varied and fragmented in

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310 J. Coohill, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
311 *Ibidem.*
312 *Ibidem.*
313 *Ibidem.*
314 *Idem*, p. 126.
315 *Ibidem.*
316 *Ibidem.*

their ideas and aspirations. Probably, Stoker is the best model to express a contradictory - perhaps double, if not multiple - identity, which is constantly attempting to find a stationary point in order to feel secure and at ease. As a matter of fact, Irish history, as it is briefly resumed here, probably provides a historical background that will help to comprehend what will happen in the near future, with respect to the Brexit question. I deem that, whether the Brexit would be declared or not, it will cause in any case further situations of dissatisfaction, since it will renovate the sense of separation and nationalism between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.

2.1 Bogland

In the English language, there exist various and different words which can be related to the term "bog": mire, morass, swamp, fen, slough, and goo. They are all synonyms, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* confirms: the bog is (an area of) wet soft ground, formed of decaying plants; the mire is an area of deep mud; the morass is a dangerous area of low soft wet land; the swamp is an area of ground that is very wet or covered with water and in which plants, trees, and other vegetation are growing; the fen is an area of low, flat, wet land; the slough is area of soft, muddy ground; the goo is any unpleasant sticky wet substance.[317] In sum, these definitions recurrently present the nouns "ground, area" and the adjectives "wet, soft". Briefly, all of these habitats are examples of wetland, as they are periodically inundated with freshwater.

Nevertheless, there are some subtle differences between these ecosystems. For instance, swamps are forested wetlands which reside near lakes and rivers. They have slow-moving water and woody plants, such as mangroves or cypress trees. Marshes also originate from a watercourse but do not have much water movement and feed non-woody, herbaceous plants. The PH of water is neutral, making marshes rich with plants and animals. They tend to form a transition between open bodies of water and dry land. Bogs are covered in peat, that precisely comes from the leftovers of dead plant material.

[317] Oxford English Dictionary online, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/, (19/11/2019).

Their water source comes mainly from precipitation and no external runoff or river. They have a hard-sealed clay soil bottom that prevents water from seeping out: water from precipitation collects in bogs and sticks around. The water has mostly a lower pH, which limits survival of plants and animals. Moreover, bogs are anoxic and dominated by sphagnum mosses and shrubs. Fens also have peat. They are fertile land, since they are high in nutrients and usually also pH or alkaline neutrals. When fens are near each other, they can form bogs. Nutrients come from groundwater: a breach in the clay allows groundwater to seep up into the depression, thus forming a habitat.

The word "bog" derives from the Irish or Scottish Gaelic *bogach,* which refers to a certain type of soft ground made of peatland.[318] "Bog" is a shorthand name for biological products of peatlands, which are a specific type of wetlands that often appear to be solid ground, yet they comprised a great amount of water, between 85% and 98%.[319] Peat is the resulting material derived from the thousand-year-old decomposition of the remains of plants, trees, and animals. Although on the surface it appears to be firm ground, it is not solid at all, as it contains a high percentage of water. Since it contains a high level of acidity, it lacks nutrients, nonetheless it gives life to various insects, invertebrates, and carnivorous plants. Therefore, this squishy landmass is in part liquid, in part gas, and in part solid material. Furthermore, its morphological state constantly changes according to the presence or absence of rainwater, which can make it drier or wetter. This, along with the blanket of mist covering the bogland due to its ongoing process of decomposition, explains the optical effect that one perceives: a sort of shifting movement of the ground, almost like an avalanche, which squashes and suffocates anyone or anything in its path.

In Europe, bogland is present in the territories of Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, and Finland. More specifically, this specific kind of ground covers one-sixth (about 1.34 million hectares) of the total land area in Ireland,[320] which is unparalleled in any other

[318] P. Foss & C. O'Connell, "Bogland: Study and Utilization", in J. W. Foster (ed.), *Nature in Ireland: A Scientific and Cultural History*, 1997, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, pp. 184-198, p. 184.

[319] S. McLean, "'To Dream Profoundly': Irish Boglands and the Imagination of Matter", *Irish Journal of Anthropology,* Vol. 10, No. 2, 2007, Anthropology Plus, pp. 61-69, p. 61.

[320] P. Abbot, "Ireland's Peat Bogs", Cork University Press, 1997, https://www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/geography/bogs.html, (14/11/2019).

country in the European Union except for Finland.[321] The Irish country is covered by two different types of bogland: raised and blanket bogs. The first ones are smaller, generally formed in lowland areas (such as in the Midlands and in central Ireland), where there is less drainage, and they originated naturally as post-glacial lakes. While in the past they were depressions filled with water, they are now filled with bogland, indeed, they are characterised by a dome shaped centre. Because of their accessibility, raised bogs are the major sites of turf removal for fuel. In contrast, blanket bogs are extensive, usually formed in upland areas near oceans (as in western Ireland), where there is consistent drainage and a high amount of rainfall. They are located especially in the counties of Galway, Mayo, Wicklow, Kerry, and Donegal. Blanket bogs are so called since they appear quite homogeneous and seem to cover the ground as a blanket.

Because of the bogs' depth, which can reach more than seven metres in raised bogs, and thanks to the ongoing chemical process resulting from the anaerobic environment - lack of oxygen, excess of tannic acid, and the proliferation of *Sphagnum* moss - bogs preserve many objects, such as ancient butter, oaks, golden or bronze artefacts (weapons and valuables) from specific cultures at various periods in history, and human bodies as well. Indeed, misled by the seemingly solid surface of bogs, few people found their ultimate death by drowning or asphyxiation: they believed they would have been supported by stable land, whereas no solid footing was provided. Or, these people could have been sacrificed in ancient times. It is up to archaeologists to determine whether the bodies belonged to people who died accidentally or whether they were killed as part of a sacrifice rite. Most bog bodies date to the Iron Age and were found in northwest European lands, especially in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and Ireland. Thanks to the bog's preservative characteristic, all of these relics and remains are well preserved. Indeed, although the tannic acid dyed the bodies' skin brown, hair and fingerprints are still visible on corpses. The oldest one is Koelbjerg Man (from Denmark), who dates to 8000 BCE, during the Mesolithic period. Other well-known bog bodies are Lindow Man (from the UK), Tollund Man and Grauballe Man (from Denmark). These corpses present a great deal of similarities, such as an age between 20 and 25 years old, lack of clothing, high status, and violent death, leading archaeologists to suppose that they were killed as human sacrifices or executed as

[321] J. Feehan, "Bogs", in F. H. Aalen, K. Whelan, M. Stout (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*, Cork: Cork UP, 2011, pp. 168-174, p. 168.

criminals. Unfortunately, the recoveries happened during the process of peat extraction, and often the corpses were damaged by the milling machine. Since this thesis is focused on Ireland, I spend some words about the discoveries occurred there. Many of them are exposed today at the National Museum of Ireland. Bogs are etched in Irish history as both a geographical and human record.[322] All of the three findings shortly described here were intentionally buried in peat after death. In addition, they appear to have been human sacrifices: allegedly, the corpses belonged to kings and, since ancient tribes considered kings as responsible for calamities such as poor weather or harvests, they were sacrificed. Anyway, theories about the manner and the reasons these men died vary. Stuart McLean argues that it is the transformative power of collective memory drawn from the bog bodies that enables both human and non-human understanding.[323] The oldest fleshed bog body is that of Cashel Man, who dates to around 2000 BCE, during the Bronze Age. Cashel Man, a crouched young adult male, was found near Cashel, County Laois, in 2011. He had a pre-mortem broken arm and a cut on his back, both caused by a sharp object. Moreover, his back was broken in two places. Wooden stakes accompanied the body, which suggest ritual sacrifice. The torso and head of Clonycavan Man, another Iron Age bog body, was found in Clonycavan, County Meath, in 2003. Due to specific signs on the corpse, studies determined that he was murdered. His skull was split by a sharp element, probably an axe. He was also disembowelled, and the nipples were missing. Various speculations have been suggested to explain the latter aspect: it could be an effect of decomposition; or it was a sign of torture while the man was alive; or it was a symbolic gesture to mark the man as a rejected ruler. However, all of them are hypothesis. Three months after Clonycavan Man was discovered, Old Croghan Man was found near Croghan Hill, County Offaly. He is likely to have died between 362 BC and 175 BC, during Iron Age. Evidence showed that the man was killed and buried at the foot of an ancient hill used for kingship ceremonies. This body is noteworthy for its well-preserved manicured nails, which might indicate high social status, as suggested by the plaited leather band around its left arm. The man

[322] J. Feehan, "Bogs", in F. H. Aalen, K. Whelan, M. Stout (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*, Cork: Cork UP, 2011, pp. 168-174, p. 168.
[323] S. McLean, "Bodies from the Bog: Metamorphosis, Non-human Agency and the Making of 'Collective' Memory", *Irish Journal of Anthropology,* Anthropology Plus, 2008, pp. 299-308, p. 306.

was decapitated and the body presented a stab wound in the chest, with deep cuts under each nipple.

Over the centuries, bogs have been exploited as a source of fuel: after having extracted the decomposed peat material, either by hand with a spade or with a small tractor, land workers transformed the wetland into turf. During the nineteenth century, this process was mainly executed by hand (and it is still widespread in economically depressed rural areas such as the Midlands): year by year, families worked the bog in their land in order to produce enough fuel for cooking and heating. Nevertheless, mechanized peat extraction has become the predominant method: the removed peat, namely the turf, is dried in the air. After it has dried, it is stored indoors and eventually sold or used for fuel.[324] Until the middle of the twentieth century, turf-harvesting was a labour-intensive process, but mechanical extraction meant the destruction of vast ancient bogs (with the consequent elimination of significant folkloric sites). Nowadays, however, the traditional activity of turf cutting is more and more decreasing for a few reasons. Firstly, the creation of an electrification system in mid-twentieth century Ireland reduced the necessity for families to harvest turf from the bog for their household needs. Secondly, the process of peat extraction has been mechanised by corporations and sold on international markets, rather than exploited in its original place. Thirdly, the European Union has massively forbidden such a practice to protect and preserve the bogland habitat; even if it is still legal in Ireland, Scotland, and Denmark.

Throughout history, bogs have functioned as spaces where Irish rebels could find refuge and shelter from colonial armies. Beyond an increasing demand for lumber in the British Empire, the Tudors, especially under the monarchy of Elizabeth I, ordered to clear all forests, in order to secure timber supply and prevent rebels from clandestine meeting. The elimination of forests and peat bogs was one of the practices relevant to the English colonial project that triggered an environmental - and political - impact still tangible today. Indeed, bogs currently remain the most endangered ecosystem in Ireland: over ninety-two percent of them have been exploited at dizzying rates for fuel

[324] G. Doyle & C. Ó Críodáin, "Peatlands - Fens and Bogs", in M. L. Otte (ed.), *Wetlands of Ireland: Distribution, Ecology, and Uses and Economic Value*, Dublin: University of College Dublin Press, 2003, pp. 79-108, pp. 97-98.

or damaged by colonialism, commercial development, and industrialisation process.[325] Nowadays, Ireland is involved in a policy of preservation and restoration of bogland biodiversity. On the one side, Irish culture benefited from what the bog contained; while, on the other side, it mourned the loss of a quintessential national ecosystem.

Bogs' topographies have changed over time in connection with different land management systems and cultural practices surrounding them. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the English considered bogs as zones of decay and waste. Hence, the British government established the Bog Commission in 1809, in order to fulfil research about bogs: it described and mapped them; it investigated their commercial and profitable uses; eventually, it gave advice on drainage. Since bogs were unused space, policy administrators proposed they should be drained to produce high-profit harvests for landowners and economic resource for the British Empire. Consequently, the English set up policies to reclaim bogs, as part of a bigger land reform which implied the dispossession of Catholic peasants who lived near or on bogs, in order to increase agriculture production for Protestant and Anglo-Irish landowners - and consequently the British Empire. Actually, the reform began in the mid-eighteenth century, following the 1731 Land Act, and aimed at clearing bogs for agriculture but later, during nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the priority turned into the extraction of peat from bogs for fuel production. At the time, this project was viewed favourably, since it would rid Ireland of its cesspool; nonetheless the people who mostly took advantage from it belonged to the landowning class. As a matter of fact, the ineffective landlord system in Ireland disenfranchised many people. For many centuries, unequal distribution and ownership of property represented the dysfunctional system of English colonial power.

In order to justify the exploitation and elimination of bogs, both the English and the Anglo-Irish imposed a derogatory identification of bogland: it was considered as a site of sin and sloth, a place of social and moral darkness. Bogland was therefore associated with the Irish inhabitants living on it. Indeed, Irish people were called "bog dwellers, bog trotters"[326] or "culchie" (a pejorative term for peasants coming from rural Ireland, meaning they are rustic. For instance, the west side of Derry, in Northern

[325] G. Derek, *Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic,* Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2016, p. 227.

[326] W. Hughes, "'For Ireland's good': The Reconstruction of Rural Ireland in Bram Stoker's "The Snake's Pass"", in *Irish Studies Review,* Vol. 3, No. 12, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), Autumn 1995, pp. 17-21, p. 18.

Ireland, was - and still is - called the "Bogside". This name derives from the fact that many of the impoverished Catholics living there worked as labourers on the bogs, just outside of Derry, and were pejoratively associated with the sinking, decomposing, and stagnant mire of peat. Only recently, since the late twentieth century, this word has been restored by the people who are proud of their rural origins). In doing so, the British reinforced the idea that the bog expresses Irish intractable personality and introducing the discriminating stereotype that the Irish were miserable, sterile, and slothful. They were connected to adjectives such as weird, atavistic, primitive, irrational, and superstitious. As a way to imply a justification for activating drainage projects on bogland, the English and the Anglo-Irish needed to demonise Ireland's landscape and people: the reclamation of bogs and the consequent displacement of Catholic local peasants not only provided with agriculture revenue for landowners, but also with salvation of Catholic tenants from sin through conversion to Protestantism. In so doing, the reclamation of bogs meant both economic and religious transformation. In this way, bogs and its inhabitants were marginalised to reinforce their subordinated "otherness" status, as not only Irish landscape and Catholic peasants, but also as colonial objects and subjects.

In sum, land has long been a crucial issue of strife in Ireland, affecting several sectors: economics, politics, geography, and ethnicity. It is not surprising that bogs serve as symbols of national identity that Irish culture struggles to restore because they have been marginalised, transformed, and exploited, likewise the people living near them and all the Irish population in general, who felt as if they were emptied of its Irishness.

Not only bogland functions as an emblem for national Irish identity, but also it represents Irish landscape as a transhistorical space, in that it embodies a repository of culture: it unifies history, materialised by relics and artefacts, and cultural memory, retained by lore and tradition.[327] Both nature and culture intersect and overlap, so much that, in the past, families were used to give a proper name to bogs, that would remain unvaried for generations, revealing a very intimate relationship between Irish people and their land. From a certain point of view, the bog simultaneously underpins and eschews culture: it contains, holds, and preserves culture by destroying what comes into

[327] D. Gladwin, *Bogs and the Irish Postcolonial Gothic, 1890-2010*, University of Alberta: Department of English and Film Studies, 2014, p. 49.

contact with it. In this regard, Karin Sanders argues that especially bog bodies negotiate the liminality that results from the combination between their material reality as archaeological artefacts (mummies) and the temporality that comes with their humanness.[328] Tellingly, bogs record and collect memories of the material and cultural human past, thereby serving as useful means to account for a new interpretation of certain histories, such as the bog bodies and the discriminatory way in which many people were murdered before being buried in bogs.

Diane Meredith contends that the uncanny qualities of bogs destabilise historical and spatial order and, precisely for this characteristic, they mirror Irish politics and history.[329] Bogs represent a terrestrial element that has got its identity and might turn into a profitable resource which would lead to economic independence from Britain. In fact, the history of colonial occupation is so strongly preserved in the bogs' environment - through abstract metaphors and concrete objects (bog bodies and vestiges of battles) - that it continues to unfold in the present.

Bogs are both attractive and dangerous because of their imaginative and biological qualities - both contradictory and complementary. Karin Sanders points out that there is something fundamentally contradictory about bogs: they are solid and soft, firm and malleable, wet and dry; they are deep, dark, and dangerous; but they are also mysterious, alluring, and seductive.[330] Derek Gladwin suggests that bogs are not oppositional sites in terms of traditional either/or binaries, to the extent that they both terrestrially and imaginatively create what the postmodern geographer Edward Soja defined as "Thirdspace": a flexible way of thinking about fluctuating ideas, events, appearances and representations, and how these affect the material and perceptual ways geographical spaces change.[331] Given that Firstplace is the material world, and the Secondspace is the imaginative one, Thirdspace is the combination of the two of them. It serves to understand bogs in alternative and multiple ways, beyond a dualistic dimension analysis. With this respect, Soja distinguished the "both/and also" logic,

[328] K. Sanders, *Bodies in the Bog and the Archaeological Imagination,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 9.

[329] D. Meredith, "Hazards in the Bog - Real and Imagined", *The Geographical Review,* Vol. 92, No. 3, July 2002, pp. 319-332.

[330] K. Sanders, *op. cit.,* p. 7.

[331] D. Gladwin, *Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, cit., p. 6.

relevant to bogs, in contrast to the "either/or" logic, typical of a binary view.[332] In this sense, bogs rely on a union of opposites, that goes beyond a limited two-dimensionality investigation and reaches a limitless multidimensionality view of spaces that symbolically embraces specific geography with imaginative and physical characteristics. Examination of bogs implies making associations and metaphors between biological and cultural qualities.

For all these aspects, and especially for their typical liminality, bogs provide with the suitable site for the conception of legends and folk tales in Irish popular culture and lore. This relation between geography and culture is so strong that, one of Ireland's most extensive bogs covering the south-eastern midlands, the Bog of Allen, is an Irish mythological site that took its name from an obscure goddess or heroine named Alend. Besides, as Terry Eagleton affirms, objects preserved in bogs are caught in a kind of living death, and this sense of death as part of life is a typical topic of Irish tradition.[333] This exemplifies the idea that death and life are connected as part of the uncanny qualities of the bog. As a type of wetland, which is neither water nor land and is inhospitable either for farming or living, bogs depict a halfway world consisting of both water and land.[334] They represent the perfect entrances to the Otherworld. Indeed, in the Iron Age, they were believed to be gateways to other worlds, places of communication with spirits.[335] The metaphorical relation of bogs as entrance doors signals their transitional qualities, linking two worlds as one, even as these worlds are commonly viewed as coexisting separate spaces. Myth and folklore attempt to explicate the inexplicable horrors that exist on the bogs. For instance, when bogs swell because of prolonged amounts of rainfall and eventually start to shift, Irish lore considered it as a signal of spiritic agency. Even though geology justifies this effect revealing that the swollen bog ultimately subsides from the base and slides in the direction given by the inclination of the ground, Irish mythology assumes the presence of some spirits materialising on bogs. One of them is the *púca*, which in Irish means "spirit, ghost". It is a shapeshifter that can transform into frightening or desirable forms, either animals or

[332] E. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places,* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996, p. 2.
[333] T. Eagleton, *The Truth About the Irish,* Dublin: New Island Books, 2002, p. 31.
[334] B. & J. Coles, *People of the Wetlands: Bogs, Bodies and Lake-Dwellers*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1989, p. 151.
[335] K. Sanders, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

humans, and that can be either malevolent (like a blood-thirsty killer) or benevolent (like a spiritual guide). Another supernatural apparition is the “Bog Sprite” or “Water Sheerie”, represented by the lights that spontaneously appear in bogs, who entice the wanderer to an untimely death. This is what mythology calls the “will-o’-the-wisps”, better known as *ignis fatui*. Scientifically, this phenomenon is explained by the gases that the bog produces below its surface during the decomposition process: when exposed to oxygen, they spontaneously combust, creating flickering lights.

Because of their liminality, bogs are difficult to describe with definitive terms. As unshaped landmasses, bogs cover many parts of Ireland and are often associated with culture, politics, and history as much as they are with geography and biology. The limited and limitless characteristics of bogs offer various and endless speculations about the past, as much as about the present and the future. I confirm Gladwin’s characterisation of bogs as contentious terrains, since this special ecosystem demands careful attention, which will never stop differing critical ways of investigation. What is certain is that, in its ambiguous and antithetical status, the bog represents a sort of synecdoche for an environmentally challenged Ireland and its contended and traumatic history.

Chapter 3
Stoker's enigma

The following description about Stoker is far from being exhaustive and complete, it is in fact more a general overview of his life, rather than a detailed biography; basically, I focus on those aspects of the author's identity that influenced his narrative and can primarily be detected in the novel *The Snake's Pass*. My objective thus is defining the background for the subsequent analysis of the above-mentioned novel, which will be examined in the fourth chapter by investigating the specific fictional devices that Stoker employed and that find their explanations in the assumptions given here.

In the past, anthologies commonly included Stoker among British writers, with no mention to his Irish origins or his Irishness.[336] It is only recently, mainly from the beginning of the twenty-first century, that scholars have begun to deeply investigate and enhance Stoker's Irish identity and his overall fiction. Indeed, even though he spent most of his lifetime in London and abroad, his Irish identity was never undermined, as I attempt to demonstrate in this chapter. With respect to this, two journal articles have given a precise and enlightened definition of Stoker. The first, an article published on 22 April 1922 in the *Irish Times,* praised Stoker as "a typical Irishman of the best type".[337] The second, an article of 26 July 1913 in the *Irish-American*, written in reply to the newspapers which described Stoker as an "English author and scholar", declared that:

> … Someone once said that when an Irishman did anything creditable, he was English; when he did the opposite, then he was Irish. […] Bram Stoker was a fine Dublin man, […] a really rabid home ruler and keenly sensitive of the good name of his native land, which he loved, with a rare devotion. […] Mr. Stoker never let anybody, when the occasion called for a declaration, forget that he was Irish through and through […] He would be the first to declare that he was an Irishman, Irish educated, too, and that whatever talents he possessed were due to his Irish birth and Irish environment.[338]

[336] M. Cadeddu, "Bram Stoker's Proposal for the Development of a Small Nation", *Estudios Irlandeses,* Vol. 11, No. 11, pp. 23-32, Asociación Española, 2016, p. 4.
[337] B. Belford, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of* Dracula, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996, p. 321.
[338] J. E. Browning (ed.), *The Forgotten Writings of Bram Stoker*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 218, 265.

Stoker is commonly known as the writer of *Dracula*. Tellingly, the British writer Daniel Farson entitled his biography of Stoker *The Man Who Wrote* Dracula;[339] similarly, the American author Barbara Belford wrote her biography on the same subject under the title *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of* Dracula;[340] W.J. McCormack, Professor of Literary History and lecturer of Irish literature, seems to have taken into consideration Stoker, in the section on *Irish Gothic and After* in the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, only because of *Dracula*'s success.[341] In spite of this, Stoker was a prolific writer, who managed to write as far as eighteen books: a long tale, eleven novels, two collections of stories (which were posthumously published in 1914 by his wife), and four non-fiction works, other than many articles and interviews. Nevertheless, the success reached thanks to *Dracula* had a double effect: it made Stoker extensively well-known; while, to a certain extent, it obscured his other works and limited his reputation exclusively to this text. Notwithstanding, both public readership and criticism appreciated all his writings in general.

Stoker was quite secretive and did not leave much information on his private life. He wrote a vast amount of correspondence, but it mostly concerned business; indeed, except for some letters, like those to Walt Whitman, there exists little material which testifies Stoker's innermost thoughts. Nonetheless, he put much of his opinions and desires in his works, thus rendering his fiction a sort of autobiographical record, well-hidden and tacit between the lines of his plots.

Abraham Stoker was born in Dublin on 8 November 1847 in a Protestant middle-class family. He was the third of seven children and came into being during the most acute and intense period of the Great Famine, which decimated the Irish population. There is no certain tracking record relevant to the ancestry of his family; as a matter of fact, different versions exist: Barbara Belford contends that Stoker's ancestor was a military officer who arrived in Ireland together with the army of William III of Orange at the end of the seventeenth century;[342] Haining and Tremaine argue that the Stokers came from Scotland and arrived to Ireland around the seventeenth

[339] D. Farson, *The Man Who Wrote* Dracula: *A Biography of Bram Stoker*, London: M. Joseph, 1975.
[340] B. Belford, *op. cit.*
[341] W. Hughes, "'For Ireland's good': The Reconstruction of Rural Ireland in Bram Stoker's 'The Snake's Pass'", in *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12, pp. 17-21. Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, Autumn 1995, p. 17.
[342] B. Belford, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

century;[343] some scholars believe that the family's origins lie in Great Britain, while some others deem they came from the Netherlands.[344] Perhaps, the most objective assertion about the Stokers' lineage is that of Paul Murray, who affirms that:

> … It is not possible to substantiate any of these conflicting claims from the material in the Stoker family collection or public records which only allow the ancestry on this side of the family to be traced back with certainty to William Stoker, Stoker's paternal grandfather.[345]

Consequently, the characterisation of Bram Stoker as an Anglo-Irish writer, firstly made by Barbara Belford, is quite daring and inadequate, as Paul Murray, Roy Foster, Chris Morash, and David Glover claimed.[346] Moreover, his family was not very wealthy, as was the ruling class of Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy; instead, Stoker's family belonged to the lower middle class - often struggling to stay middle class - confirmed by a census made for Bram's college tuition and the fact the Stokers lived in Clontarf, a suburb of Dublin.[347] Stoker's mother, Charlotte Matilda Blake Thornley, descended from one of the fourteen "tribes" of Galway, as proved by her surname: "Blake" indeed belonged to one of Ireland's most ancient and illustrious families, which could trace its origins back to Richard Blake, Sheriff of Connaught in 1305.[348] His mother was committed to prompting social and politic reforms and to helping people in need. She was a charity volunteer in the workhouses and became also involved in the plight of the deaf and mute people. She sensitised her children to become aware of unfortunate people and help them, and especially influenced her son Bram's literary production by narrating him tales about Irish traditions and accounts about her childhood, spent during the 1832 cholera epidemic in Sligo. Stoker's father, Abraham, worked as a civil servant in the public administration at Dublin Castle, as Bram later did. He transmitted his son the passion for the theatre, indeed since he was a teenager, Bram was used to attend to stage performances.

Stoker's childhood was quite tough, since he suffered from an unknown ailment that rendered him paralysed and bedridden until the age of 7, as he confirmed: "Till I

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[343] P. Haining & P. Tremayne, *The Un-dead: The Legend of Bram Stoker and Dracula*, Constable, 1997, p. 42.
[344] M. Cadeddu, *op. cit.,* p. 37.
[345] P. Murray, *From the Shadow of* Dracula*: A Life of Bram Stoker*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2004, Kindle Edition, p. 17.
[346] *Idem,* pp. 20-21.
[347] *Idem,* p. 32.
[348] *Idem,* p. 7.

was about seven years old I never knew what it was to stand upright".[349] While apparently sickly as a child, he got his personal revenge at the Trinity College, where he proved to be so fit that he was awarded the Dublin University Athletics Championship. Stoker studied at the Trinity College Dublin from 1864 to 1870, where his college tutor Dr George Ferdinand Shaw, a Fellow of the College, became one of his lifelong influences. There, he met some of the most notable intellectuals of the time, like Edward Dowden, his English literature Professor, who was an internationally renowned critic and instilled in Stoker the admiration for the works of the American poet Walt Whitman. At the Trinity College Dublin, he was one of the few students who managed to become President of the University Philosophical Society as well as Auditor of the College Historical Society. During the debates of the Philosophical Society, Stoker also made the acquaintance of Sir William Wilde, well-known ophthalmologist and otolaryngologist, father of Oscar. The Wildes ran one of the most in vogue literary salons in Dublin, where Bram had the opportunity of spending much time in their company, therefore deepening his knowledge about such issues as Irish folklore, antiquarianism, and nationalism. As Paul Murray argues, it is no wonder that Stoker paid a tribute to his old friend in *The Snake's Pass* through the admiring words of Andy, the Irish coachman, who exclaims: "Musha, but Docther Wilde himself, Rest his sowl! Couldn't have put it aisier to grip. It's a purfessionaler the young gintleman is intirely!",[350] thus referring to Sir William Wilde as a model of professional scientist and antiquarian, capable of great clarity and rhetoric. In addition, Lisa Hopkins contends that Sir William Wilde, as archaeologist and adventurer in Egypt, inspired the story of Stoker's novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903).[351]

Thanks to his great friendship with the Wildes and the time spent at their salon, Stoker met one of the most beautiful women of Dublin society, Florence Balcombe, and fell in love with her. However, Oscar Wilde noticed Florence, too, and proposed to her for first, but she rejected him. Later, Florence married Stoker, and together they had one child, Noel. This biographical data seems to be recalled in *The Snake's Pass*, in which a

[349] B. Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving,* London: William Heinemann, 1906, p. 31.
[350] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* in L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition (Irish Studies),* New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015, Kindle Edition, p. 53.
[351] L. Hopkins, *Bram Stoker: A Literary Life*, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 24.

love-triangle is constituted by Arthur, who loves Norah, who in turn is loved by Dick, Arthur's best friend.

In 1870, Stoker graduated with a BA (Bachelor of Arts). In *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, he claims to have graduated "with Honours in Pure Mathematics".[352] However, some scholars doubt this assertion: Barbara Belford and Ludham contend that he graduated in Science, rather than Mathematics;[353] while Paul Murray confirms that there are no records of his "Honours";[354] Lisabeth Buchelt affirms that "as a student he was only average";[355] Jarlath Killeen states that "he was academically average".[356] Shortly, an objective deduction is unlikely, given the poor evidence on the matter; besides, I do not think it is the case of approving Buchelt's and Killeen's statements.

In 1866, during his college years, Stoker followed in his father's footsteps: he joined the Irish civil service in Dublin and worked as a clerk in the Chief Secretary's office at Dublin Castle, until 1878. Initially, his role was unspecified, but in 1867 he was appointed as Inspector of Courts of Petty Sessions, a newly created position. The Petty Sessions were local courts, included in a section of the public administration of justice, dealing with minor civil and criminal cases. His job, therefore, required Stoker to extensively travel throughout Ireland. While working at Dublin Castle, Stoker started to write *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, published in 1879. This handbook originated by Stoker's realisation and consequent disappointment about the fact that clerks had no precise reference for their work, and thus spent much time and effort in the consultation of an infinite number of documents, even for the simplest cases.[357] He then collected cases and laws; classified them by topic; added his own introduction, and put some annotations on the margins. Successively, Stoker's text became the reference handbook on legal administration in Ireland and has remained the standard source for all the concerned executives for many years. Not only did he

[352] B. Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving,* cit., p. 32.

[353] B. Belford, *op. cit.,* p. 34; H. Ludham, *A Biography of Dracula: The Life Story of Bram Stoker*, London: W. Foulsham, 1962, p. 19.

[354] P. Murray, *op. cit*., p. 33.

[355] L. C. Buchelt, "'Being of Ireland' An Introduction to Bram Stoker's Irish Novel", in L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition (Irish Studies),* New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015, p. XIII.

[356] J. Killeen, "Bram Stoker (1847-1912)", Trinity Writers, January 2016, Trinity College Dublin website, https://www.tcd.ie/trinitywriters/assets/pdf/Bram%20Stoker%20December%202015.pdf, pp. 1-10, (29/09/2019), p. 4.

[357] H. Ludham, *op. cit.,* p. 45.

manage to publish a book that acquired essential importance from then on, but also "he experienced rural Ireland and witnessed how farmers in the countryside suffered under the English landlord system",[358] thus collecting material and putting the basis for his following work *The Snake's Pass*.

He was recognised as a prominent figure in Dublin social life and his life was very busy: he worked at Dublin Castle as a clerk; he had university tasks; he worked, although unpaid, as a drama critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail* (in his opinion, Dublin press was not able to promptly publish theatre reviews; he thus reformed the reviewing system, indeed, for the first time, a review would appear the day after the performance, rather than two days as it was previously done); in 1872, he published some novels in the English newspaper *London Society* (*The Crystal Cup*) and in the Irish newspaper *The Shamrock* (*The Primrose Path, Buried Treasures, The Chain of Destiny*); in 1873, he became editor of a daily magazine, the *Irish Echo*; in 1875, he was admitted to the degree of Master in Arts (by purchase).

It was during his free service of reviewing that Stoker met the famous actor Sir Henry Irving, who went to Dublin on several occasions to give readings. The two became friends, even though it seems that Stoker's friendship bordered on flattery and that of Irving lied on self-satisfaction.[359] Notwithstanding, Irving admired his friend and asked him to become Acting Manager at the Lyceum Theatre in London. In 1878, therefore, Stoker left the Civil Service at Dublin Castle and moved to England. After having spent almost half of his life in Ireland, he left his homeland and what was supposed to be an ambitious and lucrative career in government, without any apparent qualms. Hence, when he was over thirty, he opted for a new life in London and chose to undertake what would become a successful career as the general manager for one of the greatest theatre companies on the late-Victorian stage. He was thereafter associated with the theatre for the rest of his life: he would work at the Lyceum Theatre for almost twenty-seven years. It is true that Stoker's father transmitted him the passion for the theatre, but Bram admitted that he undertook theatrical criticism because he appreciated Irving's art. Stoker's appreciation of Irving was so immense that, when the actor came to visit Dublin, he organised impressive and crowded ceremonies to welcome him, and once Irving was even carried in triumph by a group of students. According to Paul

[358] B. Belford, *op. cit.,* p. 77.
[359] J. Killeen, *op. cit.,* p. 5.

Murray, Stoker got a considerable amount of earnings from this job, in contrast to that as Inspector of Petty Sessions, thus elevating his social and economic class to an upper level.[360] Indeed, although Stoker was the only Irishman at the Lyceum and was not a member of the dominant Irish Ascendancy class, his position at the London theatre brought him into the social circle of the English elite. The Lyceum was important not only as a theatre, but also as a meeting point where intellectuals, politicians, and high-level society people met to have banquets and conversations. It brought Stoker into contact with many of the leading politicians of the day. For instance, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom William Gladstone regularly frequented the Lyceum Theatre, and they had many discussions about the political developments of the day. Sir Henry Irving was also charged for the entertainment of honourable people during special events, such as the jubilee of Queen Victoria or the coronation of her successor, and showing a respectable British identity was essential on these occasions. It is curious to note that Stoker, so much connected to the definition and preservation of Irish identity, also contributed to the safeguard of the British one. Stoker's management of the Lyceum theatre was excellent in his efficiency and in his introduction of new improvements. As stated by some journals of the time, Irving benefited a lot from his cooperation. Such a success seems to confirm what the historian Roy Foster argued about the possibility for an Irishman to make a career in Great Britain, despite the prejudices and the marginalisation perpetuated by the English:

> … The Irish stereotype […] included the idea of a people too clever for their own good (or England's), but educable all the same. This attitude was not conducive to giving the Irish self-government, but it did not prevent the middle-class Irishman from making his way through accepted career structures. Prejudice there certainly was, but it is hard, overall, to feel that "racialist" is the correct term, similarly, the Irish were not segregated on the basis of race, which is why the word "ghetto" is too loosely used; segregation, like discrimination, was based at least as much on class.[361]

Stoker was so much praised that even Queen Victoria, on the occasion of a very important event, accepted his request of sending a message to journalists, providing him with the private telegraph of the royal castle and leaving him white paper for the writing of the message.[362]

[360] P. Murray, *op. cit.,* p. 92.
[361] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972,* London: Allen Lane, 1988; Penguin, 1989, p. 364.
[362] H. Ludham, *op. cit.,* p. 86.

While managing the Lyceum, Stoker also began to study for the bar in 1886; four years later, he was called to the bar at the Inner Temple. Though he never actually practiced law, he was quite proud of his legal qualification; indeed, on the 1891 census he stated that his occupation was, in this order, "barrister, theatrical manager, author."[363]

Nevertheless, despite the fact that writing was at the third place in Stoker's list of occupations, he found enough time to write several works ascribed to different genres: *Under the Sunset* (1882), *Snowbound: The Record of a Theatrical Touring Party* (1908), and *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories* (1914, published posthumously), are collections of short stories; *A Glimpse of America* (1886) is the diary of Stoker's journeys to America with Irving; *The Snake's Pass* (1890) is the only novel set in Ireland; *The Watter's Mou'* (1895) and *The Shoulder of Shasta* (1895) are novels focused on some of Stoker's burning topics, such as regional dialect, male bonding, and moral power; *Dracula* (1897), considered as his masterpiece; *The Dualitists* (1887), *The Judge's House* (1891), *The Squaw* (1893), and *Dracula's Guest* are Gothic short stories filled with black humour, incidents, and intense violence; *The Chain of Destiny* (1895) is an epistolary novel including hypnotism, magic, and the supernatural; *Miss Betty* (1898); *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902) is a mystery novel; *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), *The Man (*1905), *Lady Athlyne* (1908), *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909), and *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) are typical Gothic or horror novels; *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906) is a biography of Henry Irving; *Famous Impostors* (1910) is a non-fiction book featuring various historical impostors and hoaxes.

Stoker died on 20 April 1912. In his old age, he experienced illness again: he had a paralytic stroke after Irving's death, he suffered from pneumonia and from a kidney disorder, practically turning into an invalid, as in his childhood. His poor health culminated with syphilis, which allegedly brought him to death. By the end of his life, he was not financially secure, in fact he was quite hard up, as evidenced by the request for a 600-pound loan that he made to his friend Hall Caine. He died nearly a decade before independent statehood would be achieved by Ireland; at the time when the Third Home Rule Bill had just been presented to the Parliament of Westminster, the first to be approved after the failures of those presented in 1886 and 1893: this Home Rule Bill

[363] P. Murray, *op. cit.,* London: Jonathan Cape, 2004, pp. 114-115.

which granted Ireland partial autonomy from London (even though it was suspended because of the beginning of the First World War).

During Stoker's life, Irish culture and society experienced a fast development and they were closely connected; literature actively contributed to prepare and divulgate political movements into the society, and writers - such as Pearse, Yeats, and Hyde - took part in them. In Stoker's opinion, any writer was publicly and politically committed.[364] Both in Dublin and in London, he had the opportunity of meeting and spending time with several influential politicians and intellectuals. At the Trinity College, Stoker made the acquaintance of Isaac Butt, the founder of the Home Rule; Charles Stuart Parnell, the first leader of the Irish Land League; Roger Casement, a fervent Irish patriot; Douglas Hyde and Count Plunkett, co-founders of the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language. At Dublin Castle, Stoker met the Irish writer and liberal unionist MP William E.H. Lecky; Lord Randolph Churchill, the British representative in the government in Ireland, and father of Winston (whom later Stoker had the opportunity of interviewing). At the Lyceum, he encountered William Ewart Gladstone, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and supporter of Home Rule for Ireland, who had his own personal seat in the theatre wings; the degeneration theorist E. Ray Lankester; William O'Brien, a nationalist member of Parliament and journalist, who co-founded the United Irish League (one of the organisations of the country). O'Brien played a significant role in Stoker's inclination for Irish self-rule, which sometimes became an issue for contention with Sir Irving. For instance, Stoker asked the actor to dramatize O'Brien's novel *When We Were Boys* (1890) at the London theatre, since it would be of help for the Home Rule campaign; however, Irving refused, as he did not want to stage a political work. Furthermore, David Glover states that O'Brien's influence is clear in some of Stoker's novels, such as *The Snake's Pass* and *The Primrose Path.*[365]

However, even though Stoker probably never met him, John Bright was one of the politicians, considered the most skilled orator of the time, who massively influenced Stoker. Bright was a radical liberal and supporter of democracy, mainly interested in issues about land property and Irish people. Briefly, he believed that the current

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[364] D. Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1996, pp. 38-39.

[365] *Ibidem*.

condition of Ireland did not enable the Irish to demonstrate their power.[366] Bright insisted that "whatever […] is defective in […] Irish people comes not from their race, but from their history, and from the conditions to which they have been subjected".[367] He asked for reforms that would create favourable conditions for Ireland to develop, by exploiting its natural resources and the industriousness of its population, so that the country could finally find stability and peace with Great Britain. As regards Irish people, he argued that they were not the lazy and incapable drunkards depicted by the common stereotype of the time; but rather they possessed strength and skills, as proved by the fact that, after emigrating, they managed to make use of their qualities in the new country.[368] As concerns land property, Bright contended that it was precisely this issue to block Ireland's development. He therefore suggested a redistribution of land prompted by the help of the government, since in his mind the government had the duty of supporting the tenant farmers to buy terrain - above all the areas which were still uncultivated - from landowners.[369] Tellingly, it seems that Bright's ideas were at the basis of Stoker's proposal for the development of a small nation, a project that is adopted by the protagonist of *The Snake's Pass*. More than that, in Bright's ideology, past, present, and future are connected, as in the plot of *The Snake's Pass*: the past underlies the bog or the cave, but hides treasures; the present is full of anxiety and worries caused by a gombeen man and an untamed landscape; the future is based on justice and equality promoted by the intervention of an English man and the patriotism showed by a Protestant tenant.

Nevertheless, Stoker and Bright had different ideas regarding the Irish Home Rule, the politic movement which aimed at Ireland's self-government. Stoker declared himself as a moderate or "philosophical" Home Ruler,[370] since he never had any explicit involvement with any political party or movement; actually, he supported independence for Ireland, while continually declining the devolution of British imperial rule. On the contrary, Bright was against Irish Home Rule and the creation of a parliament in Dublin. Bright aimed at a political union between Ireland and Great Britain, in which

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[366] J. E. Thorold Rogers (ed.), *John Bright: Speeches on Questions of Public Policy,* Vol. 1, London: Macmillan, 1869, Forgotten Books, 2012, pp. 306-307.
[367] J. E. Thorold Rogers (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 363.
[368] M. Cadeddu, *op. cit.,* p. 151.
[369] *Idem,* p. 152.
[370] B. Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving,* cit., p. 263.

Ireland would preserve its traditions, yet would take the use of English language; the Irish country would have a sufficient amount of its representatives at Westminster and the democratic possibility for its committees to modify the proposal of laws.[371] Bright, therefore, was openly in opposition to Parnell and Gladstone, while Stoker admired both of them (actually, he preferred Gladstone's meliorism to Parnell's militancy). Gladstone, in turn, appreciated Stoker, as shown by his interest in *The Snake's Pass*.[372] According to Barbara Belford, Gladstone often discussed Irish politics with the author.[373] In sum, Stoker was inspired at different times by John Bright and William Gladstone. Probably, what was fascinating about them is that both their speeches moved people to acquire a renovated sense of Irish identification and hope for a future of improvement and advance.

Bram Stoker was born in a family of Tories and unionists, nevertheless he grew up as a liberal with, to a certain extent, Irish nationalist leanings. Hence, he viewed the Tory party as the chief obstacle to the onward direction for reform and democracy. It might be that Bram responded to his family's political ideology and what he considered as the backwardness and the philistinism of Irish people by leaving Ireland and seeking a better future somewhere else, like three of his brothers had already done. In London, indeed, he joined the National Liberal Club. Despite David Glover argues that he "was a cautious but convinced advocate of Irish Home Rule from at least his early twenties",[374] underlining that he never changed his mind, I contend that Stoker's ideology has changed and has evolved over the time. The author's nationalism was complicated by his condition of simultaneously having Irish roots along with connections to England, which moved him towards opposite directions.[375] Living in London and working for Sir Irving allowed him to escape from Irish provincialism, but he still remained an Irishman easily recognisable by his accent. Undoubtedly, indeed, his contemporaries remembered that he was Irish every time he opened his mouth, since he never modified his pronunciation (unlike Oscar Wilde). Barbara Belford and Paul Murray agree on arguing that Stoker consciously chose to maintain it;[376] while Daniel Farson contends that his

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[371] M. Cadeddu, *op. cit.,* p. 155.
[372] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* p. 29.
[373] B. Belford, *op. cit.,* p. 212.
[374] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* p. 23.
[375] *Idem*, pp. 12-13.
[376] B. Belford, *op. cit.,* p. 240.

accent came up only when he got angry and could not avoid it.[377] Even though Stoker joined the Lyceum theatre, and consequently acquired a respectable position in the English milieu, he never really transformed himself into an Englishman. Instead, he remained a well-built and red-bearded Irishman who maintained his Irish accent. Actually, despite being physically distant from his homeland, he held himself close to his Irishness, supporting Ireland's culture and its causes.

Stoker's political vision aimed to a sort of devolution of Ireland in which his homeland would not be totally independent from the British Empire. Stoker's desire for the creation of a small nation is inserted in the idea of a confederation of counties allied to and supported by the British Empire. Therefore, his support for the British Empire, clearly shown in his debates at the Historical Society, switched to the support for the Home Rule.[378] At the time, the background of Irish politics was divided between unionists, who wanted to maintain their status quo; opponents, who wanted independence from England; and people with an intermediary vision (that of Stoker), who "just" wanted more autonomy for Ireland. As affirmed by Andrew Smith, Stoker aligned his fiction to his view: "Ireland would benefit, economically, by becoming part of Britain although crucially it would not have to surrender its own cultural history".[379] Briefly, Bram Stoker had a liminal and ambivalent belief: he contemporaneously supported either Irish Home Rule or British imperial rule. In other words, Stoker's attitude to both Ireland and Great Britain was full of frustration and conflict. He never forgot his homeland, as proved by *The Snake's Pass,* which is set in Ireland, and by *Dracula,* whose context seems to particularly relate to the Irish country. His move to England was a liberation for him, since he felt Ireland and Irishness as constricting. However, although England offered him many more opportunities than Ireland, it also imposed restrictions on him: he was permanently an outsider, as if he was in exile. Despite being favourably accepted by the British cultural establishment, his fiction shows some hints that he felt an unequivocal judgement of the Englishmen.[380] On the one hand, he admired their expertise and competence; while, on the other hand, he

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[377] D. Farson, *The Man Who Wrote Dracula. A Biography of Bram Stoker*, London: Michael Joseph, 1975, p. 232.

[378] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* pp. 12-13.

[379] A. Smith, "Demonising the Americans: Bram Stoker's Postcolonial Gothic", *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Routledge (Taylor and Francis), 2003, pp. 20-31, p. 22.

[380] L. Hopkins, *op. cit.,* p. 84.

criticised their insularity and arrogance. Basically, Stoker positioned himself ambivalently as an Irishman writing in England. He was an outsider both in Ireland and in England, and in his fiction he took advantage of this liminality to explore both countries and expose strengths and weaknesses in each of them.[381] Although feeling exiled, Stoker demonstrated his self-contradictory affection to both Ireland and Great Britain in more than one occasion throughout his life, and especially in the christening of his only child. Stoker had his son baptised at Howth, under the name of Noel Irving Thornley Stoker.[382] The choice of both that location for the baptism and of "Irving" as his son's second name apparently explain Stoker's attachment to Ireland along with his bond to the English actor, who was also Noel's godfather. I would suggest that Noel's christening, therefore, might be viewed as a symbolic act of Stoker's conscious strategy to reconcile the two countries.

Jarlath Killeen argues that Stoker turned away from Irish affairs and Irish literature after Charles Parnell scandal, having become thoroughly disillusioned with one of the supposed emblems of future Irish nationhood.[383] I do not understand what Killeen exactly refers to when stating that Stoker "turned away from" literature, since the author's last novel, *The Lair of the White Worm*, was published in 1911, only one year before his death. Anyway, Parnell trial signified for sure a hard blow for Stoker and left its mark in his life. As Joseph Valente claims, Parnell, the head of the Irish Nationalist party, was lionized as an icon of manly Irish virtue.[384] His reputation as a model of Irish masculinity and morality was quickly destroyed in the early 1890s by the revelation of having committed adultery: he had a long-term love affair with a woman who bore him three children, but who was already married to Captain William Henry O'Shea, an Irish MP in Parnell's party. This scandal provoked the downfall of the politician, accused of immorality by the Catholic Church in Ireland and of violation of Victorian norms. His public degradation seriously damaged the depiction of Irish virtue. As regards Stoker, the fall of an iconic Irish man might have driven him away from investing in the Irish future, since in the Parnell scandal depravity had clearly defeated morality, and Irishmen proved to confirm English stereotypes.

[381] L. Hopkins, *op. cit.,* p. 90.
[382] P. Murray, *op. cit.,* p. 111.
[383] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 184.
[384] J. Valente, *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922,* IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011, p. 35.

Albeit Bram Stoker's narrative is not commonly associated with questions of national identity, deeper investigation of his fiction reveals that such concerns occupy a central position in his writings.[385] His novels deal with questions of Irishness and Irish Home Rule. Stoker's controversial and troubled relationship with national identity is expressed in his writings by the exploitation of characters of different nationalities. He was aware of his own position as an Irishman in London, but he was also fascinated by what it meant to be a member of another nationality. His fiction, then, resulted in a tension between his own Protestant Irish origins and his desire for a more cosmopolitan and multi-cultural idea of citizenship. His narrative is constantly enveloped by issues about the political and scientific criteria that delimit one's membership within a specific national group. As a matter of fact, he gave close attention to the scientific and precise physical description of real people and fictional characters. Stoker's narrative "never settles into a definite formulaic set of meanings and exploits the political resonances of contemporary ethnology".[386] Indeed, he draws upon the ideas of ethnology and the current pseudo-sciences - such as physiognomy, phrenology, and palmistry - that at the time tried to ascertain an individual's personality through the demarcation of physical features. As an example, when Stoker interviewed the young Winston Churchill in 1908, he portrayed the politician by means of physiognomic terms, giving a detailed account of Churchill's hands, as he did in the description of Count Dracula's hands. In the nineteenth century, the interest in classifying physical types, in order to sort out their meanings and consequently define a common interpretation that would chart the whole population, found a prolific terrain. However, this concern, that firstly conceived physiognomy and phrenology as enlightened and scientific instruments that would lead to progress in human studies, successively became a racialised consideration pertaining to ethnology and racial biology. These pseudo-sciences aimed at stipulating somatic schemes for the legibility of humans, thus distinguishing modern and civilised citizens from their pathological Other - be it atavistic, primitive, degenerate, or criminal. Works such as Robert Knox's *The Races of Men* (1850); Cesare Lombroso's *Genio e follia* (1872) and *L'uomo delinquente in rapporto all'antropologia, alla medicina legale ed alle discipline carcerarie* (1876); Edwin Ray Lankester's *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism* (1880); Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892) and *Entartung* (1893); Francis

[385] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* p. 23.
[386] *Idem*, p. 41.

Galton's *Hereditary Genius* (1869) and *Classification and Uses of Fingerprints* (1892) belong to a short list of the most significant publications written during Stoker's lifetime, which dealt with identifying physical traits to stigmatise humans' biological degeneration. In *The Races of Britain* (1885), John Beddoe, president of the Anthropology Society of London and subsequently of the Royal Anthropological Institute, deployed variables such as hair colour and skull shape to map the distribution of physical types and races throughout the country. It is noteworthy that, with reference to the particular "colour-type" of the people living in western Ireland, he defined them as "the swarthiest people I have ever seen".[387] In addition, by pointing out their flat foreheads, concave noses, and projecting lower jaws, he speculated on their possible African origins. He asserted that this population, despite its low intelligence, possessed great cunning.[388] This is only one of the examples which testify how physiognomy contributed to represent the Irish as a race apart, one that located at a lower level in the evolutionary tree, and therefore was inferior to the other European races. For instance, Kingsley referred to them as "human chimpanzees", while Carlyle characterised them as "white negroes".[389] Francis Galton, the statistician and later eugenicist who travelled round Ireland in the 1890s with the objective of cataloguing Irish peoples, regarded to them as an indigenous and nomadic population "alien to the genius of an enlightened civilisation", in opposition to the typical British civilised and modern population.[390] Moreover, the English press sustained this racist vision by supplying caricatures of the Irish, which depicted them as monstrous, subhuman, similar to primitive, stupid, cruel, and uncivilised Neanderthal men. On the other side, the Irish attempted to respond to these portraits by providing caricatures of the monstrous English, but they could not manage to completely destroy the prejudices that were by then attributed to their identity. Irish politicians, too, strenuously countered English preconceptions. For instance, during an audience in Cork in 1885, O'Brien asserted that "there is no taint of

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[387] J. Beddoe, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe*, (1885), London: Hutchinson, 1971, p. 12.
[388] *Idem,* p. 295.
[389] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* p. 37.
[390] F. Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into Its Laws and Consequences,* (1869), London: Macmillan, 1914, pp. 334-343.

intellectual or physical degeneracy in the Irish race".[391] He maintained that "the Irish population is composed of two races who have never melted together, and can never by any possibility melt together", namely the English settlers and the Celts.[392] Furthermore, he deemed that the colonists had repeatedly tried to break down the barriers throughout history, in order to become part of the natives, but in vain. He thus attempted to replace strict separatism with good breeding, by associating the Irish not to a lower Other, but rather to a neighbour of equal status.[393] Another prominent politician, Michael Davitt, claimed that Irishmen were "warm-hearted, impulsive, and generous".[394] By contrast, the literary critic Matthew Arnold postulated in *The Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) that "the Celtic races are quick to feel sentiments very strongly, and are keenly sensitive to joy and sorrow", yet they lack "the skilful and resolute appliance of means to ends which is needed both to make progress in civilisation and politics".[395] In Arnold's opinion, the union between Great Britain and Ireland would harmoniously combine Celtic emotion with Anglo-Saxon pragmatism. Arnold's vision activated a dilemma in Stoker: from a certain point of view, he agreed with the critic's proposal of a peaceful union between Great Britain and Ireland; whereas, from another point of view, the expression of Celtic sentimentality complicated his support of the Irish Home Rule. Similarly to the before-mentioned prejudice about Irish people that Roy Foster ascertained, Stoker stated in *Famous Impostors* that "It cannot be denied that the Irish people were [...] as unstable as they were swift in their judgments".[396] In sum, if from one side Stoker was fascinated with modernity, science, and technology, on the other side ethnological and biological theories suggested a flawed modernity still struggling with the power of the past and worrying about the fact that "we are subject to the general laws of evolution, and are as likely to degenerate as progress".[397] Stoker's characters are depicted by highlighting their nationality and ethnic identity, and in his

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[391] W. O'Brien, *Irish Ideas,* London and New York: Longmans, 1895, https://dspace.gipe.ac.in/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10973/23218/GIPE-001971.pdf?sequence=3, (20/09/2019), p. 10.
[392] W. O'Brien, *op. cit.,* p. 116.
[393] *Ibidem.*
[394] The 'Times'-Parnell Commission, *Speech delivered by Michael Davitt in Defence of the Land League, Carefully Revised,* London Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., Ltd., University of Illinois: Urbana Campaign, 1890, p. 45.
[395] M. Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature,* (1867), London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1912, pp. 84-88.
[396] B. Stoker, *Famous Imposters*, New York: Sturgis & Walton company, 1910, p. 9.
[397] E. R. Lankester, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*, London: Macmillan, 1880, p. 60.

fiction races or racial qualities remerge from former times. Sometimes his representation of races is racist, often fed by the phrenological and physiognomic prejudices of the time. Clearly, Stoker's view was supported by the scientific racism which had spread rapidly in the wake of Darwin, and above all by the pseudo-science of phrenology.[398] As Jeffrey Richards argues, Stoker subscribed to the racial ideas dominant in his period, in particular the superiority of the Nordic races to all others.[399] However, other times Stoker's characterisation of races is animated by a less judgemental and more simply ethnographic inclination. He sometimes highlighted a form of self-deprecating humour by representing Irish characters as comic or evil, like Andy and Black Murdock in *The Snake's Pass*; while other times, he remained faithful to a proud sense of nationalism by depicting his characters as strong, energetic, determined, and hard-working. These two impulses did not sit together at all. As David Glover points out, "To be a 'believer' in physiognomy who was also Irish, let alone a 'believer' in Irish Home Rule - no matter how 'philosophical' - was to find oneself torn by a contradictory set of allegiances."[400] Glover continues by asserting that Stoker often gave his heroes some kind of Viking genealogy, and that the characters who are not of Viking descent are constantly attacked.[401] Probably, Jarlath Killeen expressed the best explanation about Stoker's ambivalence about Irish nationalism by stating that it has been rather too over-emphasized in critical examination, especially given that nationalism in his period was a multifaceted phenomenon.[402] What is certain, however, is that he chose to put into contrast primordial and atavistic past through weak and depraved Irish characters, on one side, with a glorious future through powerful, vigorous, and industrious Irish characters, on the other side. It is evident that Stoker saw no future for an Ireland which had broken from Britain. He wished to restore pride in Irish nationhood by reclaiming the ancient and combative Irish identity. As Lisabeth C.

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[398] D. Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1996, p. 13.
[399] *Idem*, p. 12.
[400] *Ibidem.*
[401] *Ibidem.*
[402] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", in C. Morin & N. Gillespie (eds.), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 168-187, p. 183.

Buchelt argues, Stoker advocated "the formation of a community not determined by race or ethnicity",[403] but by the recovery of traditional values and virtues.

In his work Stoker proves very interested in questions related to the possession of land. Morash contends that the author strongly believed that land redistribution was the only action that would allow the reinforcement of the middle class and consequently the progress of Ireland.[404] Similarly to Bright, Stoker was convinced that Ireland's landownership system needed to be significantly reformed. Actually, in many of his novels, he imagines a radical redistribution of land. Moreover, in his fiction, he describes landscapes in terms of their past as well as their present, and territories often seem to stand for something other than themselves. He depicts places not in terms of their materiality, but in terms of what they evoke: the reality of the present is always haunted by alternative imageries - be they coming from the past or the future. Stoker's fiction constantly and predominantly recurs to the motif of the return of the distant past, as in *The Snake's Pass*. Locations eerily blur into somewhere or something totally different. It does not matter what is recalled, be it either monster or treasure; his fiction simply evokes something of the past that has been repressed. It is Stoker's Irish identity which lies at the heart of his complex and conflicted representation of geography. He describes places with chorographical care, and he is particularly fascinated by the inherently liminal space of the coast.

Although the redistribution of land is a matter about purchase and sell between landlord and tenants, Stoker commonly depicts the trading by means of technology. "Like many advanced Liberals, Stoker looked to scientific growth as the key to modernisation".[405] He certainly had a great interest in innovation and new technology, and he exploited his passion to create fiction. This fascination is evident throughout all his writings, in which Stoker delights in showing that he can use the language of science. His novels are filled with scientific knowledge, technology, and factual accuracy, especially *The Lady of the Shroud,* which deals with warship and naval armaments, air war fleet, rifles, and the connection via radio, and *The Snake's Pass,*

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[403] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2012, pp. 113-133, p. 113.

[404] C. Morash, "'Ever Under Some Unnatural Condition': Bram Stoker and the Colonial Fantastic", in B. Cosgrove (ed.), *Literature and the Supernatural,* Dublin: Columbia Press, 1995, pp. 95-119, pp. 115-116.

[405] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* p. 13.

which describes the projects of the engineer Dick to reclaim the bog and to turn the area into an economic hub with a harbour. It seems like an autobiographical comment, what Arthur says in *The Snake's Pass,* after listening to the effects of the bog: "for real cold-blooded horror, commend me to your men of science".[406]

Two articles written for a special edition of *The World's Greatest Work* dedicated to Ireland in May 1907 are fundamental for the analysis of Stoker's proposal of a model for development: *The Great White Fair in Dublin* and *The World's Greatest Shipbuilding Yard*. In the first article, Stoker highlights how the 1907 International Exhibition gave the opportunity of showing the numerous changes occurred in his homeland, and consequently presented Ireland with a new identity. The exhibition took place in the area between Donnybrook and Ballsbridge, precisely where in the past the Donnybrook Fair was held. This ancient fair, that firstly originated in the Middle Ages, was characterised by "an almost carnival-like disregard of rules, by a licentiousness that would not have been normally tolerated and by frequent fights (which sometimes resulted in a death)",[407] thus rendering that zone "ill-famed" and "synonym of misconduct".[408] Like Stoker's novels, this essay refers to an event linked to the past that has modernised its location and initiatives in the present, and therefore represents a prelude for an ameliorated future. In the article, the author asserts:

> …The days of Donnybrook Fair and all it meant, the days of the stage Irishman and the stagey Irish play, of Fenianism and landlordism are rapidly passing away, if they have not even now come to an end. Perhaps there has been some joy of living and much humour lost with the passing of the country fair, its merry-makings, its rows, and its shillalahs; but there has come in its place a strenuous, industrious spirit, spreading its revivifying influence so rapidly over the old country as to be worth more than even historical bitterness and sentimental joys. Patrick's problem is fast finding its solution in diverse ways, […] this Exhibition does nothing else than call the attention of the world to this new spirit […] it will serve [to] introduce Patrick to his new self.[409]

Stoker believed that modernisation was aligned with tradition, because it started thanks to something that came from the past, then replaced it, but did not destroy it. As an example, the architecture of the buildings of the Great White Fair was

[406] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 57.
[407] M. Cadeddu, *op. cit.,* p. 28.
[408] B. Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin: How There Has Risen on the Site of the Old Donnybrook Fair a Great Exhibition as Typical of the New Ireland as the Former Festival was of the Ireland of the Past", in *London: The World's Work IX*, Special Irish Number, pp. 570-576, London, May 1907, p. 574.
[409] *Idem,* p. 571.

contemporaneously innovative and traditional, as shown by the ceilings decorated with shamrocks, a symbol of the Celtic tradition. In the article, Stoker compares the 1907 International Exhibition to the previous fairs held in Great Britain, especially that one which took place in London in 1851. In his comparison, the balance needle oscillates in favour of the Dublin exhibition, which managed to surpass the London previous edition. Stoker praises the architecture in the Italian Renaissance style, and the fact that all the buildings have a common design that gives a sense of unity and harmony. Hughes remarked that the essay deals more with buildings than with the objects they contain, contrary to what usually occurred in descriptions of this kind.[410] Indeed, here again, like in his novels, construction plans and building works are central for the development of Ireland. Not only architecture and industry can offer a new conception of Ireland, but also they can rely on "the strenuous and industrious spirit"[411] of Irish people and the natural resources that still have to be exploited. Stoker's enthusiasm and pride is explicit when he defines the 1907 Dublin Exhibition as "a revelation to British and Irish eyes",[412] and they were so strong that he even makes an invitation for businessmen to invest their money in Ireland.

In the second article, *The World's Greatest Shipbuilding Yard,* Stoker describes the process of construction of a vessel, starting from the handling of raw material and leading to the final assembly. He highlights the efficiency and the skilled organisation, made possible by Irish entrepreneurship, of high-quality Belfast shipbuilding yards.

William Hughes highlighted that in these two articles Stoker implicitly underlines that the human and material potential of Ireland can be released only by an external and foreign agency, namely by imperial England,[413] I would rather contend that Stoker merely expresses his firm trust in his homeland's resources to the extent of publicly praising the final results of Ireland's know-how and industriousness. Predominantly in *The Snake's Pass* and in *The Lady of the Shroud*, Stoker's dream is evident: the investment of capital and the agency of an external part are necessary to modify and exploit the land for its development and the production of wealth. His

[410] W. Hughes, "Introducing Patrick to his new Self: Bram Stoker and the 1907 Dublin exhibition", *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 19, Routledge: Taylor and Francis, 1997, pp. 9-14, p. 13.

[411] B. Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin: How There Has Risen on the Site of the Old Donnybrook Fair a Great Exhibition as Typical of the New Ireland as the Former Festival was of the Ireland of the Past", cit., p. 571.

[412] *Ibidem.*

[413] W. Hughes, *op. cit.,* p. 20.

project for the development of a small nation is clear in these two novels, but it can be also found in his 1872 speech at the Historical Society of Trinity College Dublin, when he advocated a union of nations that would allow peace and prosperity. In his vision, Ireland would achieve a bright future thanks to, on the one hand, its strong identity and tradition, and, on the other, its natural and human resources. Above all the second part of *The Lady of the Shroud* appears to be a sort of treatise about the necessary interventions for the creation of a small nation. This novel incorporates Stoker's idea of a federation where its members are independent from one another, yet unified by common objectives, and provides with a detailed description of the territorial changes necessary to create it.

Stoker's internal tensions and contradictions make it difficult to describe him. By consequence, scholars provide with a vast array of approaches in analysing his personality and identity. For instance, Nicholas Daly contends that Stoker's writings can be incorporated in the Irish Literary Revival, a movement in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that attempted to revaluate Gaelic and Celtic heritage as pre-colonial origins for both Irish and Anglo-Irish.[414] McCormack, instead, argues exactly the contrary: according to him, Stoker took part to the "London-based exiles", in opposition to the "home-based revivalists".[415] William Hughes considers both Daly's and McCormack's opinions as oversimplifications, and states that Stoker's writings neither align to Irish Literary Revival, nor to the London-based exiles, nor to any sense of "exile".[416] In Hughes' opinion, Stoker merely adhered to the Home Rule movement, refusing the separation of Ireland from England, but rather promoting their integration. From another point of view, Luke Gibbons focuses on the idea of progress, evolution, and manifest destiny (namely, a vision that promoted the increasing spread of western civilisation through modernisation) in Stoker's mind and narrative.[417] According to him, the author celebrated with a mixed sense of fascination and angst the triumph of capitalism over racial, social, and economic recidivism. Jarlath Killeen goes farther and

[414] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", *Literature & History*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Dublin, Trinity College, 1995, pp. 42-70.
[415] W.J. McCormack, "Irish Gothic and After, 1820-1945", in D. Seamus (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, vol. 2, Field Day Publications, 1991, pp. 842-846, p. 845.
[416] W. Hughes, *op. cit.,* p. 17.
[417] L. Gibbons, "'The Old Far West and the New': Bram Stoker, Race, and Manifest Destiny", in C. Morin & N. Gillespie (eds.), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 188-205.

concentrates on that overlooked dimension of Stoker that shows him as a promoter of Irish renovated and reshaped manhood, and a supporter of the Land League.[418] Indeed, Stoker wrote to Michael Davitt, the Irish Republican Brotherhood campaigner and the Irish National Land League co-founder, seeking his endorsement for his novel *The Snake's Pass*.

With regard to Stoker's narrative, his works present numerous overlaps, similarities, parallels, and recurrences, probably due to the autobiographical allusions of his narrative. Indeed, he drew material for his works from his personal and his time experience, regularly using familiar places and people. Contemporary writers influenced his literary style and content; in fact, each of his writings resulted from a painstaking library research, including works by O'Brien, William Carleton, W.B. Yeats, Rider Haggard, Maria Edgeworth, and Sheridan Le Fanu.

The experience at the Lyceum theatre affected Stoker's work in the construction of the plots and in his references to plays and dramatic characters. Moreover, due to his job as a theatre manager, he spent many occasions overseas, in his travels to France, Switzerland, and the United States. It cannot be a coincidence that Stoker's narrative deploys the footloose adventurer and his journeys as recurrent fictional devices. In 1906, he wrote *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, a sort of tribute to the English actor, considered as his mentor. Indeed, Stoker's novels in general are particularly interested in roles similar to those performed by Irving - in particular Hamlet and Macbeth - and his texts contain indirect references to Shakespeare, especially in their concern with danger and villains. In addition, many of his novels involve the theme of the double, probably because of either Shakespeare's allusion or Stoker's own life, which, like that of many of his characters, was dual. Indeed, on the one hand, he represented one of the most publicly recognisable figures of Victorian London; on the other, he was intensely private.

Many of his characters are undead and most of his narrative is invested with the indefinable distinction between life and death. This fascination might have resulted by his mother's horrific stories about her childhood, which referred to the people that had been buried alive in the confusion of the cholera epidemic. Jeffrey Richards notes that Stoker's heroes are "frequently projections of himself, big, burly, athletic men who act

[418] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", cit., pp. 168-187.

according to chivalric ideas".[419] They frequently save someone from drowning, as he did when he attempted to rescue a would-be suicide in the Thames (and was awarded the Bronze Medal of the Royal Humane Society). Some of his characters died after a shipwreck (like in *The Snake's Pass*), recalling the 1887 likely tragedy, when his wife Florence and his son Noel experienced a shipwreck off French coast, but fortunately survived. Other characters go blind and recover partial sight, something that Stoker himself underwent following Irving's death in 1905.

With respect to female characters, Stoker deals with them through conflicted depictions. In fact, what mainly emerges from his fiction is an overall ambivalent inclination towards women and mothers. Criticism explains this special attitude as a consequence of Stoker's conflicted relationship with both his mother Charlotte and his wife Florence, as well as his anxiety about the figure of the "New Woman" and about the erotic power of women. Firstly, his narrative is obsessed with motherhood. During his forced-in-bed childhood, he had the opportunity of spending much time with his mother. This fact was central in influencing Stoker's fiction, in which the figure of the mother is represented by an unstable and contrasting attitude: on one side, she personifies the Angel in the House; while on the other side, she incarnates a monstrous and dangerous Other. These two opposed portraits might express Stoker's ambivalence due to his association of the mother between both the fear of separation and that of absorption. Throughout his work, the imaging of motherhood as demonic recurs, perhaps because Stoker conceived a sign of sensuality in it. Secondly, Stoker's alleged proclivity to homosexuality and repressed sexuality reveal a tension with his wife, exacerbated by the relationship she had with their only child Noel: she was cool and unloving to him. In Stoker's works, parenthood as a whole is disastrous, enacted by coolness between parents and children. Thirdly, Stoker's writings express, directly or indirectly, his polemic against the figure of the New Woman. This ideal emerged in the late nineteenth century to promote women's emancipation and independence; it demanded radical changes as regards women's gendered role in social, political, and economic issues such as education, employment, marriage, sexuality. The New Woman aspired to obtain women's rights in various fields, in order to reach women's autonomy and fulfilment both in private and public spheres. However, while the New Woman

[419] J. Richards, "Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Bram Stoker's Other Novels", in C. Parker (ed.), *Gender Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Literature*, Aldershot: Scholar Press, pp. 143-147, p. 146.

aimed at alternatives to marriage and motherhood, Stoker regarded at it as a representation of otherness. Even though *Dracula* directly deals with this question by explicit mentions of the New Woman in its pages, with its two main female characters discussing the changing roles of women and the New Woman in particular, Stokers' fiction as a whole is concerned with this issue. Notwithstanding, as Lisa Hopkins argues, conversely to the characterization of the New Woman, Stoker habitually reinserts female characters into a maternal role.[420] Moreover, it is remarkable that motherhood in Stoker's fiction is not a mere reversal of the distinctive traits of the New Woman, but rather a reaction underlying ambiguity.

Indeed, Stoker is worried about possible gender blurring. In his novel *The Man*, he explains Stephen's theory about sexual equality: "If men and women were equal, the woman should have equal rights and opportunities as the man. […] a woman could propose as well as a man; and […] the result would be good."[421] However, Stoker depicts this theory as something that leads to nothing but trouble and sorrow.[422] His fear concerned uncertainty about gender roles not only in relation to women, but also in relation to men. As Jeffrey Richards remarks, many of the stories in Stoker's *Famous Impostors* deal with crossdressing and gender ambiguity; moreover, it seems that the author stresses that males who possess a certain feminine sensitivity do not have their masculinity compromised.[423] This is revealed by a 1872 letter that Stoker wrote to the poet Walt Whitman, whom he praised: "How sweet a thing it is for a strong healthy man with a woman's eyes and a child's wishes to feel that he can speak so to a man who can be if he wishes father, and brother and wife to his soul".[424] Here, Stoker refers to his own sensitivity and to the special relationship he feels towards Whitman. Like the poet, Stoker promoted male-to-male bonds and comradely love, which often exclude or marginalise women. For example, in *The Snake's Pass*, Arthur, Dick, Andy, and Phelim Joyce are all united against Black Murdock's tyranny. Stoker was preoccupied with the contamination resulting by women's influence; by consequence, he strongly believed in men's relationship and trusted a shared secrecy among men. To confirm that, Farson

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[420] L. Hopkins, *op. cit.,* p. 37.
[421] B. Stoker, *The Man,* 1905, p. 41.
[422] *Idem,* p. 64.
[423] J. Richards, *op. cit.,* p. 146.
[424] H. Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden: 21 January - 7 April 1889*, in Sculley Bradley (ed.), London: Oxford University Press, pp. 181-185.

reported that, when Stoker asked his friend Hall Caine for a sum of money, he wrote to him: "I shall not even tell my wife, and you did not tell your wife."[425] Nonetheless, Stoker's considerations about gender roles do not have to be read as a form of misogyny, but rather as a personal response to the current pressure on this matter.[426] As a matter of fact, Stoker's masculinity was undermined on several grounds. Firstly, he was sick and weak in his childhood. Secondly, his first working position was that of a clerk, a job that commonly is not associated with men. Thirdly, he worked at the Lyceum and Irving's circle was well-known as a place of sexual impropriety. In addition, his colleagues were used to call him "Mama", an epithet that is quite equivocal, if it is addressed to a man.[427] Lastly, there have been speculations on Stoker's possible homosexuality or latent homoerotic desire, but it is not of my interest to conjecture about these concerns here. What is certain, is that the writer was aware of the increasing tendency of criminalising homosexuality and indecency at his time: he was friend of Henry Labouchere, the author of the amendment under which Oscar Wilde was convicted, and defended Walt Whitman against accusations of licentiousness at a meeting of the Fortnight Club, in 1876. All these factors made it necessary for Stoker to clarify what was uncertain about his personality, thus promoting a reinforcement of his masculinity, consequently weakening femininity in general. Tellingly, in his fiction, male heroes are typically late, unconscious or unsuspecting of the real danger whenever a woman has to be saved. His male characters are initially projections of himself, yet they finally become helpless or unmanned by manipulative women; whereas female characters are comically abject and glad to sacrifice themselves for the men's sake. Actually, his narrative often concludes with the reassertion of gender norms, as he makes clear in his novel *Lady Athlyne:* "… women have obeyed the commands of the men they loved, and were proud to do so, from Eden garden down the ages".[428]

Stoker's issues on gender implicitly result in ideas about nationality. Indeed, Jessica de Mellow, in her introduction to *The Mystery of the Sea*, argues that "Occupying that interesting position as both insider and outsider in literary London, and possessing the […] identity of an Anglo-Irishman, Stoker was ideally positioned to

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[425] D. Farson, op. cit., p. 230.
[426] L. Hopkins, *op. cit.,* p. 17.
[427] *Idem*, p. 18.
[428] B. Stoker, *Lady Athlyne,* New York: P.R. Reynolds, 1908, cit., p. 303.

explore the ambiguities of sexuality and gender identity that both feminism and the beginnings of gay consciousness were making topical in the 1880s and 1890s".[429] Tellingly, during Stoker's time, the dominant cultural vision gendered England as a male and Ireland as a female. His homeland therefore was metaphorically envisaged like a country that has to be conquered like women. Significantly, the motif of marriage, mostly represented in Stoker's fiction as the union between subjects of different nationalities, is a common closure. As David Glover notes, Stoker deployed this theme as the key to national regeneration.[430] Marriage thus becomes a metaphor in which the relationships between his idealised men and women can be seen as mirroring the union that he hoped to see between his adopted country and the country of his birth.

To sum up, Stoker was fully engaged in the gender wars of the late nineteenth century and revealed that such concerns deeply embraced, for him at least, national politics. Stoker was fascinated with muscles and manliness as a form to prove power and virility. In his fiction, many of the characters are physically massive and their impressive physique is symbolic of their profound moral and psychological virtue. Nearly all his heroes are openly admired by the other characters and are supposedly meant to be admired by the readers too. In this, Stoker was probably forged by late Victorian culture, which extolled muscular men in every place and on every occasion. Indeed, by the 1870s, the muscular male athlete became a Victorian symbol for strength and power. For instance, in 1877, the Royal Academy of London exhibited an impressive bronze sculpture called "Athlete wrestling with a python" (now displayed at Tate Britain in London), sculpted by Frederic Leighton, President of the Royal Academy. The statue depicts a dramatic scene of life and death, freezing the moment in which a classical muscular nude athlete is struggling with a huge snake that has coiled around his body. The man is standing with his legs apart, holding the snake's open mouth away by his right outstretched arm, while grasping its body with his left arm behind his back. The proportions of the musculature of both the male and the python's bodies are realistically depicted. This sculpture represented a perfect model of the ideal British male body. At that time, many speculations were advanced about who, whether the man or the serpent, would endure and overcome in the battle. In addition, *Manly Exercise*, the first manual of physical workout for British men, was released in 1865. It

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[429] B. Stoker, *The Mystery of the Sea,* Sutton Publishing Ltd, (1902), 1997, cit., p. XIII.
[430] D. Glover, *op. cit.,* pp. 14, 19.

contained many series of strenuous exercises in order to develop a well-shaped and a healthy body.[431] Furthermore, public schools promoted the practice of sports as a method of building character in students, thanks to the "muscular Christianity" belief. It was in vogue during Stoker's period, characterised by a belief in moral and physical principles attainable by the pursuit of masculinity and athleticism associated with patriotism, discipline, self-sacrifice, and Christian ideals. With these premises, the built male body became more than an iconic image of the Victorian period, it rather became the distinctive representation of Englishness in general. The athletic man possessed not only a strong body, but also a strong mind and morality. Metaphorically speaking, a man with a brawny body suggested that he could win the physical as well as the moral battles of his life.

Stoker was extremely ill and physically weak as a child, however, he became a successful athlete, as an undergraduate student at Trinity College. He excelled in almost every sport activity: rugby, sling shot, high jump, trapeze, weightlifting, rowing, and walking races.[432] He proudly admitted that: "I won numerous silver cups for races of various kinds […] I was physically immensely strong, in fact I feel justified in saying that I represented in my own person something of that aim of university education *mens sana in corpore sano*".[433] His characterisation as a strong athlete, other than a strong personality, certainly helped his status in terms of social popularity. Indeed, Stoker was recognized as an example of such moral and physical prowess by his contemporaries.

As previously affirmed, Stoker was fascinated by the poetry of Walt Whitman, who, especially in his collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass* (1855), exalted the athletic, warrior-like body of men. In 1872, Stoker wrote to Whitman a detailed description of his physical characteristics and his athletic achievements: "I am six feet two inches high and twelve stone weight naked and used to be forty-one or forty-two inches round the chest. I am ugly but strong and determined".[434] Here, it is evident that Stoker was well-aware and proud of his well-built imposing figure and had no qualms about glorifying it. I prefer to leave open further speculations about the motivations that induced Stoker to write such information to Whitman, since they are of no help here. With regard to the

[431] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 172.
[432] J. Killeen, "Bram Stoker (1847-1912)", cit., p. 3.
[433] B. Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving,* cit., pp. 31-32.
[434] H. Traubel, *op. cit.,* pp. 181-185.

poetry of Whitman, another topic he insisted on was the connection between healthy physicality and healthy nationhood, that in turn mirrored the link between the individual and the nation. Stoker, like Victorian society, made this association as a sort of slogan in his life: the noble physique and mind of men embody a promising future for nations and mankind in general. In his narrative, Stoker constantly recurs to the symbolic metaphor of the man wrestling the snake, as an example of the duties that individuals have to pursue in respect of their nation, and as he himself defeated the serpent of sickness in life.

Notwithstanding this, physical strength brought anxiety together with power. The implications that evolution and degeneration theories generated about race and national identity have already been dealt with in this chapter; however, I did not dwell upon the conditions implied on those principles. In *The Descent of Man*, published in 1871, Darwin postulated the leading guideline for the survival of the (physically and morally) fittest: a race needs to be *strong* in order to survive. In other words, Darwinism implied that evolution included either the possibility of progress or the eventuality of degeneration. A strong species can either improve or deteriorate, become stronger or weaker. In the second case, the athlete would be unable to defeat the serpent, recalling Leighton's sculpture. Being the muscular man the representation of Anglo-Saxon masculinity, if the snake triumphs over the athlete, then Great Britain itself would degenerate, thus turning back on the evolutionary scale.

In reply to the preoccupations raised by the evolutionary theories of the time, the struggle of the athlete against the snake in Leighton's sculpture turned into a national representation for a redeemed masculinity of the Anglo-Saxon race. Unfortunately, for an Irishman like Stoker this was even more problematic, since Irish manliness was often represented as both degenerate and savage in the English press. As a matter of fact, Ireland itself was considered more as an expression of femininity rather than masculinity. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, English public opinion associated Anglo-Saxons with masculinity, while Irish were considered a "feminine" race, interested in poetry and superstition, representatives of sensitiveness and exaltation, thus confirming an irrationality typical of the feminine idiosyncrasy.[435] In addition, Irish nationalist masculinity was often represented as both pagan and serpentine in the

[435] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 175.

English press. For instance, *Judy* magazine showed two significant caricatures in the 1880s: in 1881, the forces of the Land League were pictured as a serpent against which Britain was fighting; in 1882, after the Phoenix Park murders (when the Irish Chief Secretary, representative of British power in Ireland, was murdered by a nationalist group), Irish nationalist violence was depicted as a serpent with the head of Charles Stewart Parnell.[436] This might be one of the main reasons that motivated Stoker to suggest a different depiction of Irish virility, by shifting the English prejudice from the serpentine shape to an athletic one.

Stoker believed that the Irish were capable of muscular power. This position contradicted the dominant cultural versions of masculinity, which considered the snake-like Irish a "feminine" race, more interested in folklore and superstition than industry and technology. Due to their "feminine" nature, the Irish were not believed capable of incarnating the sturdy male body. Moreover, gendering the Irish as a "feminine" race justified the British masculine colonial presence in the Irish feminized colony: it explained the relationship between the two countries as the domestic relationship between husband and wife. Consequently, colonial rule assumed the expression of gender hierarchy and male control as the ultimate objectives of British colonial mission in respect of Ireland. As already argued, the Celts were connected to sensitiveness, irrationality, and untamedness, all features related to the feminine gender. Hence, such a culture needed to be domesticated by a colonial control, namely by the masculine power of Great Britain. For many people living during Stoker's time, the Union was considered analogous to a marriage in which Ireland was viewed as England's passive wife. Furthermore, those who were not typically "feminine" in Ireland, such as Irish nationalists and reformer patriots, were seen as atavistic and degenerate forms of the masculine norm, Neanderthal, simian, drunken, and randomly violent, figured in the popular press as hairy and degenerate beasts.[437] Joseph Valente well defines the Irish men's condition, "trapped between the feminizing discourse of Celticism and the bestialising discourse of simianisation, which cooperated in representing the Irish as racially deficient in manhood and so unready for emancipation."[438]

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[436] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 175.

[437] L. Perry Curtis, Jr, *Apes and Angels: the Irishman in Victorian Caricature,* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971.

[438] J. Valente, *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922,* IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011, p. 11.

As an Irishman who supported Home Rule, Stoker attempted to eradicate Ireland from this plague, both in his effort at developing his body into a striking muscular physique, and in his literary celebration of alternative versions of the Irish. Among his works, *The Snake's Pass* is probably the most adequate example of this objective. For instance, he included a player of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) as a minor character. The GAA acknowledged the weakened build of Irish young men after the Great Famine and aimed at reshaping the Irish male body through hurling and bodybuilding. This organisation celebrated perfect physicality as an icon for Ireland: its games were not only for playing but also for performing spectacles. The English protagonist of the novel, Arthur, admires the well-built physique of the athlete; likewise, in another passage, he praises the bodies of the Irish workers at work. Arthur, too, shows physical strength and prowess. Killeen argued that, by describing the athletic qualities of both Irish and English characters, Stoker aligned the two nationalities in terms of their places in the evolutionary scale.[439] Moreover, given the GAA's commitment to Irish self-legitimation and the association between the muscular male body with power, the fictional devices that Stoker undertook in this novel appear to symbolically bolster the fight for Irish Home Rule: if the Irish can develop these types of bodies, then there is no reason to deny them the right of self-government too. The GAA and the Land League developed and modernised forces in Irish affairs, attempting to reverse English representations of Irish atavism. The historian Joe Lee states that they both transformed Irish men from slavish and servile weaklings into self-authorizing, muscular, hard-working, progressive seekers of the future.[440] Basically, Stoker recognised them, as well as his own body, as promoters of the potential future for Irish manhood. Through re-appropriation and re-constitution of physical and moral power, Irish men would be able to establish Ireland as a strong nation firmly within the British Empire.

According to several sources found in the biographies by Farson, Belford, and Murray, few people were celebrated as much as Stoker was, during his time. Irish authors running from Charles Maturin at the beginning of the century to Bram Stoker at its close, although economically and ideologically dependent upon British readership, managed to produce a type of fiction in which their cultural margination, due to

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[439] J. Killeen, "Muscling Up: Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", cit., pp. 179-180.
[440] *Idem*, p. 183.

Ireland's turbulent politics, was combined with ordinary Gothic tropes. Stoker showed great mastery in exploiting the devices of literary Gothic in order to present and investigate what he considered as Ireland's impediments to modernity during his time.

Stoker's fiction can be considered quite anti-conformist, if it is considered in comparison with the ideals and conventions of the Victorian society. To a certain extent, he attempted to subvert the English stereotypical vision of the time on many fronts: the way Irish identity was depicted, the way gender and sexuality were distinguished, the way nationhood was defined and patriotism was felt, the way colonialism was conceived, how innovation and modernisation were carried out, and how civic-mindedness and morality were perceived. He was forward-thinking and future-oriented, yet he held close the past in its traditions and heritage. He was fascinated by technological innovation, agriculture reform, and capitalistic economics, and rejected anything considered to inhibit progress. More than investigating the causes and the effects of the conflict between Ireland and Britain - in national, political, economic, social, and cultural terms - his fiction proposes bolder solutions to it, through a model in which successful results are achieved by the agency of individual citizens who re-appropriate some of the autonomy and freedom that the state is wresting from them.

Still nowadays Stoker is remembered as a horror writer, while his oeuvre covers a much wider range of topics. His fiction is closely tied to conceptions of national and cultural identity, masculinity and femininity, evolution and degeneration, ethnology and physiology, etc. Yet, Stoker's texts are almost overwhelmed by liminality and by the impossibility of fixing precise boundaries: his narrative continuously oscillates between modernity and atavism, science and folklore, present and past, without definitely granting a neat separation among all these opposites. His drive to settlement and union - both personal and political - is held strongly in tension with a darkly Gothic obsession with opposites which, more than a century after his death, has lost none of its power to disturb yet attract.

The fact that only recent criticism deepened, doubted, and subverted previous biographies and issues about Stoker, by emphasising what has been overlooked before, represents a key factor that justifies the various interpretations given to his personality, identity, and ideology. Eventually, what results is nothing definite, yet open to further speculations.

Chapter 4

Re-evaluating Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*

The Snake's Pass first appeared in serial form in 1889 in the periodical *The People* and in some provincial papers; subsequently, in 1890, it was issued as a single volume by the London publisher Sampson Low.[441] From its initial introduction in the literary world, the novel has been considered as a pseudo-minor classic that would have been forgotten, if it was not written by Stoker, the author of *Dracula.* Indeed, *The Snake's Pass* has received little critical attention until the mid-1990s, and its adherence to a precise genre is still questionable, insomuch as it combines the model of the imperial romance, the colonial marriage plot, and a historical and more local narrative. *The Snake's Pass* simultaneously presents both similarities and discrepancies to all of these literary models. In this chapter, I will investigate all the different topics that align the novel to one genre rather than another, while analysing various issues that inextricably link *The Snake's Pass* with Stoker's life and personality, the literary Gothic, and Ireland's history, geography, and politics. Basically, indeed, *The Snake's Pass* can be examined as a colonial Gothic work that broadly serves as a point of departure for discussing various concerns relevant to Irish culture approaching the twentieth century. Notably, Stoker himself called *The Snake's Pass* "an Irish novel […] being of Ireland and dealing with Irish ways and specially of a case of oppression by a 'gombeen' man under a loan secured on land."[442]

The novel accounts for the adventures of Arthur Severn, an English gentleman who has recently inherited a conspicuous sum of money from his aunt. He decides to spend it in travel and idleness. After a six-month tour in Italy and in France, he heads to the West of Ireland, to pay a visit to some friends living in County Clare. Since Arthur wants "to improve [his] knowledge of Irish affairs",[443] he decides to make "a detour through some of the counties in the west",[444] specifically the area between Killala and

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[441] The Snake's Pass, http://www.bramstoker.org/novels/02pass.html, 01/12/2019.
[442] B. Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Vol. 2, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 29.
[443] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, in L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition (Irish Studies)*, New York: Syracuse University Press, Kindle Edition, 2015 (1890), p. 8.
[444] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 8.

Galway. Suddenly, a heavy storm forces Arthur and Andy, the local driver of the horse-drawn cart, to stop in a shebeen (a small, unlicensed public house, from the Gaelic Irish *síbín*, which stands for either "illicit whiskey" or "low-quality beer")[445] located in a small village, Carnaclif, known for the rocky pass of Shleenanaher (from the Irish *Slì na Nathair*, which means "The Snake's Pass",[446] a sort of gap in the rocks[447]). There, Arthur makes the acquaintance of several local peasants reunited around the table to have dinner and drink whisky punch; among them, he meets the two storytellers Jerry Scanlan and Bat Moynahan, and the local tenant Phelim Joyce. During the conversation, the Englishman learnt some local legends. One is recited by Jerry Scanlan and tells about Saint Patrick and the King of the Snakes. The king lived over the fen on the hill of Knockcalltecrore, which is also called Knockcalltore (the first is a corruption of the Irish phrase *Knock-na-callte-crōin-ōir*, which in English means "The Hill of the Lost Crown of Gold"; whereas the second is an abbreviation for the Irish words *Knock-na-callte-ōir*, translated in English as "The Hill of the Lost Gold").[448] The king was fed by snakes in turn, and asked for a sacrificed baby once a year (human sacrifice was a common practice in the Celtic society, aimed at both thanking the gods and easing their wrath).[449] When St Patrick arrived and expelled all the snakes to the sea, the King of the Snakes refused to obey, since it did not want to leave its property. St Patrick thus decided to seize the Snake's crown, but the King plunged into the lake, the ground shook, and the water disappeared. When it was visible again, the King of the Snakes was coiled round the bottom of the lake, without its crown, as it had buried it somewhere underneath the fen. St Patrick asked it where the crown was, and the King replied that the saint would have found it coming across the water again. The King then crawled towards the sea, creating a chasm in the hill, namely Shleenanaher. Before disappearing, the King of the Snakes menaced St Patrick of coming back under some unsuspected shape, allegedly the shifting bog, which moves like a snake. The other story is told by Bat Moynahan and dates back to a real historical event happened during the Irish Rebellion of 1798, the most widespread of all the Irish uprisings: a French expeditionary force under the command of General Humbert disembarked at Killala

[445] F. Marucci & C. Zabeo, *Il Passo del Serpente* di Bram Stoker, Bari: Palomar, 2007, p. 33.
[446] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 13.
[447] *Idem*, p. 9.
[448] *Idem*, p. 24.
[449] F. Marucci & C. Zabeo, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

Bay, in County Mayo, in order to facilitate Irish resistance to Britain. Firstly, French soldiers defeated the British army and proclaimed the temporary Republic of Connaught; yet they were successively crushed at the battle of Ballinamuck and the Irish rebels were massacred. Eventually, the British Empire regained its supremacy and the French boats were captured at the north-western coast.[450] Allegedly in Moynahan's story, the French had brought gold in order to corrupt neutral people and make them assist the French during the invasion.[451] Moynahan's father was told that, when the French attempt was over, English soldiers were promised a great prizemoney if they got hold of the treasure.[452] The soldiers who found the chest containing the gold, escaped, and were never seen again after they headed out on the bog carrying it. They probably buried it on the hill of Knockcalltore. Bat Moynahan reports his father's witness when he saw two Frenchmen carrying a chest of gold bullion. They were crossing the river and facing the mountain; he then hid behind a bush; however, the soldiers found out him and he ran away, losing sight of them, who could vanish with the chest.

Since Phelim Joyce has just had an accident because of the storm and his arm has broken, Arthur gives him a lift to his home. When they arrive, the Englishman encounters for the first time Norah, Phelim's daughter. The night is dark, and they cannot see each other but only hear each other's voice. After the storm has passed, Arthur pays the visit to his friends, and then chooses to go back to Shleenanaher. This time he meets Dick Sutherland, one of his old schoolmates, who is now a geologist and an engineer working for Murtagh Murdock, also called Black Murdock, the gombeen man (an Irish word that comes from the Gaelic *gaimbin* and derived from the phrase *airgead a chur ar gaimbín*, which means "to lend money at interest on a loan/usury").[453] It is therefore a synonym for "usurer": at the beginning, the gombeen man lends money to farmers at high interest rates, then he becomes a dealer and forces his borrowers to supply from him. He thus increases his wealth and starts to buy land, managing to reach a higher-level position, and sometimes obtaining the title of "Lord" or "King").[454] Murdock is the evil villain of the village and he is looking for the chest of bullion gold lost during the 1798 Irish rising; that is why he employs Dick and needs him to map the

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[450] F. Marucci & C. Zabeo, *op. cit*., p. 46.
[451] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 20.
[452] *Ibidem.*
[453] *Idem,* p. 28.
[454] F. Marucci & C. Zabeo, *op. cit*., p. 50.

bog area. He has already dug and checked the area where he lives, but wants to explore his neighbours' land, that owned by the Joyces. Therefore, since Phelim failed to pay him the lease on time, Murdock dispossesses him and his daughter of their land with a low blow, exchanging his estate with theirs, thus taking up residence in their former house.

Further on, once Arthur accompanies Dick in his inspection of the bogland, he meets a woman on the top of the hillside and immediately falls in love with her, even though he does not know she is Norah Joyce in person. In fact, he listens to her singing but does not recognise her voice. Things get complicated when the two old schoolmates talk: Arthur confesses to Dick that he is in love with the unnamed girl; Dick in turn confesses to his friend that he is in love with Norah and hopes to marry her. Arthur then decides to help his friend: he purchases Black Murdock's land on behalf of Dick, so that he can use it as a dowry and propose to Norah. He makes an agreement with Murdock: Arthur will buy all his land (paying more than it really costs) and will give him the time - a year - to find the treasure. Consequently, if no gold is found, the gombeen man will at least be satisfied with the money he got from the purchase of his estate.

Afterwards, during a walk in the Cliff Fields (a large plateau at the foot of Knockcalltecrore, owned by Phelim's daughter), Arthur meets Norah again and eventually manages to ask her name. When he realises that his beloved is the same person that Dick is in love with, Arthur goes into crisis. However, he decides to talk to Dick, who proves to be a real friend who, after some outrage and frustration, understands the situation and forgives Arthur for not having said anything until that moment.

Arthur does not waste time and asks Norah to marry him. She timidly admits that she loves him, but she cannot become his wife because she has to live with her father and look after him. However, Arthur does not desist; three days later, he asks Phelim Joyce for his daughter's hand; her father is firstly quite undecided, but finally accepts, with one condition - as he wanted to take time: Arthur will be able to claim Norah, and Phelim will give his permission, when the treasure of Knocknacar is found. In addition, the three of them decide that Norah needs schooling, in order to live up to Arthur's social status, therefore she will spend two years in Europe to be educated. Nonetheless, that same day, also Murdock proposes to Norah, but he finds nothing more

than absolute refusal. He reacts badly and offends Norah, but Arthur defends her by hitting the usurer with one blow in his face and knocking him down. It is precisely at this moment that Phelim Joyce understands that the Englishman is the right groom for his daughter.

In the meantime, research and excavation continue at Knocalltecrore: the landscape is completely transformed and devastated, so much that the bog has dangerously expanded and has risen its height. Notwithstanding Murdock's attempts, he has only managed to dig up a rusty iron gun-carriage. The gombeen man, then, chooses another path: he forces Bat Moynahan to show him the site where his father last saw the French soldiers; to do this, he gets him constantly drunk. After Moynahan has shown Murdock the exact place (that results to be in the Joyces' land), the usurer tries to get rid of the poor man; but luckily, Dick was nearby and manages to rescue Moynahan.

Meanwhile, the Joyces are arranging things for Norah's departure to Europe, established for the same date when Arthur takes possess of Murdock's land. The weather is awful as it is heavily raining from many days, with the subsequent growth of the bog's height. The night before her departure, Murdock makes Phelim and Norah leave their house in the storm through a fictitious ruse, with the evil intention of killing them. Nonetheless, Arthur, who in the last period has continuously had nightmares which warned him from a possible catastrophe at the expenses of him and Norah, decides to go the Joyces' house, accompanied by Dick, in order to check that everything is going on well. When they arrive, they realise the incoming tragedy and start to look for Norah and Phelim. Arthur eventually finds Norah who has just been hit by Murdock, but, while trying to save her, the Englishman sinks in the bog. Luckily, Norah manages to rescue him. Meanwhile, Dick has found Phelim, and all of them reunite on a large rock which prevent them from falling in the bog. Indeed, because of Murdock's quarrying and the violent storm, the bog is shifting and moving, sucking into its pit everything that it finds in its path. This is what happens to Murdock's house, with him and Moynahan swallowed up by the bog. Eventually, the bog slides into the sea. Arthur, Norah, Dick, and Phelim go back to the Joyces' house, which has been spared by the catastrophe because it was situated on a higher level than the bog, and start recalling the events of the night.

Afterwards, they return to inspect the physical outcomes of the storm and the bog's displacement. For the bog slide has completely changed the landscape, it has also uncovered the longed-for treasures: they find the 1798 wooden chest of gold coins, with the hands of the soldiers' skeletons still grasping its handles, and the jewelled crown of the King of the Snakes, hid in a cavern carved with Ogham writing (an Irish writing system that used twenty-five characters formed by straight vertical lines, and believed to have Celtic origins).[455] More than that, they found what the engineer hoped but nobody expected: a limestone quarry.

Two years later, Norah comes back from her European studies. Thanks to the discovery of the limestone, which enabled a system of waterworks, Knockcalltecrore has been transformed into a "fairyland",[456] with a beautiful house, wonderful gardens, and a harbour connecting to the continent. On the spot where Norah rescued Arthur, he has reared a monolith in honour of her strength and bravery. The couple eventually marries and can experience "all the possibilities of happiness that men and women may win for themselves".[457]

As Lisabeth C. Buchelt contends, the 1990s were a sort of a watershed period for critical examinations of *The Snake's Pass*, which saw Nicholas Daly, David Glover, Joseph Valente, Luke Gibbons, William Hughes, Mark Doyle, and Christopher Morash, all writing a more thoughtful appreciation of this novel's possibilities.[458] Nicholas Daly concentrates on the analysis of Stoker's novel by confronting it with the genre of the imperial romance as well as the subgenres of the colonial marriage plot and the treasure-hunt. Daly argues that *The Snake's Pass* is a hybrid text, which can be ascribed to both an Irish colonial novel and an allegory of English imperialism, in that it provides colonial issues beyond the typical imperial romance.[459] In his opinion, it does not exist a definite reading of the novel, since it depends on whether one interprets the novel within a colonial or a metropolitan background.[460] In any case, Daly comprises Stoker's novel

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[455] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 260.

[456] *Idem*, p. 255.

[457] *Idem*, p. 260.

[458] L. C. Buchelt, "'Being of Ireland' An Introduction to Bram Stoker's Irish Novel", in L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition (Irish Studies)*, New York: Syracuse University Press, Kindle Edition, 2015, pp. XI-XXII, p. XVIII.

[459] N. Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 79-80.

[460] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", *Literature & History*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Dublin, Trinity College, 1995, pp. 42-70, p. 44.

to a general tendency in Anglo-Irish writing between nineteenth and twentieth centuries - that one inscribed in the Irish Literary Revival and advocated by W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Standish O'Grady - which professed a Celtic heroic past in Anglo-Irish history.[461] In the novel, this concern is exemplified by the three treasures uncovered after the bog slides into the sea: the lost French treasure, a cave inscribed with ancient Celtic Ogham writing, and an ancient Celtic crown. As a matter of fact, if the lost bullion-chest reminds of a past of colonial oppression, the other two discoveries signal a glorious aristocratic Celtic culture, now vanished - but on the way of being restored. Tellingly, Stoker might have found in this movement, which contributed to the revival of romance and tried to create modern epic, a way to enhance the position of the politically marginalised Anglo-Irish. Nonetheless, Irish nationalist and English imperialist fin-de-siècle romances appear to share a similar intent, insofar both celebrated spiritual values as heroism, nobility, and self-sacrifice.[462] Although *The Snake's Pass* incorporates more than a narrative genre, it is unquestionable that the novel embodies the overarching concern of nineteenth-century British-Irish politics: the land.

Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch states that, in his text, Stoker "wished to create a distinctive cultural identity through folklore, mythology, and the Irish language".[463] Stoker incorporates powerful and detailed aesthetic descriptions of the landscape and Irish people to develop the construction of Irishness. Christopher Morash suggests that in *The Snake's Pass* "the soil of Ireland […] constitute[s] a locus of anxiety […] the clearest instance of Stoker using the literary fantastic to write the condition of Ireland as unnatural."[464] Stephen D. Arata considers the novel as a "narrative of invasion and colonisation, [which], while not central to the plot, intrude continually upon the main action of the story".[465]

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[461] N. Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture*, cit., p. 56.
[462] *Ibidem.*
[463] S. Bhreathnach-Lynch, "The West as Metaphor. A Reading in Word and Image", in L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015, pp. 122-126, p. 126.
[464] C. Morash, "'Ever under Some Unnatural Condition': Bram Stoker and the Colonial Fantastic" in B. Cosgrove (ed.), *Literature and the Supernatural: Essays for the Maynooth Bicentenary*, Dublin: Columba Press, 1995, pp. 95-119, p. 110.
[465] S. D. Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization", *Victorian Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 4, Summer 1990, pp. 621-645, p. 625.

Mark Doyle focuses his examination of the novel on the role of the land and the subtext references to the nineteenth-century agrarian agitations in the novel. He suggests that Stoker's "story of love and agronomy" addresses "the most vexing of Irish questions: Who is to own the land?", and investigates how this interrogative corresponds to the central point around which all the other Irish issues of poverty, emigration, underdevelopment, desire for independence and self-rule revolved.[466] Doyle examines how "the land of Knockcalltecrore is something for which men are willing to fight and die. It is captivating and deadly, changeable and haunted, but also capable of yielding great joy and abundance".[467] Doyle posits that Irish farmers' management of land is just as slippery as the bog,[468] and their resistance to modern improvement demonstrates either the unfitness of the Irish for self-rule or the failure of the British government to bring enlightenment to Ireland.[469] In spite of this, in the novel, it is indeed the British organisation and legal system that ultimately save the rural inhabitants of Knockcalltecrore. Moreover, Doyle raises up a considerable issue: on the one side, Arthur's agency to purchase a bankrupt estate incorporates the real focus of benevolent British improvement; while, on the other side, his actions need to be questioned: "Has anybody, apart perhaps from Norah and Phelim Joyce, asked Arthur to turn their home into a capitalist fairyland? Is it possible that the people of Connemara do not want to become quarrymen and would prefer to remain farmers?".[470] Again, Stoker leaves no clear and definite answer to these questions as well.

Luke Gibbons interprets the conflicting colonial ideology that underlies the plot of the novel as an inherited way of thinking that originated from ancient Gaelic roots. In his book *Gaelic Gothic: Race, Colonialism and Irish Culture* (2004), Gibbons investigates the racist representations of Irish culture during the colonial period, ranging from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. Moreover, Gibbons focuses on Gothic forms and motifs, and he defines Stoker's writing as a sort of transitional colonial/postcolonial Gothic, given that it can be ascribed to the "Gaelo-Catholic" Gothic, as a form of resistance to the divide between a dominant Anglo-Irish Protestant

[466] M. Doyle, "The Snake's Pass and The Irish Question(s)", in L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015, pp. 109-113, p. 109.
[467] *Ibidem.*
[468] *Ibidem.*
[469] M. Doyle, *op. cit.,* p. 111.
[470] *Idem,* p. 112.

ascendancy class and a disenfranchised Gaelo-Catholic peasantry.[471] Furthermore, according to Gibbons, the bog stands for "those aspects of the Irish past which will not go away, but whose threats to the social order are actively reproduced by the forces of modernization which consigned the poorest of the peasantry to these outlying areas".[472] For Gibbons, the novel suggests that "the unstable combination of financial expropriation and the political residues of feudalism arrests social progress and unleashes the burden of the past".[473]

David Glover considers the novel as a text recording Anglo-Irish conflict, indeed he associates the long narration of the bog to "a symbolic source of horror and laughter, knowledge and uncertainty, [which stands] at various moments […] for the Irish homeland and its womanhood, the story of its past carrying sediments of the country's history of underdevelopment".[474] Furthermore, Glover adds that *The Snake's Pass* adheres to the narrative tradition of the national tale, for Stoker mingled nationalist and cosmopolitan motifs in provocative ways.[475] William Hughes as well views the novel as a representation of the colonial tensions between English capitalism and Irish economy of subsistence in the late nineteenth century. Like Glover, he contends that the bog in *The Snake's Pass* is depicted as the material background witnessing the contrasts between England and Ireland, and it "encodes a reading of Irish problems and British solutions into the fabric of a supposedly local issue."[476] Hughes attempts to interpret the novel to explore what it might reveal about "Stoker's ambiguous relationship to Ireland and the Irish".[477] He argues that *The Snake's Pass* "functions essentially as a fable of reconstruction, a synecdoche in which supposedly representative Irish 'problems' are identified, and an arena where these [problems] are overcome through the intervention

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[471] L. Gibbons, *Gaelic Gothic: Race, Colonization and Irish Culture,* Dublin: Arlen House, 2006, pp. 77-87.
[472] L. Gibbons, "Some Hysterical Hatred: History, Hysteria and the Literary Revival", *Irish University Review*, Special Issue: Literature, Criticism, Theory, Vol. 27, No. 1, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997, pp. 7-23, p. 8.
[473] *Idem*, p. 9.
[474] D. Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1996, p. 48.
[475] *Idem*, p. 53.
[476] W. Hughes, "'For Ireland's Good': The Reconstruction of Rural Ireland in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), Autumn 1995, pp. 17-21, p. 18.
[477] *Idem*, p. 17.

and energy of an outsider rendered the more conspicuous through his nonparticipation in the well-wrought dialect of the fictional peasants".[478]

W.J. McCormack contends that the novel should not be considered as a key text in Irish Gothic tradition, for Stoker did not show his writing mastery in enhancing his homeland, as he did instead with Transylvania in *Dracula*.[479] In this regard, Hughes opposes McCormack's claim by arguing that the latter oversimplified Stoker's identity: according to Hughes, the Irish author was neither a "London-based exile" nor an "Irish Revivalist", thus he cannot be ascribed to the Irish canon as depicted by McCormack.[480]

Derek Gladwin reads *The Snake's Pass* through the lens of environmental criticism, namely Ecocriticism, insomuch as this method of analysis intersects literature, culture, and geography.[481] Basically, Ecocriticism creates an association between the written text and the external world: it allows an approach that critically examines material ecosystem and its phenomena as information about the world inhabited by human - and non-human - beings. In fact, human agency is only one of the elements that belong to a much larger environment. Specifically, Gladwin suggests that *The Snake's Pass* can be categorised as an EcoGothic text,[482] insomuch bogland is the central element around which the plot is developed. The EcoGothic merges ecocriticism with gothic studies and, to the present, there is little research on it. Its description consists in plenty of contrasting aspects, as the EcoGothic joins two opposite fields: on the one side, the Gothic examines human, non-human, or hybrid characteristics; while, on the other side, ecocriticism explores environmental and natural properties. Briefly, the EcoGothic analyses the Gothic entity in an effort to inscribe it in an environmental identity. In so doing, it points out the binaries surrounding gothic literature - human/nature, male/female, urban/rural, etc. - and highlights the liminal spaces between these binaries: it fosters an ecological approach to Gothic literature that examines in depth how fear and monstrosity, as well as the sublime and the supernatural, can be

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[478] W. Hughes, "'For Ireland's Good': The Reconstruction of Rural Ireland in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 12, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), Autumn 1995, pp. 17-21, p. 17.

[479] W. J. McCormack, "Irish Gothic and After (1820–1945)", in D. Seamus (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, Vol. 2, Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991, pp. 842-846, pp. 889-898.

[480] W. Hughes, *op. cit.,* p. 17.

[481] D. Gladwin, *Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2016, p. 80.

[482] D. Gladwin, "The Bog Gothic: Bram Stoker's 'Carpet of Death' and Ireland's Horrible Beauty", in *Gothic studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Manchester University Press, 2014, pp. 39-54, p. 51.

detected in nature and environment. The EcoGothic is more than a study on the fauna and flora which characterise a peculiar ecosystem, but rather it is a vehicle which explores how nature *is* gothic, to the extent that environment creates angst and the supernatural. In other words, the EcoGothic inspects the relationship between the ecocritical aspects of the Gothic and the Gothic elements of ecocriticism, insomuch as Gothic tropes - monstrosity, the uncanny, catastrophe, oppression, etc. - are manifest not only in human and animal bodies, but also in natural ones. It is a provocative literary way to refer to environment and landscape by means of Gothic interpretations. As already described in Chapter 2, bogland is synonymous of three main characteristics: anaerobic composition, fuel source, and gaseous state. Exactly these three elements lead to the bog's characterization as both a physical and imaginative Gothic site. Indeed, the lack of oxygen in bogs brings about biological conservation, which in turn generates speculations about time and space; peat, as a fuel source, is used for heat and food preparation, thus recalls domestic environment; gases emitted by bogs contribute to supernatural interpretations about how they host evil and eerie manifestations. These three qualities connect the physical and imaginative dimensions of bogs and exemplify the core reasons why Irish Gothic writers used bogs as representational spaces in postcolonial contexts. EcoGothic writings about Ireland make use of the bog as a symbol that both extols and discredits the sublime of the Irish landscape, depicting it as an untamed wasteland that resists incorporation into modernity and colonialism.[483] Among EcoGothic works, three sub-genres can be identified: the Bog Gothic, the Bog Noir, and the Eco-bog.[484] All of them include aspects of the Gothic postcolonial writing, such as trauma, haunting, the otherness, the sublime, and the supernatural. The Bog Gothic investigates the association between the bog and Irish culture, ranging from the pejorative and discriminated vision of a few late-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries English writers - such as Spenser, Boate, King - to the more redeeming and ameliorative conceptualisation of many twentieth-century Irish writers. The Bog Gothic focuses on the effects that external forces, namely the bog and non-human elements, exert on human bodies; it analyses the human body in relation to its material surroundings. In *The Snake's Pass,* for instance, anxiety, terror, awe, and fear appear as

[483] D. Gladwin, "The Bog Gothic: Bram Stoker's 'Carpet of Death' and Ireland's Horrible Beauty", cit., p. 40.

[484] D. Gladwin*, Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, cit., p. 212.

intrinsic conditions of the bog, as they are emotional reactions to this specific bioregion. Specifically, Stoker explores the conflict between the Catholic nationalists' views about preservation of natural landscape and the Anglo-Irish landowners' efforts of bog reclamation and modernisation.[485] The Bog Noir is a genre mainly related to crime and justice. According to Gladwin, in Stoker's novel, crime and illegal activities are present: for example, when Black Murdock swindles land from the Joyces' family and tries to murder Bat Moynahan on the bog, or when Arthur and Dick attempt to destroy the bogland for their personal profit. The Bog Noir is a genre that confronts law/disorder, reality/imagination, rationality/irrationality, mainly because bogs are capable of both preserving and concealing, thus functioning as deposits for objects of the past. In addition, law is treated from two contraposed points of view: the one of the coloniser, and that one of the colonised. Lastly, the Eco-bog writing is a non-fictional form of writing which gives ecological information about bogs. In conclusion, I contend that *The Snake's Pass* contains elements relevant to each of these literary genres, except those pertinent to the Eco-bog writing, and especially adheres to the Bog Gothic mode, due to the importance given to the narration about bogland.

Bogland and all its aspects is a multifaceted issue, so much that a vast array of interpretations have been given about the different relations between it and literature, history, politics, economics, and culture. Certainly, bogs evoke literary Gothic conventions and tropes through their association with the mysterious, the eerie, the uncanny, the macabre, the otherness, the unknown, the supernatural, and the transgressive. As Gladwin points out, bogs are "visually deceptive, physically volatile, and conceptually elusive",[486] and their texture implies a paradox, since they are "simultaneously solid and liquid, limited and limitless, yielding and unyielding, canny and uncanny, stable and unstable, ordered and disordered".[487] In other words, the bog can be viewed either as an evil entity that can ruin human life or as a possible resource for economic independence from Britain. The contradiction and the cohesion of the bog's qualities fill the narrative of the novel with land management options and possible solutions to political conflicts. The setting of *The Snake's Pass*, County Mayo, is

[485] D. Gladwin*, Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, cit., p. 57.
[486] *Idem,* p. 1.
[487] *Idem,* p. 2.

covered by blanket bogs, and many and long sections of the novel concern its description, for example when Arthur explains:

> a long, low gurgle, with something of a sucking sound; something terrible - resistless - and with a sort of hiss in it, as of seething waters striving to be free. Then the convulsion of the bog grew greater; it almost seemed as if some monstrous living thing was deep under the surface and writhing to escape.[488]

The bog consists of matter and represents a non-human presence that has the power of providing meanings in human life. Through Arthur's reference to "some monstrous living thing", the bog acquires an autonomous identity, capable of unpredictable agency. Stoker proves to be a master in attributing such skill to the bog: even though it is merely a tangible landform, the bog serves as one of the central characters in the novel and controls the development of the narrative. For instance, Dick gives a topographical description of the bog: while exposing the natural processes acting in it, he simultaneously highlights the dangerous agency intrinsic to it:

> What you see is simply a film or skin of vegetation of a very low kind, mixed with the mould of decayed vegetable fibre and grit and rubbish of all kinds which have somehow got mixed into it, floating on a sea of ooze and slime - of something half-liquid half-solid, and of an unknown depth. It will bear up a certain weight, for there is a degree of cohesion in it; but it is not all of equal cohesive power, and if one were to step on the wrong spot…" He was silent. "What then?" "Only a matter of specific gravity! A body suddenly immersed would, when the air of the lungs had escaped and the rigor mortis had set in, probably sink a considerable distance; then it would rise after nine days, when decomposition began to generate gases, and make an effort to reach the top. Not succeeding in this, it would ultimately waste away, and the bones would become incorporated with the existing vegetation somewhere about the roots or would lie among the slime at the bottom." "Well," said [Arthur], "for real cold-blooded horror, commend me to your men of science."[489]

Here, through the words of Dick, Stoker delineates the bog as an element whose action aims to destroy and devour life, by transforming the composition of what was once a living being, and eventually incorporating it. This is what makes the bog a character: it symbolizes a physical terrain that acts more like a monster, rather than a mere fictional setting for the narrative. Indeed, earlier in their conversation, Arthur asks Dick more details about the bog, and the engineer explains:

> "Is it a dangerous bog?" [Arthur] queried. "Rather! It is just as bad a bit of soft bog as ever I saw. I wouldn't like to see anyone or anything that I cared for try to cross it!" "Why not?" "Because at any moment they might sink through it; and then, good-bye - no human strength or skill could ever save them." "Is it a quagmire, then? Or like a

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[488] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 238.
[489] *Idem*, pp. 56-57.

> quicksand?" "Like either, or both. Nay! it is more treacherous than either. You may call it, if you are poetically inclined, a 'carpet of death'![490]

Dick refers to the bog as a "carpet of death" that joins both living and non-living characteristics, which repels and attracts people at the same time. Indeed, when Dick describes the bog through the words "skin", "fibre", "weight", and "cohesion", he recalls to mind either human or animal qualities. By placing typical corporeal characteristics of living beings to the bog, Dick personifies this terrain as a living creature capable of agency, a sort of "carpet of death", which can shift and swallow what comes in its path. Here, Stoker applies animism to the bog: it is an ecosystem that can be associated to an animal, unmistakably a snake, that moves and devours whatever passes over it. Animism implies the Gothic opposition living/non-living and assures that inanimate elements become animate, and eventually get individual identity. Imagination, folklore, and even science give life to the biological reality of the bog, and, once a form of matter becomes animated, it complicates any actions toward its elimination or improvement. In this way, Stoker renders environmental materiality a central literary concern. Not only does the bog acquire power and action, but also it cannot be completely controlled: it eventually slides off of the mountain and escapes human intervention. All of these issues are summarised in Arthur's final sentence, when he incisively underlines the "real cold-blooded horror" intrinsic of bogland. Tellingly, Arthur explicitly refers to the uncanny of bogland. In fact, at the beginning of the novel, when Arthur arrives to the west of Ireland, he does not seem frightened by the bog, although he immediately feels an unpleasant sensation:

> From the first moment that my eyes lit on it, it seemed to me to be a very remarkable spot, and quite worthy of being taken as the scene of strange stories, for it certainly had something "uncanny" about it.[491]

Moreover, in contrast to Dick's scientific description of the bog, Arthur notices that the mountain surrounding the bog "must have been a solid mass of gnomes, fairies, pixies, leprechauns, and all genii, species, and varieties of the same".[492] Furthermore, when Arthur arrives at Carnaclif, the locals tell him the legend about the bog, when it was used as a barrier to conceal the King of the Snakes. In this way, Stoker uses Gothic themes in order to highlight divergent perspectives of the bog and how they overlap and

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[490] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., pp. 55-56.
[491] *Idem*, p. 54.
[492] *Idem*, p. 107.

oppose each other. In this case, indeed, the opposition is given by terrestrial/supernatural: on the one hand, Dick purports technical explanations on the bog; on the other hand, Arthur and the local community refer to imaginative elements.

On many occasions after his arrival, Arthur has long walks on the bog and on the mountain, above all to meet Norah and to explore the territory with Dick. As Arthur gets to know the land, it is likely that the bog scares the English gentleman not because of its unfamiliarity, but rather because of its familiarity: Arthur learns the bog's terrorising qualities thanks to the research with Dick as well as the information given by the local community. In this way, the bog evokes terror on two levels: its unfamiliarity is frightening because of its unpredictable agency; while its familiarity is scaring because of its well-known dangerous and damaging characteristics. In this sense, the bog is uncanny due to its opposition between familiar/unfamiliar; in fact, the familiar might evoke more fear than the unfamiliar.

Actually, in the novel, the bog's unpredictable agency turns out to be dominated - albeit occasionally - by the "executive man", who uses science and technology to control and reclaim it in order to obtain economic and political gain:

> "We cure bog by both a surgical and a medical process. We drain it so that its mechanical action as a sponge may be stopped, and we put in lime to kill the vital principle of its growth. Without the other, neither process is sufficient but together, scientific and executive man asserts his dominance."[493]

As a matter of fact, Arthur and Dick's objective is making the bog productive and thus profitable. In so doing, Stoker investigates the possible advantages that industrialisation will bring, or rather, he wants to ascertain whether and how exploiting natural resources in Ireland will ameliorate its own economic position with respect to the British Empire. Indeed, in his article from *The World's Work* (1907), Stoker sustains that Ireland offers many resources in agriculture, fishing, and minerals and it should exploit them, for example using the bog as fuel source.[494] He then specifically refers to the "strenuous, industrious spirit" which would transform the country and effectively turn Patrick into a "new spirit"[495] - one that may be activated by either Arthur Severn or Stoker himself. In his opinion, therefore, Ireland could function without British support. It is likely that the

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[493] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 53.

[494] B. Stoker, "The Great White Fair in Dublin: How There Has Risen on the Site of the Old Donnybrook Fair a Great Exhibition as Typical of the New Ireland as the Former Festival was of the Ireland of the Past", in *The World's Work*, IX, Special Irish Number, London, May 1907, cit., pp. 570-576.

[495] *Idem,* p. 571.

commercialisation of bogland in *The Snake's Pass* hides Stoker's belief that the industrialisation of Ireland will free it from the British colonial yoke.

As Gladwin suggests, the bog not only is a central character in the novel, but also it serves as a multidimensional element, since Stoker strategically uses it as an exploratory device for the colonial period in the nineteenth- and twentieth century.[496] The bog is described in both its material and symbolic characteristics, thus combining scientific information together with historical references. By depicting it with its contrasting and complementary qualities, the bog is a nexus employed to deal with such issues as colonisation, nationalism, industrialisation, modernisation, tradition, and folklore. Indeed, the unstable and changing nature of bogland generates spatial and temporal destabilisation, similar to the historical and political rupture that Ireland witnessed when the British colonisation put into contrast tradition and modernisation. In this sense, *The Snake's Pass* offers a representative overview which combines Irish land concerns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries together with technical and historical information about the bog. It appears, therefore, that the novel hides a sub-text to be deciphered, or perhaps, it offers two concurrent co-texts: on one level, scientific and topographic details frame the bog as a distinctive ecosystem; on another level, underlying and implicit historical references outline the troubled struggle about colonisation and land ownership. In sum, Stoker simultaneously suggests the bog as a colonised space, yet hostile to colonisation, because of both its biological and evocative features. This is probably the main reason why, in the novel, modernity and progress are continuously challenged by the supernatural and the uncanny. From this perspective, the bog serves as a device for understanding colonial politics, especially through Stoker's idea of nationalism. He was strongly convinced that Ireland's landownership system needed to be significantly reformed, however he contemporaneously supported either Irish Home Rule or British imperial rule.[497] As defined in Chapter 3, Stoker was a "philosophical Home Ruler", since he contemporaneously supported an independent Ireland while repeatedly disapproving the devolution of British imperial rule in

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[496] D. Gladwin, "The Bog Gothic: Bram Stoker's 'Carpet of Death' and Ireland's Horrible Beauty", cit., p. 40.
[497] *Idem*, p. 69.

Historical Society debates.[498] I contend that this is probably the main reason why *The Snake's Pass* is so much based on ambivalence and binary oppositions.

The novel is set sometime in the 1880s, a period during which Ireland was mainly concerned with the economic and political struggle about land ownership and management. The Land Wars, a conflict between Anglo-Protestant landowners and Catholic tenants for control of property, broke out in the 1870s and ended in the 1890s, and produced evictions and violence. County Mayo, in the west of Ireland, was the first site concerned with the Land Wars and one of the most tumultuous areas concerned with the campaign of the Irish National Land League (probably because it was the birthplace of its founder, Michael Davitt). It is no wonder that the conceivable setting of *The Snake's Pass* is precisely County Mayo. In the novel, the fight for control of land is between two Irishmen: Murdock and Joyce. As Daly notes, Stoker transformed the historical struggle between Catholic tenants and their Protestant landlords into the persecution of the Protestant - yet poor - Joyces at the hands of the Catholic Murdock.[499] In 1882, the London *Times* reported the account about a gruesome tragedy: a family of four people, the Joyces, were murdered and two boys wounded in their own home in Maamtrasna, County Galway, since they were suspected of collusion with encroaching English landowners[500] and of being potential police informants.[501] In this area, many deeds of blood, called the Maamtrasna's murders, perpetrated. The most obvious link with the novel is the name Joyce, attributed to the poor family targeted by the evil Murdock. Moreover, the opening of the newspaper account and the beginning of Stoker's novel show a parallelism: both describe the Irish landscape and make use of the traveller's journey depicting a transition from the modern and civilised English world to the atavistic and wild Irish world.[502] Later on, the two narratives change direction: in the article, the environment is desolate and recalls the murderous events happened there; whereas in the novel, the landscape expresses the sublime and untamed beauty of nature. Daly suggests another similarity: Phelim Joyce's accident in the lake, spending "nigh three hours" in the water, seems to recall the drowning of two bailiffs in

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[498] D. Gladwin, "The Bog Gothic: Bram Stoker's 'Carpet of Death' and Ireland's Horrible Beauty", cit., p. 69.

[499] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 56.

[500] N. C. Cantwell, "'Keeping the Past Present': Time and the Shifting Bog in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", in *Supernatural Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Daemen Digital Commons, 2017, pp. 38-50, p. 40.

[501] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 56.

[502] *Idem*, p. 59.

an earlier incident related to the Maamstrana murders.[503] Moreover, agrarian violence of Land Wars finds a way in the novel through the reference to Moonlighters (violent rebels who stole stock and devastated crops to promote agrarianism):[504] after one of Arthur's secret night walks in the area where he first saw Norah, he is warned by one of the hotel servants about

> "two dangers - one from the moonlighters who now and again raided the district, and who, being composed of the scum of the countryside - "corner-boys" and loafers of all kinds - would be only too glad to find an unexpected victim to rob; and the other, lest in wandering about I should get into trouble with the police under suspicion of being one of these very ruffians.[505]

It actually happens that Arthur is interviewed by the police, as they thought he has some interest in moonlighting. It is remarkable that Arthur comically replies to their question by alluding to a pun, as if he wanted to give political questions poetic - or comic - answers:

> "[I wander at night] Simply to see the country at night - to look at the views - to enjoy the effects of moonlight. […] - the purely aesthetic effect - the chiaroscuro - the pretty pictures!"[506]

Except for these few references, Stoker never explicitly mentions the Land Wars in *The Snake's Pass*. Notwithstanding this, he found a way to hide his strong preoccupation for his native country in the novel. He was clearly aware of the troubled situation in Ireland and attempted to give his interpretation, asking readers for speculation and, possibly, resolutive actions, as proved by the fact that he sent both Davitt and Gladstone (the serving Prime Minister from the mid-1800s to the late 1800s) copies of the text.

As already explained in Chapter 2 and 3, the Irish landlord system was, in one word, ineffective. Stoker worked as Inspector of Petty Sessions in Ireland in the decade between 1868 and 1878; he thus had the opportunity of witnessing the harsh reality in the countryside. He could not react to that situation, except with profound compassion for Irish peasants, along with an increased awareness of the necessity for scientific and technological strategies to help them. In the novel, Stoker alludes to these contrasting yet contemporary positions about the bog reclamation in various passages. He implicitly postulates that these land projects can ameliorate Ireland's economic situation, and

[503] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 60.
[504] F. Marucci & C. Zabeo, *op. cit.,* pp. 174-175.
[505] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 117.
[506] *Idem*, p. 118.

possibly, lead to some sort of independence. For instance, during a conversation between Dick and Arthur, the engineer mentions the economic profit that the bog can bring for both landowners and tenants:

> [Joyce's] farm is almost an ideal one for this part of the world; it has good soil, water, shelter, trees, everything that makes a farm pretty and comfortable, as well as being good for farming purposes.[507]

Further on, Dick goes so far as to assert that the bog not only can provide economic improvement, but also it can become a paradise:

> Let us once be able to find the springs that feed the bog, and get them in hand, and we can make the place a paradise. The springs are evidently high up on the hill, so that we cannot only get water for irrigating and ornamental purposes, but we can get power also! Why, you can have electric light, and everything else you like, at the smallest cost. And if it be, as I suspect, that there is a streak of limestone in the hill, the place might be a positive mine of wealth as well![508]

As stated in Chapter 2, Protestant and Anglo-Irish landowners viewed the exploitation of bogland, and the consequent dispossession of Catholic inhabitants, as a justification for prompting Irish development. This belief originated from the English demonization of both the bogs and Irish people, considered as bearer of moral darkness and social murkiness, which could only be purified and saved by the symbolic exorcism of reclamation and drainage process. In the novel, Arthur's colonial policy aims at transforming the untamed Irish environment into a plausible duplicate of English settlement. It follows that Arthur's expansionistic plan is depicted as progress and salvation of the whole country. In so doing, Stoker conceals his divergent vision: he simultaneously supports and refuses the relation between colonialism and salvation of Ireland. Indeed, when Dick explains to Arthur how they can reclaim and drain the bog, Stoker implies that exploitation of natural resources, along with technology and science, can increase Ireland's economic growth and thus lead to future independence from Britain. In spite of this, Stoker strategically frames the narrative through Gothic contradictions and conventions that generally revisit the past instead of projecting into the future. For instance, Stoker inserts the reference to several English earlier writings in one of Dick's discourses - those of Young, Boate, Cambrensis, Spenser, and King - which supported research on and reclamation of bogs. These works associated bogland with Irish people, therefore they promoted the removal of bogs in order to annihilate

[507] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., pp. 50-51.
[508] *Idem*, p. 83.

Irish identity. In fact, in his article *Some Hysterical Hatred: History, Hysteria and the Literary Revival*, Luke Gibbons investigates the connection between commercialisation and the past: he eventually claims that "modernisation made by the reclamation of bogs reactivates rather than repudiates the past"[509] and jeopardises the future where bogs, emblems of Ireland, are eliminated through resource extraction for Irish's interests. In Gibbons' opinion, Stoker's nationalism in *The Snake's Pass* only supports the interests of the Anglo-Irish. Nonetheless, I maintain that this concern is more complex: while supporting bog reclamation, Stoker also queries the effectiveness of land commercialisation for all the Irish. For example, science is used both as a means to industrialise and as a method to uncover the intrinsic value of Irish bogs. The novel questions which one of these two results might be more beneficial to Ireland: on the one hand, modernisation provides financial prosperity to Ireland - not Britain - and assures its independence; while, on the other hand, modernisation eliminates one of the topographies that is the quintessential prerequisite of Irish national identity. In conclusion, it is likely that Stoker did not aim at writing a novel that can be considered activist, but rather he wanted to provide a warning: he subtly inquired whether bogland exploitation would lead to further economic and political enhancement for Ireland or it would deprive the Irish of their national identity, an issue that is still relevant today. It might be that Stoker deprecated the necessary loss of Irish bogland in support of progress and independence from Britain. As developed in Chapter 3, Stoker's ambivalence with regard to his Irishness and Englishness, has hovered like a veil throughout his life, inhibiting his personal definitive stance about Irish and English affairs, constantly questioning without reaching a well-definite answer.

Destroying bogs might provide monetary profit, but it would also cause a great ecological damage, apart from emptying local population both culturally and numerically. Nevertheless, the environmental effects of bogland recovery remain unexamined in the novel. Stoker only hints at the consequences of the bog reclamation through Arthur's contrasting vision: on the one hand, the English businessman wants to transform the land to obtain financial gain; on the other hand, the English gentleman wants to preserve the beauty of the panorama for his aesthetical pleasure. Once more, opposition is given by the contrast between environment exploitation and preservation

[509] L. Gibbons, "Some Hysterical Hatred: History, Hysteria and the Literary Revival", cit., p. 14.

policy. In this sense, Stoker's novel incorporates a provocation: the imaginative material of the narration and the tangible reality of land issues match each other, reflecting the oppositions in Irish colonial politics. It is noteworthy that, by the end of the novel, Stoker never fully concludes the issue about whether to embrace reclamation or preservation of bogland. Indeed, Arthur and Dick, despite their projects, never need to choose whether to reclaim the bog or not, since heavy rain acts first, making the bog slide towards the sea, and thus altering the Englishmen's plans.

Daly seems to share Gladwin's interpretation of the novel, in that he also reads the novel as an allegory of the colonial relations between Ireland and Britain, and, in particular, he considers the bog as a space of historical memory that is subjected to the British Empire.[510] He contends that the bog specifically refers to the traumatic colonial past of Anglo-Irish people and its peculiar texture represents the anxiety of the Anglo-Irish, who try to recognize their origins in Ireland: as well as the bog's uncertain and mutable structure does not provide any footing or any stable support to stand on, it does not belong either to English, or Irish, or Anglo-Irish identities. In fact, when the bog washes out to sea, it uncovers evidence of Celtic culture - i.e. the Celtic crown and the Ogham inscription on the cave - thus testifying a glorious and ancient past. Moreover, when Dick explains to Arthur the nature of the shifting bog, he defines it as either a "quagmire" or a "quicksand", or both,[511] revealing its uncertain nature, like that of Anglo-Irish people. Furthermore, when he defines it as a "carpet of death",[512] he appears to refer to both the biological decomposition process occurring in the bog and the consequences of the political conflict between English and Irish. The association between Irish bogland and the history of colonization is perceivable in the following passage:

> Dick Sutherland gave me a rapid but masterly survey of the condition of knowledge on the subject of bogs, with special application to Irish bogs, beginning with such records as those of Giraldus Cambrensis - of Dr. Boate - of Edmund Spenser - from the time of the first invasion when the state of the land was such that, as is recorded, when a spade was driven into the ground a pool of water gathered forthwith. He told me of the extent and nature of the bog-lands - of the means taken to reclaim them, and of his hopes of some heroic measures being ultimately taken by Government to reclaim the vast Bog of Allen, which remains as a great evidence of official ineptitude. "It will be something," he said, "to redeem the character for indifference to such matters so long established, as when Mr. King wrote two hundred years ago, 'We live in an Island almost infamous for

[510] N. Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture*, cit., p. 54.
[511] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., pp. 56-57.
[512] *Ibidem.*

> bogs, and yet, I do not remember, that anyone has attempted much concerning them.'"[513]

Here, the engineer precisely defines colonization as an "invasion" and he considers the measures taken by the Government to reclaim bogland as an "evidence of official ineptitude" (the Bog of Allen is still nowadays a huge swamp covering an area of 958 square metres in the surroundings of Dublin). The first two scholars mentioned by Dick carried out fundamental works to learn the geography - and more - of Ireland. Giraldus Cambresis (c. 1146-c. 1223), an Anglo-Norman historian, was the first scholar who described the topography of Ireland in his work *Topographia Hibernica* (around 1188). In another work, *Conquest of Ireland* (1186-1189), Cambresis defined Irish locals as immoral and unruly primitives who need strict and repressive measures to be tamed and become less savage. Also Gerard Boate (1604-1650), a Dutch physician, reported in detail Ireland's topography and resources, and scientifically classified bogs, the traditional practice of turf-cutting, and the process of bogs' drainage in his work *Natural History of Ireland* (written in 1645, published in 1652). His aim was attracting as many English people as possible to take possession of Ireland and settle there. Later on, Dick refers to Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), an English poet who, after having spent many years in Ireland, described Irish rebels and clearly expressed his desire to extirpate Irish identity in his work *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (written in 1595-96 and published in 1633). In his pamphlet, Spenser discussed some plans to reform and subjugate Ireland; Dick probably agrees with him about the fact that the previous efforts made by the "scientific and executive man" had failed. Indeed, the engineer explicitly depicts the bog as resistant to the interventions of the colonial project: when a spade is stuck into the ground, a pool of water springs, thus removing any evidence of former action. Dick then insists on the disinterest of scientific concern by reporting the words of William King (1650-1729), an Irish author and founder of the Dublin Philosophical Society, who supported the Glorious Revolution and pointed out the overall indifference about bogs and their reclamation. The fact that Dick Sutherland alludes to earlier scholars proves that Stoker read and examined antecedent writings about bogs in Ireland; indeed, as already stated in Chapter 3, Stoker was used to do some research before writing. In general, those studies considered bogland as a wasted

[513] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., pp. 51-53.

space, and employed a discriminatory language to promote reclamation and industrialization of bogs not only for British economic benefit, but also for political control of the local Irish population. Stoker probably embedded the references to those works in order to call attention to a past literature which viewed Irish bogland as a resource for the British Empire.

From another point of view, the bog is comparable to a historical witness, a sort of repository device which stores Irish national culture and identity. Thanks to the bog's ability of swallowing artefacts and living beings, it preserves the past and, when it slides away and these elements appear on the surface, they are given a new life in the present. That is what exactly occurs when Arthur, Norah and Dick discover the lost chest of gold sent by the French expeditionary force of 1798, together with the two Frenchmen's skeletons. Dick relives the soldiers' death by suffocation:

> "See how the bog can preserve! this leather strap attached to the handles of the chest each had round his shoulder, and so, willy nilly, they were dragged to their doom. Never mind! they were brave fellows all the same, and faithful ones - they never let go the handles -look! Their dead hands clasp them still. France should be proud of such sons!"[514]

Dick's first statement expresses the bog's deadly power of fixing the past in the present: it preserves the leather strap that was connecting the chest and the two men at the moment of their death, when they were dragged down by the heavy weight of the gold. And again, colonial history and Irish struggle for independence from the British Empire emerge thanks to the bog, even though through the atypical exclamation pronounced by Dick: "France should be proud of such sons!", as if, for a moment, he has set aside his English roots. Admittedly, the traces that the bog retains in this situation imply the success of the British colonial project, since the English army brutally quelled the rising of 1798. Nancy Marck Cantwell categorises the bog's capacity of preserving the past as "monumental time",[515] which is in opposition to "linear time", using the two definitions given by Julia Kristeva in her essay *Women's Time*. Briefly, monumental time concerns sociocultural memories and facts, often traumatic, that are fixed in the historical past; whereas linear time regards a progressing sequence of chronological events.[516] In the case of Stoker's novel, linear time is given by Arthur's narrative, while monumental

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[514] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 248.
[515] N. M. Cantwell, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[516] J. Kristeva, "Women's Time", trans. by A. Jardine & H. Blake, in *Signs*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Autumn 1981, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 13-35, p. 14.

time is recalled by the bog and the legend inherent to the Snake's Pass and its surrounding territory. The plot chronologically follows the occurrences experienced by the English gentleman during his journey in Ireland. When he spends some time in Knockcalltecrore and finally settles there, events advance in sequence, starting from his will to own Murdock's land and continuing with his desire to marry Norah and possibly having children with her. Arthur views the legend about the gold hidden from St. Patrick by the King of the Snakes as a superstition and, together with Dick, they unravel the mystery of the bog thanks to science and technology, finally managing to discover the treasure. At the same time, the plot stops the linearity of consecutive happenings, as it follows monumental time, through Jerry Scanlan, the improvised local storyteller, who recites the supernatural tale of the King of the Snakes, and Bat Moynahan, another local peasant who relates an eyewitness account of the Frenchmen carrying the chest of gold. Both these stories are incorporated in the bog, which functions as a perfect environment to hold and hide memories of an ancient past.

Nonetheless, the bog in literature serves to shift time not only in the past, but also in the future. In fact, differently from the literary criticism carried out by some scholars - such as Hughes and Daly - which connects bogland exclusively to the past, Gibbons' and Gladwin's analysis relate it to the future, in that the bog reclamation in Stoker's novel foresees a forthcoming period in which the destiny of both the bog and Irish people will still be challenged by colonisation, modernisation, and industrialisation. Gibbons and Gladwin devise bogland as both a symbol of repression and one of redemption, insofar the people subordinated by colonial projects in the past will actively defy the present and the future.

Bogs are mysterious and multifarious landscapes which personify sceneries of threat, consumption, and death.[517] They represent the most suitable location to set a Gothic novel, where superstition and modernity, supernatural and natural, rational and fantastic are in constant opposition. In the Iron Age, bogs were considered to be gateways to other worlds and therefore places of communication with spirits.[518] Shortly, bogs are home of popular lore and tradition. Even Arthur, observing the landscape, exclaims: "that remarkable mountain must have been a solid mass of gnomes, fairies,

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[517] D. Gladwin, *Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, cit., p. 40.
[518] *Idem*, p. 2.

pixies, leprechauns, and all genii, species, and varieties of the same."[519] In the novel, the contrast between modernity and tradition is exemplified by two antitheses. One involves Andy, the local Irish peasant and storyteller, and Dick Sutherland, the geologist and engineer. While Andy believes in the myth of the King of the Snakes, Dick assumes that:

> The main feature of the geological formation of all this part of the country is the vast amount of slate and granite, either in isolated patches or lying side by side. And as there are instances of limestone found in quaint ways, I am not without hopes that we may yet find the same phenomenon.[520]

The other contrast involves Black Murdock, the usurer, and Dick. Both look for a treasure, even if it they do not seek the same one: Murdock hunts the mythic and ancient jewelled crown of the King of the Snakes and the lost golden chest of gold, while Dick searches limestone, a material resource for modern economic development.

In addition, Andy's repeated jokes, mockeries, and winks at Arthur serve to compare Norah to a fairy. When Arthur describes Norah "summing up the lady's charms"[521] to Andy, the cart driver replies:

> There's no such girrul in all Knock-nacar!" … "Glory be to God! but maybe it's the fairies, it was, of the pixies! Shure they do say that there's lots an' lots an' lashin's iv them on this hill. Don't ye have nothin' to say to thim, surr! There's only sorra follys thim. Take an ould man's advice, an' don't come up here any more. The shpot is dangerous.[522]

Nevertheless, as Mark Doyle argues, Stoker merges modernity and tradition in his novel in a mix that does not create so much tension: folk legends persist in Irish memory, but only few locals know them perfectly; Irish peasants use the old Irish language, but the most part of them speak English; outsiders may be unwelcome for many inhabitants of Knockcalltecrore, but for Norah they represent a breath of fresh air; Arthur and Dick dispel the old myths of the shifting bog, but eventually they turn the area into a fairyland.[523]

Buchelt claims that, in *The Snake's Pass*, Stoker drew on the *dinnseanchas* tradition, which is an early Irish literary genre that explains the origins of toponyms by

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[519] D. Gladwin*, Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic*, cit., p. 107.
[520] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 62.
[521] *Idem*, p. 103.
[522] *Ibidem*.
[523] M. Doyle, *op. cit.,* p. 112.

narrating historical events, saints, and fairy tales.[524] For instance, when the lost golden crown is discovered, Dick exclaims: "The Lost Crown of Gold! - the crown that gave the Hill its name, and was the genesis of the story of St. Patrick and the King of the Snakes!"[525] The ancient Irish spelling was *dindsenchas* or *dindshenchas* and meant "lore of places", while the modern spelling *dinnseanchas* means "topography". Irish mythology takes a cue from this tradition, since it is a relevant source for legends and legendary figures. *Dinnseanchas* was an oral tradition and the storytelling was entitled to special members of the community, the *shanachies*, who had the authority to transmit lore.[526] In Stoker's novel, the *shanachies* are two: Jerry Scanlan, who narrates the "*laygend*",[527] or legend, about Saint Patrick and the King of the Snakes; and Bat Moynahan, who narrates the "*shtory*",[528] or story, about the French's soldiers' 1798 lost chest of gold. Especially with regard to the legend about Saint Patrick and the King of Snakes, it might be argued that, in the same way the King of Snakes creates a chasm in the mountain and transforms himself into the shifting bog, the Irish will forever rebel to English dominance, and their resistance will continue to be retold and live in their minds by tradition and lore.[529]

Although Stoker never uses the term *dinnseanchas* in his research notes for *The Snake's Pass*, it is recorded that his maternal grandmother approached him to this genre of tales and that he read William Wilde's *Irish Popular superstitions* (1852) and Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (1887).[530] He therefore learnt about Irish folklore and was particularly interested in moving bogs, monstrous serpents, and local saints. Buchelt states that Stoker, during the promotion of the novel a year before its initial publication, created a sort of *dinnseanchas* about the origins of the story: he told London newspapers that the idea of writing *The Snake's*

[524] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", in *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2012, Center for Irish Studies, pp. 113-133, p. 113.
[525] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 251.
[526] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 116.
[527] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 9.
[528] *Ibidem.*
[529] N. M. Cantwell, "'Keeping the Past Present': Time and the Shifting Bog in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", *op. cit.,* p. 40.
[530] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 116.

Pass had come to him while he was on holiday in the West of Ireland.[531] However, it is documented that Stoker had already been working on the novel for years, long before he got his inspiration during his holiday in Ireland.[532] It is likely that the author used this stratagem in order to make readers believe that he, like many other collectors of folktales and rural traditions, was revealing true information, gathered from real local sources ascertained during his journey in the Irish country.

In the novel, the local Irish "*laygends*" and "*shtories*" are intertwined and eventually compared to the English narrations of Arthur and Dick, who become storytellers along with the Irish characters. On the one side, Andy, Jerry Scanlan, and Bat Moynahan recite Irish legends and folk tales; while, on the other side, Arthur reports the events of the whole text as an English first-person narrator, and Dick scientifically explains the origins of the bog, its characteristics, and how it can be treated. In this way, the oral and dialectal Irish culture is counterposed to the written and scientific English culture. Actually, Dick makes an exception, as he combines both *dinnseanchas* and scholarly theory: when he mentions the volcanic origins of the bog, he admits that the legend about the King of the Snakes refers to true elements, namely the presence of an ancient lake on the bog's area:

> I [Dick] would think its origin must have been volcanic. But here such a thing is quite impossible. It was evidently once a lake." "So goes the legend. I suppose you have heard it?" "Yes! and it rather confirms my theory. Legends have always a base in fact; and whatever cause gave rise to the myth of St. Patrick and the King of the Snakes, the fact remains that the legend is correct in at least one particular - that at some distant time there was a lake or pond on the spot.[533]

In another passage, when the limestone quarry is found after the bog slide, Dick admits: "And so, ladies and gentlemen, the legend is true, that the Lost Crown would be discovered when the water of the lake was found again."[534]

Another exception is given by Bat Moynahan: his "*shtory*" is not a mere fantasy relevant to Irish folklore, but rather it proves to be based on real past events, as evidenced by the recoveries that testify the story about the expedition of the French soldiers. Therefore, by evoking the real elements in the "*laygends*" and "*shtories*" through Dick and Bat Moynahan, Stoker seems to point out that both Irish and English

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[531] L. C. Buchelt, "'Being of Ireland' An Introduction to Bram Stoker's Irish Novel", cit., p. XII.
[532] *Ibidem.*
[533] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 63.
[534] *Idem*, p. 251.

narratives about the origins of places and the formation of the landscape - though giving different explanations - complement each other and finally join to achieve the truth.[535] Hence, the final truth results from the comparison between metaphorical elements and scientific ones. In this regard, Stoker made use of folklore to strategically compare Irish ancient identity with English modern culture, thus connecting the past, the present, and the future. *The Snake's Pass* represents Stoker's work most related to Irish folklore, a novel that was written and published not by chance, but exactly when the nationalistic movement was at its peak.

As well as representing a text subject to different interpretations and speculations about the bog and its symbolism, *The Snake's Pass* appears a "migratory text",[536] as Daly defined it, that incorporates a blending of genres: imperial romance, confirmed by the concerns with adventure and treasure hunt; national tale, given by the courtship story and the marriage plot; Irish colonial novel, due to the hidden historical references intertwined in the narrative.

Daly asserts that Stoker's novel can be related to two adventure romances: R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1885) and H. R. Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1887).[537] Moreover, Stoker's novel can be connected also to the works of G. A. Henty and H. M. Stanley,[538] two of Stoker's fellow writers at Sampson Low, the publishing company which collected the serial in a single volume in 1890. All of these literary works comprise adventure motifs ascribed to the imperial romance, such as the treasure hunt, the expedition, the mapping, and the "male team".[539] Indeed, adventure romance emerged in the 1880s when the New Imperialism ignited a period of colonisation on global scale. Thanks to its narrative devices, adventure romance symbolised a fictional way that helped European readers' to visualise the lands conquered by the British Empire. In fact, New Imperialism fiction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries depicted imaginary descriptions of Asian and African unexplored territories. However, while Stevenson and Haggard chose to explore exotic territories, Stoker opted for Ireland, which was still a colonial setting, but more "domesticated", if compared to

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[535] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 119.

[536] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 44.

[537] *Idem,* p. 43.

[538] *Idem,* p. 45.

[539] *Ibidem.*

Asia and Africa. Since Ireland is closer to England than other British colonies, Stoker devised it as a peculiar land and culture, and he evinced it as a special case, different from the other British colonies. Ireland is depicted as an unusual colonial territory which testifies to its special relationship with England. Indeed, several passages in *The Snake's Pass* remind to the historical and political situation of that period, thus contextualizing the liminal and ambivalent condition of Bram Stoker as an Anglo-Irish writer: he adhered to Home Rule, while being closely connected with England. Stoker wrote the novel when he was living in London and working as a business manager at the Lyceum Theatre; nevertheless, most of the text's issues deal with Irish colonial discourse. The latter is realised in the novel through a great deal of narration dedicated to the bog, improperly combined with references to historical events, which consequently subvert the centrality that the theme of adventure commonly retains in imperial romances. For this reason, Daly asserts that Stoker's novel is "never properly accommodated within the romance frame" in the same way that *Treasure Island* and *King Solomon's Mines* are.[540] Furthermore, all the metaphors and the historical references underlying the allegory of the bog, which hint at the complex Anglo-Irish conflict and suggest a fictional solution to it, do not manage to offer an imaginary Ireland that corresponds to a fantasy for imperial supremacy.[541] For this reason, Daly affirms that *The Snake's Pass* fails as a fantasy of imperial control;[542] while Glover devises the novel as both an iteration and a revision of a typical imperial romance.[543] Similarly to Daly, Killeen affirms that the novel cannot be interpreted as an imperialist fantasy,[544] due to the fact that the Irish scoundrel of the novel, Black Murdock, wants to capitalize on the financial difficulties of Phelim Joyce, hence he is automatically excluded from the nation idealized by both Irish Home Rule and the Land League. This latter, indeed, fought against not only landlords who evicted tenants, but also tenants themselves who took possess of the property of those so evicted. Although Murdock's Irishness and Catholicism associate him more closely with Ireland than Arthur, it

[540] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 64.
[541] *Idem,* p. 65.
[542] *Idem,* p. 43.
[543] D. Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1996, cit., pp. 30-32.
[544] J. Killeen, "Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", in C. Morin & N. Gillespie (ed.), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890*, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 182.

renders his betrayal of his compatriots the more disgusting and worthy of condemnation. Michael Davitt, the Land League leader, made it clear that Catholics who land-grabbed or squeezed their neighbours for rack rents were far more dangerous than Protestant landlords, who at least had the excuse of having a different nationality from those whom they were exploiting.[545] It is documented that Stoker agreed with Davitt, indeed he wrote him seeking his endorsement for the novel, and Killeen suggests that the novel mainly aims at shifting all blame for Irish underdevelopment onto native rather than imperial forces.[546]

One of the topoi of adventure romance is the expedition and, at the very beginning of the novel, Arthur Severn introduces his journey in the West of Ireland by describing the panorama that stands in front of him:

> Between two great mountains of grey and green, as the rock cropped out between the tufts of emerald verdure, the valley, almost as narrow as a gorge, ran due west towards the sea. There was just room for the roadway, half cut in the rock, beside the narrow strip of dark lake of seemingly unfathomable depth that lay far below between perpendicular walls of frowning rock. As the valley opened, the land dipped steeply, and the lake became a foam-fringed torrent, widening out into pools and miniature lakes as it reached the lower ground. In the wide terrace-like steps of the shelving mountain there were occasional glimpses of civilization emerging from the almost primal desolation which immediately surrounded us - clumps of trees, cottages, and the irregular outline of stone-walled fields, with black stacks of turf for winter firing piled here and there. Far beyond was the sea -the great Atlantic - with a wildly irregular coast-line studded with a myriad of clustering rocky islands. A sea of deep dark blue, with the distant horizon tinged with a line of faint white light, and here and there, where its margin was visible through the breaks in the rocky coast, fringed with a line of foam as the waves broke on the rocks or swept in great rollers over the level of expanse of sands. The sky was a revelation to me, and seemed to almost obliterate memories of beautiful skies, although I had just come from the south and had felt the intoxication of the Italian night, where in the deep blue sky the nightingale's note seems to hang as though its sound and the colour were but different expressions of one common feeling. The whole west was a gorgeous mass of violet and sulphur and gold - great masses of storm-cloud piling up and up till the very heavens seemed weighted with a burden too great to bear. Clouds of violet, whose centres were almost black and whose outer edges were tinged with living gold; great streaks and piled up clouds of palest yellow deepening into saffron and flame-colour which seemed to catch the coming sunset and to throw its radiance back to the eastern sky. The view was the most beautiful that I had ever seen, and, accustomed as I had been only to the quiet pastoral beauty of a grass country, with occasional visits to my Great Aunt's well-wooded estate in the South of England, it was no wonder that it arrested my attention and absorbed my imagination. Even my brief half-a-year's travel in Europe, now just concluded, had shown me nothing of the same kind. Earth, sea, and air all evidenced the triumph of nature, and told of her wild majesty and beauty. The air was still - ominously still. So still was all, that through the silence, that seemed to hedge us in with a sense of oppression, came the

[545] J. Killeen, "Bram Stoker and Irish Masculinity in *The Snake's Pass*", in C. Morin & N. Gillespie (ed.), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions, 1760-1890*, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 182.
[546] *Idem,* p. 177.

> booming of the distant sea, as the great Atlantic swell broke in surf on the rocks or stormed the hollow caverns of the shore.[547]

In this passage, the West of Ireland is compared to the South of England, emphasizing and alluring the beauty of the Irish topography: it shows the "triumph of nature" in its irregularity and wildness, where "occasional glimpses of civilization" emerge from the "primal desolation". In opposition, the English grass country offers pastoral beauty with the regularity of a "well-wooded estate". Arthur's description of the territory corresponds to the models relevant to the imperial romance: the landscape is portrayed as primitive and mysterious, for the tourist's gaze influences his depiction of the Irish environment. In the novel, indeed, a great deal of passages is dedicated to Arthur's observation and characterisation of the geographical space which surrounds him during his journey. What is different from the usual and pre-existing description of colonial land in adventure romance, is that, although the explorer travels across an unknown environment, Arthur perceives it as a "gorgeous mass" and the most beautiful view he has ever seen. Further on, the English tourist uses a reassuring statement "Somehow the view seemed to tranquilize me in some degree".[548] Later in the text, while admiring the bog on the mountain, Arthur remarks: "The sight of the Hill filled me with glad emotion".[549] Indeed, in the nineteenth century, Ireland was one of the favourite destinations of English travellers who wanted to escape from the increasing industrialization and pollution of England to find some relief in the sublime wilderness of the colonies. Arthur continues:

> Somehow I had of late seemed to myself to be waking up. My foreign tour had been gradually dissipating my old sleepy ideas, or perhaps overcoming the negative forces that had hitherto dominated my life; and now this glorious burst of wild natural beauty - the majesty of nature at its fullest - seemed to have completed my awakening, and I felt as though I looked for the first time with open eyes on the beauty and reality of the world.[550]

Here, the sense of the sublime that Arthur feels is evident: the "glorious wild natural beauty" has woken him up. The journey from the modern and industrialised England to the quaint and undomesticated Ireland represents Arthur's awakening, a transition from the civilised English world to the untamed Irish ecosystem, where English rules and values do not have any influences.

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[547] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., pp. 1-5.
[548] *Idem*, p. 94.
[549] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 210.
[550] *Idem,* p. 6.

Even though Arthur is fascinated by the Irish landscape, he recalls British spatial control in another passage:

> It may have been that there was some unconscious working of the mind which told me in some imperfect way that in a region quite within my range of vision, nothing could long remain hidden or unknown.[551]

Tellingly, from the 1880s, adventure fiction began to include geographical investigation through survey, measurements, and maps. In *The Snake's Pass* this topic is handled by Dick Sutherland, Arthur's former schoolmate, who is employed as an engineer for the local money-lender, Black Murdock. Dick is intrigued by the novelty of Irish landscape, and he is conducting some private research as well into the local shifting bog. Little is known about this peculiar Irish ecosystem, and Dick is determined to find a way to transform it in a more productive soil by its reclamation. In this regard, the shifting bog eschews imperial spatial control, typical of adventure romance, in that it is eerie, uncanny, yielding, and therefore uncontrollable. As argued by Daly, "the bog appears to represent the limits of the text's ability to contain colonial space".[552] More than that, the bog challenges not only British ability to control colonial territory, but also the visual perception of the individual.

In combination with the imperial romance model, Stoker made use of the colonial marriage plot. As David Glover argues, the author benefited from the earlier Anglo-Irish fiction of Lady Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) and Maria Edgeworth's *The Absentee* (1812), which provided him with excellent models of courtship stories.[553] Also Joseph Valente comments that "the metropolitan marriage comedy commonly concerns […] a tourist who engages a native, exoticized Irish girl on her home turf, her stationary life-posture standing for her relatively unitary and organic, because premodern, ethno-national identity".[554] Nicholas Daly adds that Stoker's novel follows the plot of Dion Boucicault's comic melodrama *The Shaughraun* (1874), a play which unites an Englishman with an Irishwoman against a rapacious moneylender.[555] Notably, the love plot intertwined in *The Snake's Pass,* and especially the final marriage

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551 B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass,* cit., p. 95.

552 N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 48.

553 D. Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1996, cit., p. 30.

554 J. Valente, "Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood", *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 384-386, p. 13.

555 N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 53.

between the English Arthur and the Irish Norah, reproduces Anglo-Irish relations in terms of inter-ethnic union. In this, Stoker's novel adheres to Anglo-Irish fiction, in which imperial marriage plot is employed to reconcile international conflicts and generally involves an Englishman and an Irishwoman. With respect to this, the novel's love plot might arguably be read not as a fictional fantasy, but rather as a political dream of affiliation between Ireland and Britain.[556] In general, courtship story is a minor trope in adventure romance; yet a typical colonial marriage plot involves a tourist/foreigner who meets a native, learns the customs and tradition of the local community, and then takes part to it through marriage with the colonial Other. Stoker bestowed a lot of importance on this kind of subgenre, presumably because this trope offered him an opportunity to consolidate the ties between Anglo-Irish and British people. As explained in Chapter 2, indeed, their relationship considerably changed after the Act of Union (1800), which gave birth to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and consequently shattered Ireland's desire for the creation of a separate Irish parliament. In this alliance, gender was attributed as it has always been assigned for ages: Ireland played the feminine role and England the masculine one. This gender characterization dated back to the sixteenth-century poet Spenser, who personified Ireland with Irena in his *Faerie Queene* (1590),[557] and perpetuated in the nineteenth century, thus preserving the stereotypical gendering that considered Ireland and the Irish as females, unpredictable and unable of self-government.

Another topos of the romance genre is the treasure hunt, enabled by surveys and maps. The ability to chart colonial ground corresponds to the ability to control the new territory and discover its treasures. In this sense, treasure hunt connects empire, colonization, profit, dominance, and imperial romance. It is actually more than a connection, since the empire made use of popular fiction to produce and develop its cultural models for domestic consumption: readers became a sort of "lounge adventurers", who identified themselves with the explorer of the novel.[558] Imperial adventure was beneficial in economic terms, as a market for British goods and provision of raw materials, as well as in cultural terms, as an expanding leisure industry which provided passive domestic readers with the empire ideology. In *The Snake's Pass,*

[556] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 53.
[557] *Ibidem.*
[558] *Idem*, p. 44.

treasure hunt is displayed through Black Murdock and his quest for the French gold, the one which was lost by the French soldiers who came to support Irish rebels against British rule in 1798. But, again, Stoker dealt with this specific narrative topic differently from the treasure hunts depicted in the other novels of his time. Firstly, the treasure to be find is generally a natural element belonging to the colonial territory - such as the diamond mines in C. Doyle's *The Lost World* and in H. R. Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines;* whereas the riches of Stoker's novel do not belong to nature, but rather they refer to history, in that they represent a historical burden, namely the spoils of the colonial struggle between Ireland and England. Secondly, while adventurers are usually motivated by their conscious desire to discover new wealth, the only character in *The Snake's Pass* who intentionally follows his greed in the treasure hunt is Black Murdock. The other characters, Arthur, Dick, Norah, and Phelim do ultimately find the treasure, but just thanks to serendipity: the bog washes out to sea after a sudden rainfall, thus uncovering the treasure. In this way, Stoker denied the characters' agency for the discovery of the riches. Moreover, at first it is unclear who will benefit from the treasure: Arthur and Dick want Phelim Joyce to keep it, who in turn prefers to use it for helping an unknown Irish cause (possibly Home Rule): "Take it I will, an' gladly; but not for meselft. The money was sent for Ireland's good - to help them that wanted help, an' plase God! I'll see it doesn't go asthray now!"[559]

Thirdly, Stoker devised another treasure, which comes up by accident: the limestone quarry uncovered by the bog's slide. It differs from the usual treasures of adventure romance since it is not an ancient relic, such as gold or diamonds, but it is probably more valuable, as it will provide further economic development and progress. Hence, the bog itself remains the most significant treasure in the novel, with its deposits of limestone which, as Hughes notes, "becomes a metonym for the changes that will take place consequent to Arthur's possession of the land and draining of the bog".[560] Thanks to the limestone, Arthur and Dick can challenge Irish methods of subsistence farming and living. The engineer realises its potential before others:

> "A limestone quarry here would be pretty well as valuable as a gold mine. Nearly all these promontories on the western coast of Ireland are of slate or granite, and here we have not got lime within thirty miles. With a quarry on the spot, we can not only build

[559] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 249.
[560] W. Hughes, "'For Ireland's Good': The Reconstruction of Rural Ireland in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 20.

> cheap and reclaim our own bog, but we can supply five hundred square miles of country with the rudiments of prosperity, and at a nominal price compared with what they pay now!"[561]

In this regard, I contend that Stoker assigns an active role to this fourth treasure, since the limestone quarry represents a starting point for a better future, rather than the final objective of the treasure hunt. Indeed, Dick acknowledges:

> "… with limestone on the spot a hundred things could be done that, as things are at present, would not repay the effort. With limestone we could reclaim the bogs cheaply all over the neighbourhood - in fact a limekiln there would be worth a small fortune. We could build walls in the right places; I can see how a lovely little harbour could be made there at a small expense. And then beyond all else would be the certainty - which is at present in my mind only a hope or a dream - that we could fathom the secret of the shifting bog, and perhaps abolish or reclaim it."[562]

Another feature in common with adventure romance is that, in *The Snake's Pass,* most of the characters - albeit not all of them - are male. Their relation is based on intense affective ties, like Arthur and Dick's friendship, which began at school but is still strong, even though a lot of time has passed. Not even their love for the same woman, Norah, manages to undermine or destabilise their bond. Further on in the text, this two-member team will also include Andy, the cart driver, and Phelim Joyce, Norah's father, as fellows. Manliness is shown in many passages of the novel, for instance when Arthur admires the powerful physique of the GAA player; when Phelim Joyce strikes a blow to Black Murdock; when Dick aggressively faces the money lender; and when Arthur defends Norah's respectability from the accusations made by Black Murdock:

> Here I could restrain myself no longer and to my joy on the instant - and since then whenever I have thought of it - Norah withdrew her hand as if to set me free. I stepped forward, and with one blow fair in the lips knocked the foul-mouthed ruffian head over heels. He rose in an instant, his face covered in blood, and rushed at me. This time I stepped out, and with an old football trick, taking him on the breast-bone with my open hand, again tumbled him over.[563]

Even though Arthur Severn is the male protagonist and the narrative follows his recounting of events as a first-person narrator, he fails to be the hero of the novel, or rather, he does not represent the typical hero of an imperial romance plot.[564] First of all, he describes what he sees from the point of view of an educated English gentleman, and

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[561] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 209.
[562] *Idem,* p. 63.
[563] *Idem,* p. 170.
[564] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 119.

this underlines the disparity between how Arthur tells his story and the events that actually happened, rendering him an unreliable narrator.[565] Furthermore, during his first conversation with Norah, Arthur compares himself to the knightly hero Geraint, quoting Alfred Tennyson's poem *The Marriage of Geraint: Geraint and Enid* (1892): "Sir Geraint's ejaculation rose to my lips: - "Here, by God's rood, is the one maid for me!".[566]

Nevertheless, Arthur's authority as a hero is regularly undermined on many occasions: Norah does not want to celebrate their engagement and marriage publicly: "she asked her father to let it be as quiet as possible, with absolutely no fuss - no publicity, and in some quiet place where no one knew us";[567] she rescues Arthur and the monument he builds for her bravery does not contain any mentions of him, but only of "a man"; despite the marriage with Norah, he does not completely integrate in the community;[568] he does not realise that the unnamed girl on the hill and Norah are one person; he does not understand Andy's jokes about Norah and the bog; he is interrupted at his own wedding by Dick, who comments on the tale that Arthur is telling. Consequently, Buchelt argues that the character of Arthur never improves throughout the novel, unlike Norah, who becomes educated, and Dick, who integrates in the community as an estate manager.[569] On the contrary, Glover asserts that Arthur undergoes a process of self-development, likewise Norah does, insofar he learns from his experiences and becomes "the heroic leader of his adopted community".[570] Similarly, Daly states that Arthur's experiences allow him "a form of heroic subjectivity unavailable to him in England" and the Irish colony represents for him "a space for epic".[571]

As regards female characters, instead, imperial romance used to treat them as passive love-objects, compared to the active male protagonists. However, during Stoker's time, the literature about the New Woman assigned determination and independence to the feminine gendered characters. For instance, when Black Murdock

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[565] L. C. Buchelt, "'Delicate Fantasy' and 'Vulgar Reality': Undermining Romance and Complicating Identity in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 119.
[566] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 76.
[567] *Idem*, p. 256.
[568] *Idem*, p. 124.
[569] *Ibidem*.
[570] D. Glover, *Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1996, cit., p. 49.
[571] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 59.

visits the Joyces to express his will of marrying Norah and the conversation results in a quarrel, she takes the floor with "a voice which there was no gainsaying"[572] and "The scorn in her voice made even Murdock wince, and seemed to cool both Joyce and myself, and also Dick, who now stood beside us".[573] The fact that Norah does not represent the typical woman of Arthur's experience is evident in the passage when he sees her sitting on the top of the hill:

> For my pains I only saw a back, and that back presented in the most ungainly way of which graceful woman is capable. She was seated on the ground, not even raised upon a stone. Her knees were raised to the level of her shoulders, and her outstretched arms confined her legs below the knees - she was, in fact, in much the same attitude as boys are at games of cock-fighting. And yet there was something very touching in the attitude - something of self-oblivion so complete that I felt a renewed feeling of guiltiness as an intruder. - Whether her reasons be aesthetic, moral, educational, or disciplinary, no self-respecting woman ever sits in such a manner when a man is by.[574]

Arthur is not used to see a woman sitting in the way Norah is, therefore, he experiences discomfort. Norah's "ungainly" posture in sitting directly on the ground, crouched "as boys are at games of cock-fighting", outlines her association with manly features, lacking femininity and grace. However, he recognises "something very touching" in that scene, "something of self-oblivion" that might represent Norah's subjectivity and distinctiveness from the usual figure of women that he was familiar with. To conclude, compared to the fictional women of adventure romance and those of the New Woman literature, Norah Joyce seems to adhere to both roles: while being Arthur's love-object and a devoted daughter to her father, she demonstrates bravery by saving the Englishman from the bog, so much so that Arthur raises a monument to praise her heroism:

> On the spot where she had rescued me we had reared a great stone - a monolith whereon a simple legend told the story of a woman's strength and bravery. Round its base were sculptured the history of the mountain from its legend of the King of the Snakes down to the lost treasure and the rescue of myself. This was all carried out under Dick's eye. The legend on the stone was:
>
> NORAH JOYCE
> A BRAVE WOMAN
> on this spot
> by her Courage and Devotion
> saved a man's life.[575]

[572] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 175.
[573] *Ibidem*, p. 175.
[574] *Idem*, pp. 72-73.
[575] *Idem*, p. 246.

In this passage, Norah's braveness is celebrated; yet it seems that - similarly to other female characters such as Mina Harker in *Dracula*, Ustane in *She*, and Foulata in *King Solomon's Mines* - the powerful values inherent to the New Woman exist only to be put in the service of men.[576] Indeed, this is clearly evident when Norah comes back from her European studies and implores Arthur to answer a question: "Mr. Severn! Are you satisfied with me?",[577] as if she wanted to get cultured only to satisfy the Englishman.

Another discrepancy from the generic characterisation of women in romance is relevant to Norah's physical description: Arthur depicts her as having dark complexion and exotic features. The Englishman considers her physical qualities:

> How lovely she was! I had heard that along the west coast of Ireland there are traces of Spanish blood and Spanish beauty; and here was a living evidence of the truth of the hearsay. Not even at sunset in the parades of Madrid or Seville, could one see more perfect beauty of Spanish type - beauty perhaps all the more perfect for being tempered with northern calm. As I said, she was tall and beautifully proportioned. […] Luxuriant black eyebrows were arched over large black-blue eyes swept by curling lashes of extraordinary length, and showed off the beauty of a rounded, ample forehead - somewhat sunburnt, be it said.[578]

Such a description aligns Norah with Iberian ancestors, rather than Scythian ones.[579] In order to give a brief explanation, when Celticism emerged in the nineteenth century, Irish origins were studied by two main theories: one stated that the Celts descended from the Scythians, the barbaric Eurasian nomads, who migrated westward across Eastern Europe; while the other theory contended that the Celts descended from the Phoenicians, who migrated northward by sea and thus coming across the Iberian peninsula.[580] Arthur portrays Norah's face as "somewhat sunburnt", yet "northern", as if he wishes to reclaim a noble Mediterranean heritage for her, rather than a barbaric one.

Norah's darkness in her complexion and hair becomes the object of some of the various and hilarious jokes that Andy addresses to Arthur:

> "Ah! Eyes like darkness on the bosom of the azure deep!" "Musha! but that's a quare kind iv eye fur a girrul to have intirely! Is she to be all dark, surr, or only the hair of her?" "I don't mean a nigger, Andy!" I thought I would be even with him for once in a way. He laughed heartily. "Oh! my but that's a good wan. Be the hokey, a girrul can be dark enough for any man widout bein' a naygur. Glory be to God, but I niver seen a faymale naygur meself, but I suppose there's such barrin' naygurs, must she be all

[576] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 52.
[577] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 257.
[578] *Idem*, pp. 73-74.
[579] N. M. Cantwell, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[580] A. Bell-Fialkoff, "The Celts", in A. Bell-Fialkoff A. (ed.), *The Role of Migration in the History of the Eurasian Steppe,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, pp. 105-115.

> dark?" "Well, not of necessity, but I certainly prefer what we call a brunette." "A bru-net. What's that now? I've heerd a when o' quare things in me time, but I niver heerd a woman called that before."[581]

Andy ironically discusses Arthur's concept of beauty. Both the Irish cart driver and the English gentleman associate darkness to "naygurs", yet Arthur underlines Norah's difference from a "nigger" by saying that she is a "brunette". In addition, the emphasis on the exclamation "I don't mean a nigger, Andy!" reveals how much Arthur desires to ennoble Norah's physical aspect - even if some racism underlies his statement.

The Snake's Pass functions as a Gothic novel because of its intersecting themes of romance, transgression, usurpation, haunting, and murder; all of which are accompanied by a sense of the supernatural and lore. Stoker relies on the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the Gothic form to work out his conflicting views about nationalism and land development. Precisely, I assume that the novel adheres to "terror Gothic", rather than to "horror Gothic". Indeed, the first subgenre concerns characters dealing with anxiety, suspense, and fear of threats; while the second one involves characters acting with dissolution, vice, and violation of social norms and common sense.

One of the main and noteworthy characteristics of the novel is doubleness, or the binary system, that is present in various elements and situations. According to the topics involved, this feature can be occasionally interpreted as interchangeability, duplicity, overlap, but also opposition. Actually, dualism and contrast are central aspects of the Gothic form, which constantly embraces the connections among the supernatural and natural, modern and atavistic, civilised and barbaric, real and fictional, rational and fantastic. Specifically, in *The Snake's Pass*, some of the most remarkable relations include Ireland/Britain, Anglo/Celtic, feminine/masculine, Norah/Bog, landowner/tenant, past/future, modern/atavistic, civilised/barbaric, modernisation/tradition, human/non-human, history/legend, sublime/distasteful, peasant/tourist, and supernatural/natural. It is outstanding how Stoker managed to combine opposing perspectives without giving a subjective criticism: as an example, Arthur's attitude may both be considered benevolent and cruel.

One of the most remarkable instances of doubleness is given by the connection between Arthur Severn and Stoker: the protagonist, indeed, appears to be the author's

[581] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 101.

autobiographical representative. First of all, from a certain point of view, they are both English and Irish at the same time. As a matter of fact, Stoker had Irish origins, but spent the most part of his life in England; Arthur is English in his birth and upbringing, but settles in Ireland, where he becomes a landowner. Both the two men, the real and the fictional one, appear to be more Anglo-Irish than exclusively English or Irish. Moreover, Arthur is an English blow-in in the west of Ireland, like Stoker in England. Speaking of this, both men share a sort of in-betweenness between their double identity.[582] In a passage, Arthur admits to feeling like an "outsider",[583] a sensation that probably Stoker experienced in England. Besides, Arthur is an orphan, "[he] was only a very small boy when [his parents] were lost in a fog when crossing the Channel",[584] and has no contacts with the rest of his family (except for his aunt): "My father had been pretty well cut off by his family on account of his marriage with what they considered his inferior".[585] This double sense of isolation - his own orphan hood and his paternal family's abandon - as well as the inferiority of his mother's origins (Irish perhaps) render Arthur a member of the Anglo-Irish class, a rank that also Stoker shared.[586] In this way, both the protagonist and the author of the novel appear to be in conflict with their origins and identities. Notably, Arthur, the Englishman who is going to settle in Ireland with Norah, chooses Hythe as the place where they will marry, a village in Kent, on the southeast coast of England. Similarly, Stoker had his son Irving Noel Thornley baptised at Howth, even if all the family was living in England.

Moreover, the relationship between Arthur, Norah, and Dick appears to be similar to that between Stoker, his future wife Florence, and his friend Oscar Wilde; it might be that the author wanted to re-create a fictional love-triangle like that he experienced in his life. Indeed, Arthur loves Norah, the girl who is also beloved by his best friend Dick, but eventually she marries Arthur. Likewise, Florence's first romantic involvement was with Oscar Wilde, but she finally marries Stoker.

In addition, as already stated in Chapter 3, Stoker's adult physicality corresponded to the version of masculinity activated by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). In the novel, Arthur appreciates the physique of the sport boy, gathered with

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[582] S. D. Arata, *op. cit.,* p. 181.
[583] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 7.
[584] *Ibidem*.
[585] *Idem*, p. 6.
[586] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 61.

him and the other peasants at Mrs. Kelligan's shebeen, as "a powerful-looking young fellow in the orange and green jersey of the Gaelic Athletic Club",[587] and he admires the figures of the Irish workers who are helping Dick, who are "fine strapping young fellows interested in the work".[588] The Gaelic Athletic Club was one of the smaller, local hurling clubs in Connemara that predate the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).[589] Furthermore, Arthur himself is depicted as a heroic Englishman who embodies athletic masculinity: on several occasions, he knocked down Murdock, thanks to the skills he learnt on the playing fields; his physical prowess and self-confidence when he states: "I am man enough to do what is best for her",[590] convince Norah's father that he is the right man for his daughter. In sum, I contend that all of these examples perfectly support the idea that Arthur corresponds to the fictional representation of Stoker. Further, given the GAA's commitment to Irish self-legitimation and the adoration of the muscular male physique, it appears implied that Stoker symbolically bolstered the campaign for Irish Home Rule in his novel.

Another example of doubleness is given by the mountain that looms over the area that functions as background for the plot: it is known as both Knockcalltore (*Cnoch cailte óir* / Hill of the Lost Gold) and Knockcalltecrore (*Cnoch cailte cróin óir* / Hill of the Lost Golden Crown). In addition, Black Murdock and Phelim Joyce swap their property, or rather, the gombeen man manages to seize Phelim's farm with a low blow; therefore, Murdock eventually owns Joyce's land and vice versa, a circumstance that turns out to be particularly significant when Phelim's former dwelling is swept away by the bog. Another example of duality is represented by Arthur's beloved, Norah: for a great deal of time, he is attracted by the nameless lady whom he occasionally meets on Knocknacar, without realising that she is the fascinating peasant girl called Norah, whose beauty is continuously extolled by Andy, but whom Arthur thought he has not met yet, as he reveals: "[Joyce's] daughter! I do not remember her."[591] Eventually, it turned out that these two women are one and the same person. Moreover, Andy

[587] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 15.
[588] *Idem*, p. 93.
[589] L. C. Buchelt (ed.), *The Snake's Pass: A Critical Edition (Irish Studies)*, New York: Syracuse University Press, Kindle Edition, 2015, p. 28.
[590] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 147.
[591] *Idem*, p. 46.

repeatedly jokes about Arthur's interest in the nameless girl as an interest in the bog, revealing every now and then the encoded connection between Norah and the bog:

> Andy, like all humourists, understood human nature, and summed up the situation conclusively in his reply - inconsequential though it was: - "Shure yer 'an'r can thrust me; it's blind or deaf an' dumb I am, an' them as knows me knows I'm not the man to go back on a young gintleman goin' to luk at a bog. Sure doesn't all young min do that same? I've been there meself times out iv mind! There's nothin' in the wurrld foreninst it! Lukin' at bogs is the most intherestin' thin' I knows."[592]

Arthur is fascinated by both Norah and the bog; apparently, what is mesmerising about them is their inscrutability and unknowability. Arthur is not only charmed, but also frustrated, as they stand out of his knowledge and comprehension. Norah and the bog symbolise the inaccessible Other, so much foreign and thus uncontrollable to Arthur: the bog's murkiness and unfathomableness, given by its liminal texture, reflect Norah's inscrutability and mysterious subjectivity, given by her nationality and social status. On many occasions throughout the novel, Andy deploys metaphors to match Norah and the bog, and he finally tries to open Arthur's eyes on the real identity of his unnamed beloved girl by using the word "bog" as a metaphor:

> "Any luck, yer 'an'r, wid bogs today?" I know I got red as I answered: - "Oh, I don't know! Yes! a little - not much." "Shure an' I'm glad to hear it, surr! But I might have known be the luk iv ye and be yer shtep. Faix! it's aisy known whin a man has been lucky wid bogs!" The latter sentence was spoken in a pronounced "aside." Dick laughed, for although he was not in the secret he could see that there was some fun intended. I did not like his laugh, and said hotly - "I don't understand you, Andy!" "Is it undershtand me ye don't do? Well, surr, if I've said anythin' that I shouldn't, I ax yer pardon. Bogs isn't to be lightly shpoke iv at all, at all!" then, after a pause: - "Poor Miss Norah!" "What do you mean?" said I. "Shure, yer 'an'r, I was only pityin' the poor crathur. Poor thing, but this'll be a bitther blow to her intirely!" The villain was so manifestly acting a part, and he grinned at me in such a provoking way, that I got quite annoyed. "Andy, what do you mean? Out with it!" I said hotly. "Mane, yer 'an'r? Sure nawthin'. All I mane is, poor Miss Norah! Musha, but it'll be the sore thrial to her. Bad cess to Knocknacar anyhow!" "This is infernal impertinence! Here - " I was stopped by Dick's hand on my breast: - "Easy, easy, old chap! What is this all about? Don't get angry, old man. Andy is only joking, whatever it is. I'm not in the secret myself, and so can give no opinion; but there is a joke somewhere. Don't let it go beyond a joke."[593]

Nevertheless, Arthur does not understand the subtle irony and comparison underling Andy's words. Dick, instead, perceives Andy's pun and tries to calm down his friend who wrongly feels mistreated and offended.

If Norah mirrors the bog, which represents a typical Irish ecosystem, then she also exemplifies Ireland, and this in some way confirms the English stereotypical vision

[592] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., pp. 46-47.
[593] *Idem*, p. 88.

that gives Ireland a female identity and England a male personality. With respect to this, the motif of inter-ethnic marriage gets a wider perspective: Arthur and Norah's union turns out to be a political alliance which will likely solve the Anglo-Irish conflict. Both the bog and Norah represent a possible danger, the one that jeopardises human life and the other that defies the virility of an Englishman (for instance, Norah devaluates her union with Arthur through her insistence on not publicly celebrating either their engagement or marriage). Moreover, Norah and the bog precisely take the same period - two years - to evolve. During the time Norah attended school in Paris, Dresden, and Brighton to become an educated lady, the bog stops of shifting and expanding, and finally recedes. In so doing, they both have undergone a similar draining process: the bog is finally controlled by the scientific and technological projects carried out by Dick, as well as Norah is eventually deprived of her Irish lack of education by the European schooling. In this, the union between Norah and Arthur, respective representations for Ireland and England, leads to positive effects for both the bog and the Irish lady. Lastly, when Arthur purchases Knockcalltecrore and marries Norah, it seems as though he purchases also Norah: these two occurrences correspond to two acquisitions, with the consequent subordination, and confirm the interchangeability of Norah and the bog. Similarly, both these acquirements enhance Arthur's wealth and status: the bog increases his riches, while Norah reinforces his status in Irish social system.

Differently from those who underpin the equivalence between Norah and the bog, Daly claims that the two characters, rather than being equalised in one single element, represent the two opposite sides of the same coin: Norah is the desirable object of the colonial project; while the bog is the undesirable one (together with Black Murdock).[594] In addition, Daly proposes that Arthur's rescue by Norah and their marriage function as releasing events that free Norah from being associated with the bog.[595]

Dreams are a frequent motif in the Gothic genre, and they appear in the novel through Arthur. He wants to carry out the development of the bog, but his dreams, or rather nightmares, manifest a sort of dread coupled with anxiety. He exclaims "There

[594] N. Daly, "Irish Roots: The Romance of History in Bram Stoker's *The Snake's Pass*", cit., p. 66.
[595] *Idem*, p. 66.

was a curse on the hill!”,[596] as he is frightened by the future consequences of his plan to industrialise the bog for his personal benefit. The English gentleman recalls:

> That night again I kept dreaming - dreaming in the same nightmare fashion as before. But although the working of my imagination centred round Knockcalltecrore and all it contained, and although I suffered dismal tortures from the hideous dreams of ruin and disaster which afflicted me, I did not on this occasion arouse the household.[597]

Arthur is constantly divided between his materialistic desire of transforming Irish land to take advantage from it for commercial use, and his aesthetic desire of preserving the delightful landscape to embrace personal pleasure. Likewise, Arthur’s fear expresses Stoker’s angst: the bog is depicted as a commodity and yet a fertile land, highlighting the contrast between modernisation and conservation. In the novel, Stoker makes Arthur’s unconsciousness arise from his nightmares as a warning. At some point, Arthur realises it: “These terrible dreams - whensoever they came - must not have come in vain! The grim warning must not be despised!”.[598] Furthermore, referring to his distress, Arthur says “I was a sort of Mazeppa in the world of dreams.”[599] *Mazeppa* might remind two references: one is an opera composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in 1883, based on *Poltava*, a narrative poem by Alexander Pushkin, which was a tale about crazy love, abduction, persecution, execution, vengeance, and murder; the other one is the romantic poem *Mazeppa* (1819) by Lord Byron, in which a young page, Mazeppa, has a love affair with a countess at the court where he serves, but is eventually discovered by the countess’s husband, and brutally punished. Both these two references employ some of the themes - such as love, torment, fright, and death - also present in *The Snake's Pass.* For instance, in this passage Arthur remembers:

> Again and again the fatal Hill and all its mystic and terrible associations haunted me! - Again the snakes writhed around and took terrible forms! Again she I loved was in peril! Again Murdock seemed to arise in new forms of terror and wickedness! Again the lost treasure was sought under terrible conditions; and once again I seemed to sit on the table-rock with Norah, and to see the whole mountain rush down on us in a dread avalanche, and turn to myriad snakes as it came! And again Norah seemed to call to me, “Help! Help! Arthur! Save me! Save me!” And again, as was most natural, I found myself awake on the floor of my room - not scream - wet and shivering with some nameless terror, and with Norah’s despairing cry in my ears.[600]

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[596] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 210.
[597] *Idem*, p. 223.
[598] *Idem,* p. 227.
[599] *Idem,* p. 226.
[600] *Idem,* pp. 226-227.

For Arthur, the bog represents both danger and investment at the same time. His words "to see the whole mountain rush down on us in a dread avalanche" synthetize either the foreshadowing of a possible catastrophe that will eventually occur later in the novel or the foretelling of the effects of the bog reclamation. It is also remarkable that Norah asks him for help, considering the associations among Norah, the bog, and Ireland: her request is representative of the need for help that also Ireland and its territory have.

Transgression is another Gothic trope employed in the novel. The character more committed to this theme is Black Murdock, who violates moral values - such as respect and virtue - as well as the law of nature. He pursues the treasure hunt of the chest of gold at the expense of the Joyces and the environment. All of his actions are fulfilled exclusively for his own profit: he wrests away Phelim Joyce's dwelling and land; he lends money to his neighbours, yet later asks for huge interest rates; he does not hesitate to destroy and modify the landscape to find the gold. Murdock is the kind of person the Irish need to get rid of, as he is a betrayer of both his compatriots and the Catholics, a merciless usurer uninterested in the good of the community and focused only on his own enrichment. The moneylender represents a reincarnation of the legendary King of the Snakes, who was banished by Saint Patrick but returned in the shape of the shifting bog, as Arthur depicts him in his "grim warning" nightmare:

> When my dreams began, […] at its summit was the giant Snake, […] whose face and form kept perpetually changing to those of Murtagh Murdock. […] the whole Mountain seemed to writhe and shake as though the great Snake was circling round it, deep under the earth; and again this movement changed into the shifting of the bog. […] suddenly Murdock's evil face, borne on a huge serpent body, writhed up beside us.[601]

In this passage, two metaphors clearly arise: like the legendary King of the Snakes demanded the annual sacrifice of a live baby, Murdock is a middleman who does not hesitate to sacrifice paupers for his greed; like the shifting bog that appears firm on surface, yet it is mutable beneath, Murdock seems a solidly masculine figure, yet capable of transforming and changing shape, depending on the situation, thus never showing his real identity.

On several occasions, Dick warns Murdock about the dangers of the bog and the catastrophic consequences that his search for treasure would cause, but the moneylender is deaf in his obsessive pursuit of riches. His greed for modifying the texture of the bog,

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[601] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., pp. 212-213.

in order to reduce the amount of water and thus dig it, leads to the opposite outcome: the bog paradoxically continues to rise and eventually slithers toward the ocean dragging Murdock into its pit. As a result, therefore, nature punishes the transgressor by using the same element that he has attempted to control.

However, Black Murdock is not the only one who violates environment: both Arthur and Dick aspire to handle the bog for commercial use, thereby enhancing their financial situation. At the outset, they are more interested in research and survey about this peculiar natural resource, above all Dick, the man of science. But later, after having purchased the areas of Shleenanaher and Knockcalltecrore to settle there, Arthur aims to reclaim the bog in order to get profit from it, as suggested by Dick:

> "Why, my dear fellow," [Dick] said, as he stood up and walked about the room, "it will make the most lovely residence in the world, and will be a fine investment for you. Holding long leases, you will easily be able to buy the freehold, and then every penny spent will return many fold. Let us once be able to find the springs that feed the bog, and get them in hand, and we can make the place a paradise. The springs are evidently high up on the hill, so that we cannot only get water for irrigating and ornamental purposes, but we can get power also! Why, you can have electric light, and everything else you like, at the smallest cost. And if it be, as I suspect, that there is a streak of limestone in the hill, the place might be a positive mine of wealth as well! We have not lime within fifty miles, and if once we can quarry the stone here we can do anything. We can build a harbour on the south side, which would be the loveliest place to keep a yacht in that ever was known - quite big enough for anything in these parts - as safe as Portsmouth, and of fathomless depth."[602]

At first, Dick ensures how that area can provide a comfortable residence, but later he introduces the option of exploiting it for commercial use through the limestone and a future harbour. Finally, they decide to proceed with their reclamation projects. Nevertheless, even though they transgress the ecological codes of nature, no negative consequence occurs to them. The reason of this, I argue, might be explained by the fact that Stoker intended to differentiate "positive" transgression from the "negative" one: all three of the characters aspire to manipulate the environment for personal benefit; however, Arthur and Dick's intentions will also provide progress and development for the land, while Murdock's desire aims only to a mere exploitation of the bog. In addition, Arthur and Dick decide to capitalize on the bog afterwards, for initially they did not realise its potential; while Murdock is obsessed by personal monetary gain from the very first moment and pushes his lust to excess. Briefly, as Hughes claims, Murdock

[602] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., pp. 182-183.

“functions as a negative Other”,[603] who stays in constant opposition to Arthur and all the elements that constitute Arthur’s identity as the coloniser. The gombeen man is tainted by such vices as corruption, avidity, selfishness, and depravity; while the two English gentlemen’s behaviour incorporates a combination between economic profit and environmental development. As Stoker suggests throughout his novel, Arthur and Dick’s agency embodies a satisfactory solution to the choice between conserving or destroying Irish rural landscape. Notably, according to Hughes, the fact that the villain of the novel is an Irish Catholic usurer suggests that Stoker considered Irish mismanagement as a cause for its own problems[604] and that the agency of an English “gentleman-pioneer”[605] could solve them. In doing so, Stoker seems to propose that, in contrast to Murdock’s Irish cruelty, Arthur and Dick’s English enterprise enacts a positive option. In fact, the harbour projected by Dick represents more a gateway that will connect Ireland to England rather than a border that will isolate and delimit Ireland.

Catastrophe is another theme that commonly appears in Gothic writing. In *The Snake's Pass,* catastrophe occurs, symbolically and materially, on many occasions: when Arthur’s parents die by drowning; when Arthur foretells the future avalanche in his nightmares; when Arthur sinks in the bog; when the bog spills down the hill; when Moynahan dies; when Murdock is swept away by the bog. In the novel, catastrophe assumes a special significance, for it represents the meeting point between history and legend, past and present (and implicitly future), along with modernization and atavism. Stoker employs this topic as a watershed which destroys old spatial and temporal realities and gives life to new representations of territory and time,[606] suggesting enhancement in a near future. Catastrophe propels changes in space and time and, in Stoker’s novel, evolution and progress go hand in hand with them. Cara Murray investigates how the relation between space and time is the keystone of all the developments in the plot.[607] For instance, in the first part of the novel, time is in the

[603] W. Hughes, “‘For Ireland’s Good’: The Reconstruction of Rural Ireland in Bram Stoker’s *The Snake’s Pass*”, cit., p. 19.
[604] W. Hughes, *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker’s Fiction and its Cultural Context*, London: Macmillan, 2000, cit., p. 63.
[605] D. Glover, “Reviewed Work: *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and Its Cultural Context* by William Hughes”, in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2, Winter 2002, pp. 355-357, p. 356.
[606] C. Murray, “Catastrophe and Development in the Adventure Romance”, in *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* Vol. 53, No. 2, ELT Press, 2010, pp. 150-169, p. 163.
[607] *Idem*, pp. 158-159.

hands of Murdock, who "has time on his side",[608] since he manages to dispossess Joyce's land because the poor landowner did not respect the established deadline to pay the usurer: "Phelim Joyce, I give ye formial notice that yer land was sould an' bought be me, for ye broke yer word to repay me the money lint ye before the time fixed".[609] In this way, Murdock's control of time allows him to possess space. He also owns Dick's time, since the engineer works for him. But later, Arthur manages to take time from the moneylender when he asks to buy his land: "I am willing to purchase the land - it to be given over to me at whatever time you may choose to name. Would a year suit you to make your investigations?"[610] and Murdock replies: ""A month'll do what I wanted; or, to be certain, say five weeks from today. But the money would have to be payed to the minit".[611] He precisely chose five weeks because Dick has preventively warned him that the bog would slide in six weeks, thus the land would become useless. Here, Murdock thinks that the catastrophe would work in his favour, but later he realises that the time was not enough to achieve his goal. He did not believe to Dick when the engineer warns him that the situation is quite dangerous and that the bog slide will cause the destruction of his house at any time:

> "I can see a danger, and a very distinct one, from what you are doing. Your house is directly in the track in which the bog has shifted at any time this hundred year; and if there should be another movement, I would not like to be in the house when the time comes".[612]

However, since the agreement with Arthur has been stipulated, the gombeen man, who has always considered time from now onward, starts to feel it as a countdown, from the future backward, for he has to find the treasure before the bog breaks loose. Indeed, Dick says to Arthur: "[the land] is yours after Murdock's time is up".[613] It is Arthur now who owns time, indeed he offers Murdock more time to find the treasure: "You can have a little more time if you like… I'll give you another month if you want it!".[614] Lastly, it is the bog-slide that puts an end to Murdock's time. Similarly, Arthur loses control of time when he negotiates with Phelim Joyce the date when he can marry Norah, and her father responds: ""Whin the threasure of Knockcalltecrore is found, thin

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[608] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 30.
[609] *Idem,* p. 31.
[610] *Idem,* p. 120.
[611] *Ibidem.*
[612] *Idem,* p. 166.
[613] *Idem,* p. 196.
[614] *Idem,* p. 148.

ye may claim her if ye will, an' I'll freely let her go!".[615] Nevertheless, the treasure is never found by the will of any of the characters, but thanks to the catastrophe, after the bog slides down the hill. In short, all these examples show how the close connection between time and space activates fundamental steps as the narrative unfolds.

I would like to close this chapter through Daly's words, which in my opinion best fit with a proper and exhaustive conclusion to all the analysis and speculations that can be done about *The Snake's Pass*: "the novel ultimately makes readers see how any attempt at a 'whole' reading must be doomed to failure."[616] As Buchelt contends, Stoker's multi-layered narrative ultimately leaves readers uncertain as to whether the novel endorses or critiques his depictions of identity, gender, nationality, ethnic stereotype, nationalism, and colonialism.[617]

[615] B. Stoker, *The Snake's Pass*, cit., p. 148.
[616] N. Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture*, cit., p. 82.
[617] L. C. Buchelt, "'Being of Ireland' An Introduction to Bram Stoker's Irish Novel", cit., p. XII.

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