

**CULTURAL NATIONALISM AND COLONIALISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY
IRISH HORROR FICTION**

by

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SUMMARY

This thesis will explore how writers of nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction, namely short stories and novels, used their works to express the social, cultural, and political events of the period. My thesis will employ a New Historicist approach to discuss the effects of colonialism on the writings, as well as archetypal criticism to analyse the mythic origins of the relevant metaphors. The structuralism of Tzvetan Todorov will be used to discuss the notion of the works' appeal as supernatural or possibly realistic works. The theory of Mikhail Bakhtin is used to discuss the writers' linguistic choices because such theory focuses on how language can lead to conflicts amongst social groups.

The introduction is followed by Chapter One, "Ireland as England's Fantasy." This chapter discusses Ireland's literary stereotype as a fantasyland. The chapter also gives an overview of Ireland's history of occupation and then contrasts the bucolic, magical Ireland of fiction and the bleak social conditions of much of nineteenth-century Ireland.

Chapter Two, "Mythic Origins", analyses the use of myth in nineteenth-century horror stories. The chapter discusses the merging of Christianity and Celtic myth; I then discuss the early Irish belief in evil spirits in myths that eventually inspired horror literature.

Chapter Three, "Church versus Big House, Unionist versus Nationalist," analyses how the conflicts of Church/Irish Catholicism vs. Big House/Anglo-Irish landlordism, pro-British Unionist vs. pro-Irish Nationalist are manifested in the tales. In this chapter, I argue that many Anglo-Irish writers present stern anti-Catholic attitudes, while both Anglo-Irish

and Catholic writers use the genre as political propaganda. Yet the authors tend to display Home Rule or anti-Home Rule attitudes rather than religious loyalties in their stories.

The final chapter of the thesis, "A Heteroglossia of British and Irish Linguistic and Literary Forms," deals with the use of language and national literary styles in Irish literature of this period. I discuss Bakhtin's notion of *heteroglossia* and its applications to the Irish novel; such a discussion because nineteenth-century Ireland was linguistically Balkanised, with Irish Gaelic, Hiberno-English, and British English all in use. This chapter is followed by a conclusion.

Key terms:

Irish literature; Victorian literature; Horror literature; Romanticism; Postcolonial literary theory; Imperialism; Myth; Ireland, political and social history; Language and literature; Nineteenth-century British Empire

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INTRODUCTION

I have chosen to write a thesis arguing that nineteenth-century Irish horror literature, including both novels and short stories, reflects support for and disenchantment with colonialism and cultural nationalism. I must admit that my initial interest in this subject stemmed from the fact that I enjoy reading such works. I am also aware that my liking for the works analysed in this thesis led me to seek a deeper meaning behind them, as I asked “Why do some of these works sound so ‘British’ and have British settings if they were written by Irish authors? Why are Catholics so frequently maligned? Why are Irish characters portrayed so frequently as superstitious fools? Why is horror literature so conducive to the expression of political and social commentary through metaphor?” As I began to look for the answers to these questions, I observed that Ireland has frequently been overlooked in other studies of colonial and postcolonial literature; this observation solidified my decision to devote my thesis to my chosen topic. Due to the island's centuries of occupation and exploitation by the British, it deserves further exploration in the context of colonial/postcolonial literary studies.

Declan Kiberd writes that “a recent study of theory and practice in postcolonial literature, *The Empire Writes Back*, passes over the Irish case very swiftly, perhaps because the authors find these white Europeans too strange an instance to justify their sustained attention.”¹ When discussing Commonwealth literature in *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, Elleke Boehmer does mention Ireland but qualifies the island's

inclusion by saying, "Ireland...is believed to represent a different case because its history has been so closely and so long linked to that of Britain. However, as its resistance struggle was in certain other colonies taken as talismatic by nationalist movements, occasional references to Ireland will be made in the course of this study."²

I agree with Boehmer's assertion that Ireland is a unique case, but I would also state that the experience of every colony, whether it be Ireland, Canada, India or Ghana, is unique, due to differences, even if slight, in terms of colonial administration, attitudes, means of resistance, ethnic composition and cultural expression. Furthermore, I do not think that Ireland would qualify as an exception simply because of its geographical proximity to Britain and the comparatively longer relationship between the two countries. At the same time, I realise that this proximity, as well as Ireland's 122-year status within the United Kingdom would lead some individuals, especially lay-people, to consider Ireland as part of Britain and not a colony. The fact that most literature, until very recently, was controlled and consumed by the Anglo-Irish Establishment, referring to the Protestant landlord socio-economic class, who, for centuries benefited from British rule and were of British extraction, also confounds the notions of imperialism and colonisation. Another dilemma in analysing Ireland as a distinct colony stems from the fact that, during an age of national language movements, most Irish citizens willingly adopted English and continued to speak it long after the withdrawal of British occupation from Eire [independent Ireland]. Perhaps, and I state this most tentatively, Ireland was

¹ Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) 4-5.

² Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 4.

Britain's prototype for further experiments in colonisation and cultural usurpation elsewhere in the world.

Whilst Ireland may be viewed as a First World European civilisation, its culture, especially with respect to literature may also, perhaps paradoxically, be viewed as sharing characteristics with those of so-called emerging Third World nations. On one hand, Irish literature stems from an ancient oral tradition, like most, if not all the literatures of Europe. Just as Classical Greek and Mediaeval British epics were derived from oral myth, Irish literature, at least in Irish Gaelic, is a by-product of pre-literate Celtic myths, a subject to which I shall return. Peter Berresford Ellis argues that "contained in many of the stories are voices from the dawn of European civilisation, for the Celts were one of the great founding peoples of Europe."³ Whilst one might argue that Celtic Irish civilisation was perhaps diluted through the addition of Old Norse, Norman French, and British elements, one need only remember that British civilisation is a blend of the same elements. Indeed, the language of Shakespeare, the British Empire, and Churchill owes its existence to an Anglo-Saxon/Norman French patois.⁴ Furthermore, Irish-born writers from medieval monks to Yeats to Gaelic modernists have contributed to the great annals of Irish literature, perhaps as vibrant as any 'First World' European literature.

On the other hand, Irish literature, as a written culture, for centuries resembled a "Third World" colonial literature. Following the British attempts at Anglicisation, for centuries, the emerging literary tradition became written by and consumed by the British and Anglo-Irish elites. Yet one might argue that these writings were also Irish. Seamus

Deane argues that the artificially grafted Anglo-Irish literary tradition indeed belongs to Irish tradition. He writes that “there is no dispute about the integrity of this literary tradition in the English language.”⁵ Yet Deane also asserts the difficulties in assessing this coloniser/colonised dichotomy, conceding that “the Irish experience, in all its phases, has led to an enhanced sense of the frailty of the assumptions which underlie any working system of the civilisation and of the need to create, by a persistent effort, the enabling fictions which win for it the necessary degree of acceptance.”⁶

Boehmer clarifies that that one of the basic assumptions of her work on colonial and postcolonial literature is that “cultural representations were central first to the process of colonizing other lands and then to the process of obtaining independence from the colonizer. To assume control over a territory or a nation was not only to exert political or economic power; it was also to have imaginative command.”⁷ Ireland certainly fits the definition of a colony, as this thesis will argue, because Britain not only used Ireland to its economic advantage, but it used (and abused) the Irish people to fit the whims of the collective British imagination, if such an imagination is assumed to exist, given the diversity of British subjects and ideas.

Perhaps some critics are hesitant to treat Irish literature as a valid example of colonial or postcolonial writing because the Irish are, for the most part, white Europeans. When I was an undergraduate during the early 1990s, and the idea of “political correctness” was

³ Peter Berresford Ellis, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. (New York: Oxford Press, 1992) 1.

⁴ See Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language* (New York: Appleton- Century-Cross, 1953)

⁵ Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. Notre Dame Press, 1994) 7.

⁶ Deane 8.

very much in vogue, I would hear the thoughts and works of “dead white males” being criticised, if not wholly dismissed, because they were not considered to representative of global cultures and history as a whole. Whilst I firmly support inclusiveness and multiculturalism, I do not think that the experiences or expression of a certain group of people should be dismissed because said people happen to “look like” a suspected or proven oppressor. Indeed, I believe that many “dead white males” (and females) throughout Irish history, far from being the oppressors, were on the other side of the colonial fence. This example demonstrates that it is indeed possible for members of one race to colonise and exploit other members of the same race.

The notion that the cosmetic, or even the deeper distinctions between oppressor and oppressed/coloniser and colonised are often blurry and thus inaccurate is the focus of Jean-Paul Sartre’s introduction to Albert Memmi’s *The Coloniser and the Colonised*. Sartre explains,

I said that I was a Tunisian national. Like all other Tunisians, I was treated as a second-class citizen, deprived of political rights, refused admission to most civil service departments, etc. But I was not a Moslem. In a country where so many groups, each jealous of its own physiognomy, lived side by side, this was of considerable importance. The Jewish population identified as much with the colonizers as with the colonized.”⁸

Sartre, who at times reveals his Marxist beliefs, then expounds upon his observations that the Jews of Tunisia, whilst certainly subject to discrimination, identified culturally with the French, especially the French of Algeria, and were thankful that the Tunisian Jewish population did not belong to “the mass of Moslems which constituted

⁷ Boehmer 5.

the base of the pyramid.”⁹ Although Sartre was neither Irish nor British, his experience as a Jewish Tunisian exemplifies the confounding dilemmas critics and students of colonialism face when trying to interpret the relationships and dynamics between colonisers, colonists, and the colonised (these terms will be clarified in the course of the thesis). I believe that a parallel might be drawn to the Irish experience. On one hand, the Irish were and white and “looked” like their British oppressors; the Irish Celts, like the Anglo-Saxon English, were both speakers of Indo-European languages and, I might add, belonged to the panorama of European cultures. On the other land, the Irish suffered of legal and social discrimination and were dispossessed of their land and indigenous culture.

Elsewhere in Sartre’s introduction, the author discusses the book’s audience and the groups that have identified with the political and cultural struggles described within the text. Sartre writes, “It was clear that the book would be utilized by well-defined colonized people-Algerians, Moroccans, African Negroes. But other peoples, subjugated in other ways-certain South Americans, Japanese and American Negroes-interpreted and used the book. The most recent to find a similarity to their own form of alienation have been the French Canadians.”¹⁰ The French Canadians, in my opinion, serve as an even more astonishing, potentially confusing example of the relationship between coloniser and colonised because they were colonisers in their own right. Indeed, after colonising the Canadian aborigines and turning them into second-class citizens, they faced an

⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, introduction. *The Coloniser and the Colonised*. By Albert Memmi. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991) xiii-xiv.

⁹ Sartre xiv.

¹⁰ Sartre xi.

analogous, but not identical fate at the hands of the British. Hence, the concepts of the coloniser and colonised can be colourblind, and white Europeans can, in some instances, be considered to be victims of the system. This thesis will argue that the Irish have been such victims and that their literary expression deserves to be interpreted not only as European, but also colonial/postcolonial literature.

The “victimisation” of the Irish perhaps becomes clearer after the situation of the Irish, not as a European, but as a colonial, people is examined more closely. In *The Coloniser and the Colonised*, Memmi provides paradigms of colonisation and colonialism. Without attempting to comment exhaustively on these paradigms, I believe that it might be useful to give a few examples to better solidify my argument. Memmi himself admits that “naturally, not all Europeans in the colonies [here Memmi is referring mainly to colonies in Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Americas]. Many of them are victims of the masters of colonization, exploited by these masters in order to protect interests which do not often coincide with their own.”¹¹ This model may be used to interpret the dwindling power of the Anglo-Irish Protestants, largely descended from English and French settlers and historically supportive of the Crown. J.C. Beckett writes that “before 1800, the Irish protestants had some direct control, however imperfect, of their own destiny and the destiny of the country; after 1800...their power of independent action was gone.”¹² Furthermore, the Act of Union of 1800, which united Great Britain and Ireland and will be explained in greater detail in the thesis, was defended by Unionists who said

¹¹ Albert Memmi, *The Coloniser and the Colonised*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991) 10.

¹² J.C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland: 1603-1923*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975) 287.

“that it would make Ireland prosperous.”¹³ Whilst Ireland did benefit from the Union to some degree, it produced “conditions in which economic weaknesses...were particularly damaging to Irish prosperity.”¹⁴

Memmi’s paradigms also include the creation of stereotypes. Memmi explains that “the traits ascribed to the colonized are incompatible with one another, though this does not bother his prosecutor. He is depicted as frugal, sober, without many desires and, at the same time, he consumes disgusting quantities of meat, fat, alcohol, anything; as a coward who is afraid of suffering and as a brute who is not checked by any inhibitions of civilization.”¹⁵ Much of this thesis is dedicated to the supposition that such contradictory stereotypes were attributed to the Irish. Kiberd, whose ideas regarding Irish stereotypes will be repeated in the first chapter since they are germane to the discussion of “Ireland as England’s Fantasyland,” writes that “the struggle for self-definition is conducted within language, and the English, coming from the stronger society, knew that they would be the lords of language. Few of their writers considered, even for a passing moment, that the Irish might have a case for their resistance...the two major Irish stereotypes on the English national stage embody those polarities of feeling; on the one hand, the threatening, vainglorious soldier, and, on the other, the feckless but cheerily reassuring servant.”¹⁶ Interestingly, the Irish, like other victims of colonisation and colonialism, used these stereotypes to reassert their own identity. This reversal will also be discussed in the thesis.

¹³ Beckett 289.

¹⁴ Beckett 289.

¹⁵ Memmi 83.

¹⁶ Kiberd 11-12.

Memmi discusses the subordination of the colony's indigenous language to that of the colonising nation or even the complete loss of the indigenous language, as another of his paradigms. He writes, "the colonized's mother tongue, that which is sustained by his feelings, emotions and dreams, that in which his tenderness and wonder are expressed, thus that which holds the greatest emotional impact, is precisely the one which is the least value."¹⁷ Memmi continues by stating that the indigenous language "has no stature in the country or in the concert of peoples. If [the colonized] wants to obtain a job, make a place for himself, exist in the community and the world, he must first bow to the language of his master."¹⁸ The Irish experience might be perceived as the epitome of Memmi's model, as Irish Gaelic suffered greatly over the centuries of colonisation and probably will never regain the prominence it once held on the island. Although this thesis focuses on nineteenth-century developments, it is worthwhile to note that Irish Gaelic had been in retreat as early as the seventeenth century. As early as the first few decades of the seventeenth century, "among the upper classes...the use of the English language made great progress; and though they no doubt remained more at home in Irish, it is probable that by the end of James's reign most of them spoke English as well."¹⁹ By the nineteenth century, English had made even greater advances and threatened the very existence of Irish Gaelic. During the 1800s, the Irish national schools, praised for reducing illiteracy rates, discouraged "the use of the Irish language: in 1831 the Irish-speaking population probably numbered between 1,000,000 and 1,500,00; after fifty

¹⁷ Memmi 107.

¹⁸ Memmi 107.

¹⁹ Beckett 37.

years of national education it had shrunk into insignificance.”²⁰ I shall return to this discussion in the fourth chapter of my thesis.

In contrast to the gloomy forecast offered by Memmi with regard to indigenous languages, he affirms “the indisputable and indisputable hold of a deep-rooted and formal religion.”²¹ He writes that “with its institutional network, its collective and periodic holidays, religion constitutes [a] refuge value, both for the individual and for the group. For the individual, it is one of those rare paths of retreat; for the group, it is one of the rare manifestations which can protect its original existence.”²² Much like in India, efforts in Ireland to convert the bulk of the population to the religion of the colonisers failed, for the most part. Throughout its centuries of occupation, Ireland remained a primarily Roman Catholic country; “there was little zeal for the spread of the reformed faith, and no one to direct such zeal as there was.”²³ Beckett explains that “the Roman Catholic clergy were numerous, zealous, and efficient. Their main task was to restore discipline and maintain the ecclesiastical framework; and this they did so effectively that whatever chance the reformed church may have had of capturing the Irish people was, by the beginning of James’s reign, irretrievably lost.”²⁴ The continued power and influence of the Catholic Church subsequently became a major source of conflict between the British [and Anglo-Irish] and the Irish Catholic masses.

²⁰ Beckett 313.

²¹ Memmi 100.

²² Memmi 101.

²³ Beckett 39.

Memmi, moreover, addresses economic injustices inflicted upon the colony as one of his paradigms. He states that “what is clear is that colonization weakens the colonized and that all those weaknesses contribute to one another. Nonindustrialisation and the absence of technical development in the country lead to a slow economic collapse of the colonized. This collapse threatens the standard of living of the colonized, keeping the technician from existing and the artisan from perfecting himself and his creations.”²⁵

Whilst Ireland did receive some economic preferential treatment from Britain during the nineteenth century and an industrial class did exist in Ireland at that time, the country was, at the same time, exploited by Britain. Beckett claims that

money was...being drained out of Ireland...throughout a great part of the [nineteenth] century...and this loss of capital was not compensated for by any inflow of British investments...British capitalists knew little about Ireland, save that it was poor, and frequently disturbed; they saw no prospect either of a quick return, or of substantial profits to compensate for the delay and the risk of loss; and the capital that might have transformed the economic life of Ireland went elsewhere.”²⁶

Furthermore, Irish industries were faced with more highly-developed competitors in Britain, and this inequality contributed to Ireland’s poverty.

For the purposes of this thesis, these comparisons are of vital importance because they were expressed in Irish literature, and more specifically, Irish horror literature, of the nineteenth century. The lack of power felt by the Anglo-Irish and their consequential alienation from both the British and the Irish Catholics is expressed in J. Sheridan LeFanu’s *Uncle Silas* by means of the metaphor of Maud being trapped on her uncle’s

²⁴ Beckett 39.

²⁵ Memmi 115.

²⁶ Beckett 290.

estate and being pursued by an evil Catholic woman. Irish stereotypes are found in such tales as Charlotte Riddell's "Hertford O'Donnell's Last Warning" and the apologetic stories of Gerald Griffin. In the former, the protagonist is portrayed as a macabre, superstitious coward, whilst the Irish peasants in Griffin's "The Unburied Legs," are Catholic bumpkins who have an irrational belief in the supernatural. The subordinate status of Irish Gaelic is evident in the fact that none of the surveyed stories were written originally in Irish Gaelic and, moreover, many of the stories, such as LeFanu's works and those by Riddell and Griffin, are written in British English, as opposed to Hiberno-English (or Irish English). Religion is a common theme in the horror works, such as LeFanu's "Wicked Captain Walshawe" or William Butler Yeats's "The Crucifixion of the Outcast." Similarly, the country's poverty is also reflected in some of the tales, perhaps most notably George Moore's "A Playhouse in the Waste."

My thesis relies extensively on historical and political analyses of nineteenth-century Ireland; I feel justified in emphasising Ireland's history and politics of that time because the nineteenth century was a period of extreme flux for the country. This century was an era of great Imperialist expansion for the British Empire. Having recently lost the American colonies, "Britain so successfully applied the lessons learned from the loss of America that she devised, through the conception of responsible colonial government, the notion and reality of 'Dominion status,' which have created a structure of Empire unique in the history of the world."²⁷ This era of Imperialist expansion may have inspired the

²⁷ David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: Penguin, 1991) 29.

clichéd phrase “the sun never sets on the British Empire,” referring to Britain’s dozens of colonies around the world, the number of which increased dramatically between 1800 and 1900.

Denis Judd claims that “there is no question that the existence of the Empire brought profit and wealth to a substantial section of the British population.”²⁸ Settler colonies, such those formed in the Cape Colony (South Africa), Canada and Australia, allowed for “years of mass emigration from Britain,”²⁹ and hence a relief for population congestion at home. One of the earliest and perhaps most important imperialist ventures of the 1800s was the Act of Union of 1800.

Denis Judd discusses the post-Act consequences for Ireland:

To those who chose to see, Ireland after the Union was not simply an increasingly well-integrated part of the United Kingdom. It was also a colony, and an abominably treated one at that. Victorian liberals did not need to travel, like their modern equivalents, to India or Africa to witness abject poverty and degradation or to see examples of man’s inhumanity to man. They merely needed to cross the Irish Channel.³⁰

The so-called Irish Problem was the consequence of centuries of control-and abuse-in Ireland. Indeed, the systematic subjugation and relocation of indigenous Celts, suppression of the Irish Gaelic language and culture, and a wavering policy regarding religious freedom provided a blueprint for future imperialistic mistakes. Furthermore, the

²⁸ Denis Judd, *Empire*. (New York: Basic Books, 1996) 3.

²⁹ Judd 51.

³⁰ Judd 43-44.

British exploitation of Ireland continues to influence the often conflict-ridden politics of modern Ireland, nearly eighty years after the independence of the Irish Free State.

The British imperialist and colonial ventures that characterised their pursuits in Africa, Asia, and the West Indies were indeed at work in Ireland. Kiberd defines imperialism and colonisation as follows: “imperialism...is a term used to describe the seizure of land from its owners and the consequent subjugation by military force and cultural programming...[colonialism] involves the planting of settlers in the land thus seized, for the purpose of expropriating its wealth and for the promotion of the occupiers’ trade and culture.”³¹ As this thesis will show in the historical context of the works to be discussed, both imperialist and colonising endeavours took place in Ireland, with active transplantation of the Catholic population, areas designated for British landlordship, control of Irish trade, and systematic attempts at Anglicisation.

Ireland and Britain, despite the failures of misrule, were involved in a symbiotic relationship. Ireland, with a supply of linen, wool and beef, bolstered British trade in these spheres. Ireland also reinforced a British sense of superiority through its subjugation and furthermore gave Britain a steady stream of cheap labour through immigration. In turn, Britain somewhat chauvinistically supplied Ireland with “guarantees of ‘good’ government, the maintenance of law and order, and internal

stability.”³² Although these ambitions may not have been perfectly put into place, British industrialisation, government and culture, as well as the English language, have influenced the development of modern Ireland.

In addition to my claim that the nineteenth century was extremely eventful in terms of Irish historical and cultural development, I feel justified in including such a detailed historical and political analysis because I have chosen to employ a New Historicist approach for my thesis. What I mean by a New Historicist approach is that I propose that no work of literature is immune from the contemporary historical forces at work upon the author and his or her creation. Ross C. Murfin, in his essay “What is the New Historicism?,” explains the school of thought more competently, claiming that “the new historicists, whatever their differences and however defined, want us to see that even the most urnlike poems [here the author is referring to Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1819)] are caught in a web of historical conditions, relationships, and influences.”³³ Writing about Brook Thomas’s essay “The Necessity for-and Difficulties with-New Historical Analysis in Introductory Literature Courses,” Murfin continues,

“Brook Thomas suggests that discussions of Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” might begin with questions such as the following: Where would Keats have seen such an urn? How did a Grecian urn end up in a museum in England? Some very important historical and political realities, Thomas suggests, lie behind and inform Keats’s definitions of art, truth, beauty, the past and

³¹ Kiberd 5. Although Kiberd’s definition discusses imperialism and colonisation from an economic perspective, the two terms may also be understood to have political, religious, social, cultural, and psychological connotations. See Judd 40.

³² Judd 43.

³³ Ross C. Murfin, “What is the New Historicism.” *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. By James Joyce. (Boston: St. Martin’s Press, 1993) 361.

timelessness.”³⁴

Later, when discussing Michel Foucault’s opinions on power and history, Murfin asserts that, “furthermore, no historical event, according to Foucault, has a single cause; rather, it is intricately connected with a vast web of economic, social, and political factors.”³⁵ However, I must warn that Foucault’s beliefs have been considered by some critics as being somewhat outmoded because his style of “identifying and labelling a single master or central influence goes against the very grain of the new historicism.”³⁶ Foucault has also been criticised for adopting “too cavalier an attitude toward chronology and facts.”³⁷ The reason why I have referred to Foucault here is not because I necessarily agree with his interpretation of New Historicism, but because I agree with his assertion that historical events do not occur in isolation.

Using a New Historicist approach, I analyse works, such as LeFanu’s *Uncle Silas*, by asking, “Why does the story take place in England, rather than Ireland? Why is the story written in English, rather than Irish Gaelic? Why do the Ruthyns reside in a large mansion, rather than a cottage or a flat? Why is Madame de la Rougierre French and not Dutch or Polish?” I propose that the novel was not simply written for the sake of readership, but that it was motivated by powerful historical forces and conveys a message, that of Anglo-Irish alienation, that pertains to Irish history. Murfin writes that “Greenblatt, Hirsch, McGann, and Thomas all started with the assumption that works of

³⁴ Murfin 361-362. Also see Brook Thomas, “The Historical Necessity for-and Difficulties with-New Historical Analysis in Introductory Literature Courses.” *College English* 49 (1987): 509-522.

³⁵ Murfin, 364. Also see Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. ed. Donald F. Bouchard. trans. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press, 1977) amongst other works.

³⁶ Murfin 366.

literature are simultaneously influenced by and influencing reality, broadly defined...[these authors] share a belief in referentiality—a belief that literature refers to and is referred to by things outside itself.”³⁸ It is this referentiality that is the crux of my thesis; I firmly argue that Irish horror literature of the nineteenth century was influenced by the historical events of the period, but that these works were used to influence history and disseminate the authors’ social and political opinions. Although some critics might scoff at the notion that popular literature could be considered as puissant enough to influence the course of history, one might study the influence of Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906) upon reforms in the US meatpacking industry or Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) upon the US abolitionist movement. Books can be powerful tools for social expression and social change; if they were merely frivolous cultural playthings, one would wonder why school administrators might be so concerned with the banning of so-called provocative books, such as J.D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* (1951).³⁹

In addition to adopting New Historicism as a founding model for my readings, I have also drawn on other theoretical approaches. Hence, I also make use of Tzvetan Todorov’s structuralist psychological paradigms for the works themselves. In *The Fantastic: A Structuralist Approach to the Literary Genre*, Todorov classifies the tales in

³⁷ Murfin 366.

³⁸ Murfin 367. Also see Thomas; Stephen Greenblatt. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*. (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1980) Chapter 1; Jerome McGann, *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*. (Madison, WI: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1985); E.D. Hirsch, “Back to History.” *Criticism in the University*. eds. Gerald Graff and Reginald Gibbons. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. Press, 1985) 189-197.

structuralist terms of uncanny, fantastic-uncanny, fantastic-marvellous and marvellous, based on the plots and outcomes. I find that such definitions are useful for exploring the structure, or the “main ingredients” of the tales. I attempt to describe the characteristics and distinct appeal of each category, especially how this appeal was used, in the works’ historical context, to interest and persuade readers. Theoretical discussions related to this topic by such authors as Darko Suvin will be employed to support Todorov’s definitions. Tangentially related to this use of structuralist theory is my reference to the thoughts of Stephen King and H.P. Lovecraft regarding horror writing. These writers, both renowned creators of horror literature, offer interesting insights about the influences on and unique appeal of the genre; their contributions are interesting because these authors write from the perspective of successful horror authors and not simply as critics.

I also rely heavily on postcolonial literary theory for the purpose of my thesis. The contributions of such critics as Gayatri Spivak, Chantal Zabus, Declan Kiberd and W.H. New, amongst others, are rich in terms of their diversity and interpretations of comparative colonial and postcolonial literature. These ideas of these writers, who can scarcely be unified under a term other than postcolonial literary critics, are employed, as deemed necessary, to support my arguments regarding historical referentiality, language and myth. As I am interpreting Irish literature in its colonial and postcolonial context, the inclusion of the theory of such writers is essential, as it provides necessary support for my own arguments.

³⁹ For more information about book banning, specifically book banning in the United States, please refer to Nicholas J. Karolides et al., *100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature*. (New York:

My discussion of myth in the second chapter relies heavily on archetypal criticism, especially as it is interpreted by Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye. My selection of the latter critic may appear at first to be rather questionable, since many of Frye's ideas have been regarded as obsolete. Although Frye has been widely discredited, not least by Terry Eagleton, the context of his archetypes, at least in part derived from Jungian theory, is helpful within the broader scope of the chapter to connect the early supernatural legends and nineteenth-century works. A link is thus established between such tales as the archetypal myth of the Echtraí Nerai and LeFanu's novel *Uncle Silas*. The comparison is extended to an analogy of chaos in pre-Christian Ireland to describe the political and cultural upheaval of Victorian Ireland. To "balance out" my inclusion of Frye, I have also included the useful, theory of Marxist Eagleton, especially since his interpretation of Irish literature, as stated in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture*, shed valuable insight on the social context of the works, especially LeFanu's *Uncle Silas*.

With regard to Campbell, I include a summary of aspects of Joseph Campbell's useful, albeit Freudian, description of the five major cycles of Irish mythology. I have included references to Campbell and Marie-Louise Von Franz as part of an archetypal approach to the mythic influences in an attempt to discover the origins of the myths and, in Von Franz's works, their appeal to the collective unconscious. The cycle most relevant to

the discussion of the mythic origins of Irish horror is the Mythological Cycle, with tales of banished supernatural entities which still hold influence, albeit limited over mundane affairs, especially on Samhain Eve. This cycle influenced a number of nineteenth-century works, including Thomas Crofton Croker's "The Haunted Cellar." Particularly helpful here is the metaphor of these reduced entities for depicting the decay of Celtic culture in nineteenth-century Ireland, as well as an interpretation based on Frye's definitions of literary mimesis and mode.

The concept of myth itself can be somewhat problematic, as it may, literally or figuratively, refer to so many different and even contradictory elements. Although Campbell's definition of myth is certainly not the only interpretation of the word, for the purposes of my thesis, I use Campbell's definition because it emphasises the archetypal and universal nature of myth. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell writes that

"throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth."⁴⁰

These myths have also supplied humankind with archetypes, to be recreated in many forms and over the course of time to adapt the needs of the society that employs

⁴⁰ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. Press, 1973) 3.

them. Campbell asserts that “the archetypes to be discovered and assimilated are precisely those that have inspired, throughout the annals of human culture, the basic images of ritual, mythology and vision.”⁴¹ A discussion of archetypal myths is appropriate within the scope of my argument because these myths, vital to Celtic civilisation, were told and retold during the nineteenth century as horror literature and often with an ulterior motive: to express a social or political opinion. I discuss the early Irish belief in evil spirits, as they were incorporated into myths that would eventually inspire horror literature. The original tales of the Fomorii, the ancient powers of darkness, are interpreted in terms of Marie-Louise Von Franz’s psychoanalytical and metonymic view of the significance of evil, as well as the Christian struggle between powers of good and wicked. More precisely, the ideas of Frye and Campbell are useful for the interpretation of the Mythological Cycle because their theories explore how archetypal myths are part of the collective unconscious and can be recycled as other myths by future generations. Hence, these ideas provide a theoretical basis for exploring how elements of the ancient Mythological Cycle were used by nineteenth-century writers. Furthermore, Von Franz’s theories are valuable insofar as they establish a foundation for my interpretation of the “darker” elements of these myths that were a fixture in horror writing of the nineteenth century.

Myth was used by the British to stereotype Ireland as a Romantic antiquarian wonderland and, especially during the Second Celtic Revival (to be explained later in the

⁴¹ Campbell 18.

thesis) for the purpose of diffusing cultural nationalism by spreading the ancient myths of Ireland to readers as a means of increasing interest and pride in native Irish culture.

Whilst the British had previously tried to stamp out indigenous Irish culture in an attempt to Anglicise the colony, in the late eighteenth century, the Romantic movement and contemporary vogue for folktales led to greater interest in Ireland's rich folklore, which had indeed survived centuries of the island's occupation. However, the folktales and legends of Ireland were viewed by the supposedly more modern and rational British as a cute, quaint escape from the rapid industrialisation that was a hallmark of British progress. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, cultural nationalists relied on these same folktales and legends to establish the notion that Ireland had inherited a great, ancient culture that could be resurrected, despite the centuries of colonisation and colonialism. Boehmer writes that "W.B. Yeats's evocations of an ancestral 'romantic Ireland' offer a prototype of compensatory nationalist re-creation...Yeats like later postcolonial writers drew upon his reading of myth and legend to forge an image of traditional Ireland...he believed in cultural retrieval, 'the reawakening of imaginative life,' as a strengthening force for a nation."⁴² As these cultural nationalists drew on the same or similar myths that the British had used to stereotype the Irish, they were showing, perhaps that "Irish nationalism...sought, in the first instance, an inversion of imperial values, if not of structures."⁴³ My thesis will explore this inversion, contrasting the First and Second Celtic Revivals and arguing that this process is evident in the works of horror literature.

⁴² Boehmer 119.

⁴³ Boehmer 100.

As I employ, notably in the second chapter, archetypal criticism for my analysis of the use of myth, I base my discussion on language in the fourth chapter on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia*, as interpreted by critic Gerry Smyth. The reason for this is that Smyth excellently adapts Bakhtin's ideas to the Irish experience and provides a suitable "launching point" from whence I begin my discussion on the bilingual nature of Irish society and literature. Indeed, Ireland in the nineteenth century was a bilingual (English, Irish Gaelic), multidialectal (British English, Hiberno-English [Irish English] dialects) country; consequently, cultural expression, particularly through literature, was created in different, often conflicting voices, or Bakhtin's *heteroglossia*. Smyth's interpretation of *heteroglossia* to the Irish situation refers specifically to nineteenth-century horror literature, especially Anglo-Irish literature. As I suggest that the linguistic choices of the authors reflect their social and political beliefs, the ideas expressed by Bakhtin and Smyth appear, in my opinion, to be relevant.

The horror genre is an apt touchstone for the analysis for the changing cultural atmosphere in nineteenth-century Ireland. First, the supernatural represents a converging of rival cultural trends. It represents the authentic Celtic Irish mythic culture, which the cultural nationalists wished to reclaim, as well as the fantasyland that the cultural imperialists sought to invent and exploit. Peter Haining writes that "the folk material from Celtic Ireland is far more abundant than that from any other part of the British Isles—or indeed from almost anywhere else...impressive is the quantity whose theme is the

twilight world and the figures that dwell on the borders of consciousness and reality.”⁴⁴ Such tales, in their supposedly pure form, were part of the cultural nationalists’ new legendary age towards the end of the nineteenth century. Bastardised interpretations and retellings of the same myths, revised and neatly packaged by British and Anglo-Irish antiquarians, however, were immensely popular among the suppressers of Celtic Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The need to revise the original folktales in general already suggests a cultural conflict. Although these revisions in some cases are quite minor, they may be read as altering the stories to provide them with a different ‘ethnocentric’ bias.

Meanwhile, an alternate inspiration for the horror genre arrived in Ireland from Germany via British disciples of radical Gothic literature. The horror genre represents three competing and yet overlapping cultural attitudes of the nineteenth century. A “vampire tale” could be based on a Celtic myth, an antiquarian retelling of a Celtic myth, or a British Gothic tale of terror. While the three stories may superficially appear similar, the cultural presuppositions and literary forms behind the telling of each tale could be vastly different, in fact proclaiming opposite views regarding Irish identity.

The enduring significance of Irish Gothic horror is manifested in the many retellings of these tales in twentieth-century fiction and film.. Works by Maturin, LeFanu, Stoker, and Yeats, for example, continue to be reissued by publishers around the

world to be read and studied with great energy. The 1990s have witnessed new film versions of LeFanu's *Uncle Silas* and Stoker's *Dracula*, testifying to the lasting entertainment value and quality of the works. These writers were skilled masters of the art of terror, and many of their works have not been lost to obsolescence. The writers' ability to suspend reality subtly or allow readers to question reality creates, in my opinion, an atmosphere of extremely great tension and suspense without resorting to obvious displays of gore. As such a sensationalist genre with popular appeal still earns devotees a century after publication, one can only imagine their subtle, or not so subtle, use as powerful propaganda on either side of the Irish identity issue.

My discussion is divided into four chapters, each chapter tackling a distinct topic on which British and/or Irish influences and attitudes may be discerned in the works of nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction. Chapter One is entitled "Ireland as England's Fantasy," based on the argument that Ireland and Irish civilisation served as an anachronistic, magical fantasyland for British readers. The premise of the chapter is inspired by a lengthy analysis of this idea in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* by Kiberd and includes a brief outline of Ireland's long history of occupation, whether by assimilating Norman French or imperialist/colonising British conquerors, to provide a historical context for the stories, including Charles Maturin's "The Doomed Sisters," LeFanu's "The Spectre Lovers" and Griffin's "The Unburied Legs." By analysing the texts, I demonstrate that they contain images and stereotypes of

⁴⁴ Peter Haining, introduction, *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992) 8.

Irish landscapes and citizens that were clearly beneficial to the interests of the Anglo-Irish Establishment and to British readers who had a vested interest in maintaining the subordination of Ireland.

The discussion of fantasy versus reality with respect to portrayals of Ireland, the Irish people, and Irish identity in nineteenth-century Irish literature is followed by Chapter Two, which analyses the use of myth in nineteenth-century horror stories. The importance of Celtic myth, whether accurate or distorted, to the image of Ireland as a fantasyland justifies the succession of topics. "Mythic Origins" discusses the blending of Latin Christianity with Celtic myth and then the conflicting use of myth by British and Anglo-Irish antiquarians and Irish nationalists. Indeed, myth is far from being politically disinterested and can be used to the advantage of the storyteller. My reading of myth in nineteenth-century Irish horror literature reveals that many ancient Celtic myths and mythical tropes, such as the banshee, ghosts, leprechauns and fairies, were re-narrated and incorporated into the nineteenth-century texts. Furthermore, I analyse these myths as sites of contestation between the conflicting Irish and British (more specifically, Anglo-Saxon) cultures.

As Chapter Two discusses the mythic origins of the nineteenth-century horror works, Chapter Three, "Church versus Big House, Unionist versus Nationalist," analyses how these two powerful and still controversial elements of Irish history are manifested in the tales. In this chapter, I argue that many Anglo-Irish writers presented stern anti-Catholic attitudes, while both Anglo-Irish and Catholic writers use the genre as political

propaganda. In the chapter, however, I conclude that authors were motivated more often by Home Rule or Unionist loyalties than by religious prejudice. I begin the chapter by discussing the political and religious struggles that followed the Act of Union of 1800, although the Act promised to give greater economic opportunity and ultimate emancipation for Irish Catholics. Later in the chapter, I argue that Protestant and Catholic, as well as Unionist and Nationalist voices are found in the flexible horror genre. At this point, I discuss Smyth's argument that Gothic horror served as an outlet for concerns of alienation and repressed guilt. In contrast to the pessimism of the Big House (Anglo-Irish Establishment) novel, I explore Yeats's more hopeful view of Anglo-Celtic, Protestant-Catholic relations in a united, free Ireland. The contrasting views of LeFanu and Yeats are discussed in terms of differing perspectives of imperialism and colonialism. The chapter ends with a discussion of the use of horror as an anti-Catholic weapon in Gothic literature, using the theory of James Whitlark as a foundation because of its explicit analysis of British anti-Catholicism. Indeed, whilst Big House literature reinforced British interests, Yeats's tales offer an arguably more helpful approach to the relations between Britain and Ireland, as well as relations between the Anglo-Irish Establishment and Irish Celts, even if his vision proved unrealistic in the event.

The final chapter of the thesis, "A Heteroglossia of British and Irish Linguistic and Literary Forms," deals with competing and yet overlapping uses of language and national literary styles in Irish literature of the nineteenth century. The term *heteroglossia*

stems from the definition set forth by Bakhtin, author of *The Dialogic Imagination*⁴⁵, of the successful national novel as a carnival of several linguistic forces simultaneously at work. At the same time, however, Bakhtin notes the *conflict* of languages in fiction: they do not coexist harmoniously, but rather mark in their own disharmony the struggles for power amongst diverse linguistic groups. I begin the chapter by discussing the status of Irish Gaelic and English in nineteenth-century Ireland. Subsequently, I establish that many writers used British English to achieve respectability, while Irish Gaelic was moribund as a literary language. The works in British English are actually examples of *heteroglossia*, with Irish and sometimes continental elements contained therein. Hence, this style is distinctly Irish. I then briefly mention the use of Stage Irish. This stereotype was used as an almost exclusively comic device for British audiences and a gimmick for profitable writing, consistent with the characterisation of the bucolic rube of the Irish “Fantasyland,” as discussed in Chapter One. Next I cover the use of Hiberno-English (Irish English) in these works, using such theories as those promulgated by Zabus and Kiberd to provide a context of “writing with an accent.” The ideas of Yeats, Rushdie, and Dash are also employed to illustrate the development of Hiberno-English as an effective creole, or “new...linguistic forms created from the juxtaposition of diverse populations,”⁴⁶ for literary expression. The chapter ends with the observation that as the nineteenth century progressed, the use of Hiberno-English increased, not surprisingly coinciding with the rise of the Irish Home Rule movement. I claim, however, that most,

⁴⁵ See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*. (Austin, Texas: Univ. Texas Press, 1990).

⁴⁶ J. Michael Dash, “Psychology, Creolisation, and Hybridisation.” *An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King. (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 46.

if not all languages and forms used for Irish literature make use of a diverse *heteroglossia* that records the distinct Irish experience.

The complexity of relations between Ireland and England is reflected in the shifting application of terms for various interest groups. A few definitions of these are, therefore, in order. Throughout the text, the terms "England/English" and "Britain/British" occur and are used interchangeably. Although one could argue, quite rightly, of the unique and distinct cultures of England, Scotland, and Wales, the three nations long shared and continue to share the same island and monarch. Furthermore, during the nineteenth century, the island was economically and culturally fuelled by England. Hence, "England" and "Britain" in this context can be justifiably used synonymously. In contrast, the terms, "Irish Celt" and "Anglo-Irish" are used to represent the indigenous Gaelic and transplanted British cultural elements respectively. The term *Irish*, moreover, encompasses both ethnicities.

The terms "Gothic," "Romantic" and "Victorian" are also used with great frequency throughout the text. However, strict definitions of the terms Gothic and Romantic are difficult to formulate, since there is much scholarly debate about them. The British Gothic horror genre refers to a formula novel that was fashionable between 1764 and 1830. The term Romantic refers to stories and novels written in the pan-European Romantic tradition. Katie Trumpener defines the Romantic period as lasting from 1760

to 1830, when “British literature is obsessed with the problem of culture.”⁴⁷ She views the Gothic novel as a genre of the Romantic period.

I tend to agree, however, with Emma McEvoy’s separate classification of the Gothic and Romantic, “the suggestion that the Gothic is a kind of pre-Romanticism that enacts a literalisation of the Romantic metaphor.”⁴⁸ This view would hold that the Romantic period immediately succeeded the Gothic and lasted several decades, into mid-century or even beyond. However, even toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Gothic formula is said to thrive, as LeFanu’s 1871 novel *The Rose and the Key* “follows the formula of a gothic novel, which is to say that it has a beautiful and sensitive heroine being pursued with malign intent by a dark, sinister enemy.”⁴⁹ A precise pinpointing of time frames for Gothic and Romantic literature is rendered especially difficult because labels are generally added after the literature has been created. Although such labels give the impression that literary genres occur in neatly separable epochs and types, in fact there are, more frequently, several genres and influences in a single text or in the same period. Despite the confusion regarding the terms Gothic and Romantic, I use the term “Victorian period” to refer concretely to the years (1837-1901) of Queen Victoria’s reign.

Lastly, the definition of the elusive term “Other,” which I am not using in its Lacanian sense, must be addressed here, as a full understanding of the term is crucial for

⁴⁷ Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. Press, 1997) xiv.

⁴⁸ Emma McEvoy, introduction, *The Monk*, by Matthew Lewis. (New York: Oxford Press, 1998) xv.

⁴⁹ Leonard Wolf, introduction, *Carmilla*, by J.S. LeFanu. (New York: Penguin, 1996) xi.

the purposes of this thesis. In the context of the British Empire, British civilisation and its civilising endeavours were considered to be familiar; the foreign customs of subjugated peoples, whether in Ireland, India, or British Honduras, constituted an exotic Other. Terry Goldie, in the essay "The Representation of the Indigene" addresses the question of the nature of the Other. Goldie claims that "neither the racial split between self and Other nor the process of indigenization originates with Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, but neither do they have clear origins which might be seen as the source for these manifestations...the first felt need for indigenization came when a person moved to a new place and recognized the Other as having greater roots in that place."⁵⁰ Goldie then reiterates Sander Gilman's classification of bad and good stereotypes of the Other; "the former is that which we fear to become; the latter, that which we fear we cannot achieve."⁵¹ The concept of the Other and "othering" thus serve the colonial enterprise by offering easy identification of the populations to be subjugated; the "Other" also represents not only a physical, but also psychological and even sexual threat to power.⁵² As this thesis will demonstrate, many Irish writers, wishing to become the respectable, or

⁵⁰ Terry Goldie, "The Representation of the Indigene." *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 235.

⁵¹ Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U. Press, 1985) 20.

⁵² See W.H. New, "Colonial Literatures." *An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King. Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 102-119. ⁵³ A.O.J. Cockshut, "Victorian Thought," *The Penguin History of Literature: the Victorians*. ed. Arthur Pollard (New York: Penguin, 1987) 2 .

good, Other, consequently parroted the stereotypes of the bad Other that were dictated by the British.

CHAPTER ONE: IRELAND AS ENGLAND'S FANTASY

Irish horror novels and short stories, during the Gothic, Romantic, and Victorian eras were a response to the British reader's need for literary escapism. Writing of a Britain that was rapidly becoming an industrial society, A.O.J. Cockshut claims that "the early Victorians and the Romantics were alike...in their reverence for feelings, and what an unfriendly critic might call their hunger for sensation."⁵³ During this period, Ireland served English readers as "a fantasy-land in which to meet fairies and monsters."⁵⁴ In *Inventing Ireland* Declan Kiberd asserts that "the English helped to invent Ireland"⁵⁵ and that had Ireland not existed, surely British readers would have invented the island as a playground for the imagination. Indeed, Ireland had served for centuries "as a foil to set off English virtues, as a laboratory in which to conduct experiments"⁵⁶; thus, Ireland provided a testing ground for colonial policy, fruitful soil for the establishment of an Anglo-Irish aristocracy, and a steady supply of creative lore. This chapter will explore Kiberd's assertion that Ireland was seen as a fantasyland for British literary audiences and how Irish writers exploited these exotic Irish settings and characters, packaging them to sate the nineteenth-century appetite for wildly emotional sensation novels.

At this point I shall provide an overview, by no means exhaustive, of Anglo-Irish relations from Roman times until the nineteenth century. I believe that the inclusion of such an overview and a discussion of the development of the political, economical, and

⁵⁴ Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1995) 1.

⁵⁵ Kiberd 1.

⁵⁶ Kiberd 1.

cultural subjugation of the Irish to British rulers and what may be perceived as an interdependency between the two civilisations is helpful to understanding the nineteenth-century environment in which Irish horror writers created their texts. A discussion of the history of Anglo-Irish relations also helps to explain the concept of the Other attributed to the Irish. The situation of Ireland at this time did not spontaneously occur, but was the result of centuries of settlement and exploitation, as will be shown in the discussion.

The cultural link between Ireland and England dates from the Roman occupation of Britain. Although "Ireland lay outside the Roman Empire,"⁵⁷ Roman records found in Ireland support the theory that Ireland played a strategic role in trading and raiding missions. As the Roman grip on Britain weakened, the Irish Celts established colonies on the island, especially in Wales and Cornwall. By the fifth century, a large colony of Irish settlers were governed by "members of the Deisi...the ruling class spoke Irish, and the kingdom was apparently bilingual in the fifth century."⁵⁸ These early Celtic invasions and occupations thus parallel later invasions in the reverse direction, from England to Ireland.

Foster writes that "close relations with Britain, with Roman, and latterly Christian culture, brought about dramatic change in Ireland."⁵⁹ The colonies in Britain were tapped for resources for further plundering and raiding expeditions. Through the course of this exploitation, however, material Irish culture began to become Romanised. Examples of this influence include the *Ogham*, the first form of written Irish and based on the Latin

⁵⁷ R.F. Foster, ed. *The Oxford History of Ireland*. (New York, Oxford Press, 1992) 5.

⁵⁸ Foster 6.

alphabet, and the first encounter between Ireland and Christianity, through the Celtic capture of British slave St. Patrick.

For seven hundred years, Britain and Ireland appeared to serve as extensions of each other. Whilst Britain, especially Scotland, Wales and Western England, served Ireland's imperialistic interests, Ireland became a focal point for extensive Christianisation, with theology imported from Britain. During the ninth and tenth centuries, both islands were targeted for Viking raids. Despite the presence of a Viking establishment in Dublin, Norse culture penetrated Irish culture to a far lesser degree than in Britain. Indeed, "neither did the Vikings take over whole kingdoms, as they did in England, where they conquered all north of a line from the Thames estuary to Chester...and settled extensively."⁶⁰ Furthermore, all the monasteries surrounding Dublin survived the Viking invasions.

The tide turned in the twelfth century, when the Anglo-Normans successfully invaded Ireland. The initial idea of an invasion surfaced over religious authority "as a result of Canterbury's outrage at losing all metropolitan rights over the see of Dublin, when it opted to become an Irish archbishopric in 1152."⁶¹ The English pope Adrian IV consequently gave King Henry II "and his successors with the right to rule Ireland,"⁶² an incentive which undoubtedly influenced future policy in Ireland.

⁵⁹ Foster 7.

⁶⁰ Foster 35.

⁶¹ Foster 47.

⁶² Foster 48.

The embryonic plans for occupation were given further impetus in May 1172 when the archdeacon of Llandaff gave an “oral report...on the parlous state of Irish morals before the invasions, the improvement brought about by Henry and the voluntary submission of the Irish chiefs.”⁶³ The rapid capitulation of these chiefs, although perhaps dismaying to adherents of Irish nationalism, has been explained by Foster as appearing to offer the benefit of protection from the British Crown. The chiefs simply believed that their rule and Irish culture would not be harmed by exchanging “the title of the high-king of Ireland for that of the more prestigious ‘son of the Empress’.”⁶⁴ Perhaps this misguided logic allowed the British to attribute their easy victory to the perceived ‘inherent’ weakness of Irish character.

Within the next hundred years, a system of feudalism was established in Ireland, and “the purpose of English involvement in Ireland was beginning to change from acquiring lordship over men to colonising land.”⁶⁵ A population explosion in mediaeval Europe had resulted in food shortages and low labour costs; the singular availability of underpopulated land in Ireland deepened the Anglo-Norman desire to settle the island. Thus, the system of tenancy flourished in Ireland, thanks to a heavy influx of English migrants and importation of whole estates. At this time, a distinction began to be made between English colonists and the “native Irish tenantry, who were termed ‘betaghs’ ... bound to the soul like the villeins of England.”⁶⁶ Interestingly, although the betagh [Ir.

⁶³ Foster 49.

⁶⁴ Foster 50.

⁶⁵ Foster 52.

⁶⁶ Foster 54.

daor-bhiatagh] class had existed long before the Anglo-Norman invasion, the new conquests added to their ranks many poorer, yet previously free, Irish landowners.

The next two centuries witnessed sporadic conflicts between the Anglo-Norman establishment and Irish rebels. Problems in Ireland, however, led to “an initial policy of blaming the financial decline on the corruption and incompetence of Irish-born administrators.”⁶⁷ Subsidies and military troops were imported to Ireland to maintain strict control of the island, although this watch grew less intense as the Hundred Years War involved England’s greater military interest. Nonetheless, the English still imposed rules of conduct regarding the Irish Other. Such laws forbade the use of “Brehon Law instead of English common law; intermarriage, and fosterage with the Irish enemies...selling them food or horses in time of war or weapons in time of peace.”⁶⁸ At the same time, the English colonists were not allowed to abuse the native Irish.

Despite the draconian statutes, a Gaelic resurgence in culture and nationalism emerged during the late fourteenth century. This movement, which divided the Irish themselves, served as a reaction against the increasingly thorough encroachments by English earls and further threats to Irish culture. Such an effort, which anticipated the Celtic Revivals of the nineteenth century, failed because of “the inability of the Irish to achieve long-term co-operation [and] because of the power of the Anglo-Irish lordships.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Foster 65.

⁶⁸ Foster 74.

⁶⁹ Foster 79.

The Anglicisation push, which had been primarily confined to the areas surrounding Dublin and other regions of concentrated English settlement, intensified over the next three centuries. This drive occurred as a response to perceived social and political chaos due to increasingly decentralised rule of Ireland. The schism between the Pope and the Church of England helped motivate the English Crown to assimilate staunchly Roman Catholic Ireland, still represented by Irish-born noblemen who clashed with the English rulers. When English control over Ireland began to be threatened from within, “occasionally, and almost without warning, rulers in England became engaged in frenzied efforts to draw Ireland into a desired social model.”⁷⁰ As a result, tension and sporadic warfare between Anglicans and Catholics exploded during the seventeenth century.

The Plantation System and Oliver Cromwell’s encouragement of Protestantism in Ireland were additional blows to Irish society. The Plantation System, introduced by King James II, was established to encourage settlement of Ireland by ‘New English,’ who would be loyal to the Crown. The system, which angered the native Catholic Irish as well as the old Anglo-Norman hegemony, promised land grants in designated areas to be planted. Whilst providing a broader base for English influence, the Plantation System also established the great timber industry for exports to England and trade on the Continent. The luring of English settlers to Ireland with promises of land was not a uniquely Irish situation, as settlers were lured to other colonies, such as Canada, with similar promises. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who founded the Colonisation Society with Lord Durham and Charles Buller in 1830, urged the British government to “enable

desirable emigrants to overcome the financial obstacle of the costs of the journey...[and] to sell colonial lands at a good price.”⁷¹

Whilst the system did spark protests, it also quickened the cultural assimilation of Irish Celts who needed to compete with the new settlers. Indeed, “the more their role in Ireland was questioned by the Protestant officials, the more they saw the need to demonstrate that they were promoters of English civility in Ireland.”⁷² They encouraged the use of English, supported the spread of English law into vast areas beyond the Pale and dressed in English fashions. Consequently, the dwindling bastions of Irish influence were pushed increasingly into the perimeter.

Cromwell’s efforts to eradicate Catholicism in Ireland also threatened to destroy pre-invasion Irish civilisation, although the Protestantisation of Ireland did not succeed. Cromwell’s army, “perhaps the best fighting force in all of Europe,”⁷³ was unleashed against the Irish, causing the native militia to crumble. The Cromwellians also confiscated Catholic property in the eastern portions of the island whilst hunting down priests. Cromwell’s main failure to convert Ireland to Protestantism lay in the fact that he simply lacked the necessary human resources to evangelise to the vast peasant population. Nonetheless, one of Cromwell’s legacies in Ireland was the dramatic transplantation of the Catholic landed interest “from the most prosperous to the poorest province of Ireland.”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Foster 97.

⁷¹ David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: Penguin, 1991) 91.

⁷² Foster 116.

⁷³ Foster 122.

⁷⁴ Foster 123.

The Catholics sought vengeance at the end of the seventeenth century with the defeat of Irish Jacobites at the Boyne Aughrim in 1690-91 and the subsequent Treaty of Limerick. Thus, the Irish army and law underwent Catholicisation. Ireland, however, was still very much an English colony, and an Irish Parliament, reserved for Protestants, was established in 1689. A heated debate consequently commenced regarding the extent of independence from London that this new legislative body would enjoy.

The Irish Parliament was defined by the loyalist, Anglo-Irish upper crust of Irish society, known as the ruling Protestant Ascendancy. This class was artificially maintained through the passage of laws to restrict Catholics' public participation and legal rights, thus reversing the recent Catholic gains. Although during the eighteenth century Irish Catholics were still permitted to practise their faith freely, the laws served for "the continued exclusion of most Catholics from landowning and almost all Catholics from political representation."⁷⁵ Nonetheless, Catholics did provide a vital, if underrepresented and disenfranchised, force, especially in the form of urban merchants.

The Ascendancy not only targeted Catholics, but all Dissenters, for discrimination. Whilst the Huguenots of Dublin succeeded at assimilation into Ascendancy political and social culture, the Presbyterian Scots-Irish community of Ulster found itself as underrepresented as the Catholics.

Despite an Irish economic boom in the early eighteenth century, the rule of the Ascendancy was beginning to crack by the end of the century. Fragmentation of Ireland

into emerging nationalist United Ireland, Presbyterians, and insecure Ascendancy members caused growing internal friction. Meanwhile, the rebellion of England's American Colonies in the 1770s created further unrest in Ireland, as the cause of Catholic nationalism was espoused with even more vigour. The British government, hoping to placate the Catholic majority and avoid another colonial disaster, relaxed penal laws and military restrictions against Catholics. The Ascendancy, as a result, was trapped between the gradually empowered Catholic masses and the English Crown, which would eventually abolish the Irish Parliament with the Act of Union in 1800.

Thus, as the nineteenth century unfolded, Ireland's role in the British Empire was characterised by alienation and insecurity. The English were trying to restrain Ireland, bringing it more closely under the jurisdiction of London. The Anglo-Irish were still the economically privileged class in Ireland, although their position of power in Ireland was being challenged from both the English Crown and the Catholic masses. Indeed, the Catholics, beginning with the era of the Defenders and the Rebellion of 1798, were becoming increasingly vocal about their discontent. The nineteenth century, perhaps one of the most turbulent periods of Irish history, therefore marked one hundred years of uneasy transition from colony to a region, locked into the United Kingdom, on the verge of achieving Home Rule.

This historically uneasy relationship between England and Ireland was reflected in English psychological attitudes regarding Britain's oldest and perhaps closest colony. Ireland was often characterised as being extremely backward, and it might be said that

⁷⁵ Foster 137.

Ireland served as a perfect repository for English unconscious⁷⁶ desires and insecurities. Kiberd explores the notion of Ireland as England's "fantasyland"⁷⁷ in *Inventing Ireland*. "Patented as not-England"⁷⁸, the Irish were portrayed with the irrationality, capriciousness and superstition that the supposedly rational British, with their visions of industrial mercantilism and ambitions and dreams of empire, denied in themselves. Whilst the British were producing influential tracts on philosophy and economics, whilst testing their military might in Europe and overseas, the Irish were seen as a quaint, innocuous race producing little but potatoes and mystical folklore. As early as the sixteenth century, Irish writer Seamus Ceitinn had commented that Ireland "is never to be seen in itself, but as a flawed version of England... as a country still entrapped in the conditions from which England liberated itself in 1066"⁷⁹, when Anglo-Saxon civilisation blended with that of the Norman conquerors.

After Britain conquered Ireland and sent landowners to colonise the island, an English base, in the guise of the emerging Anglo-Irish establishment, was created through which these stereotypical, amusing images were transmitted. Consequently, "Ireland... began to appear to English persons in the guise of their Unconscious."⁸⁰ Whilst John Bull would readily admit to being hard-working, reliable, rational, adult, and masculine, as evidenced by Britain's military might and riches, Ireland, the conquered, is

⁷⁶ The word "Unconscious" has many connotations, including those proposed by Jung and Freud. In this thesis, the term generally designates something denied or not admitted, yet perhaps existing.

⁷⁷ The concept of "fantasy" in this thesis signifies an event involving a supernatural event or being, connected to folklore. A "fantasyland" is a location where such events take place.

⁷⁸ Kiberd 9.

⁷⁹ Kiberd 14.

⁸⁰ Kiberd 15. This use of the term "Unconscious" refers to the Jungian interpretation of humankind's collective unconscious.

seen as “indolent and contrary, unstable and emotional, childish and feminine,”⁸¹ the exact opposite of the supposed English character. These contrasts are crucial in forming a paradigm of Irish literature written for English readers.

In what may be understood to be cultural displacement, the Irish merely became exaggerated forms of those traits that lurked in English psychology but were deeply repressed or denied. The average English reader might have been uneasy about qualities disparagingly assumed to be feminine or childlike, such as vulnerability and powerlessness, in himself or herself, so he or she effortlessly denied them and instead placed the blame on the Irish. In fact, Kiberd states that the perceived cultural division between Anglo and Irish became so pronounced that “just because the English are one thing, the Irish must be its opposite.”⁸²

In this chapter, I shall develop my argument that a large number of nineteenth-century Irish horror writers tailored their tales to meet the expectations of British readers who craved an Irish “fantasyland,” with support from Kiberd’s theories regarding Anglo-Irish relations and Irish stereotypes. At the same time, it is also relevant to explore C.L. Innes’s arguments. Innes states that the Irish writers’ self-definition, representing a colonial society lacking dignity or strength in the opinion of the English colonists, resembles the imposition of the colonisers’ expectations on colonial literature from Australia and West Africa. The distance between England and West Africa or Australia is geographically greater than that between England and Ireland, and the indigenous

⁸¹ Kiberd 30.

⁸² Kiberd 35.

peoples of West Africa and Australia seemed more exotic to the English public. Thus, the Irish were less easily exoticised. Nonetheless, “there are significant similarities between the experiences of the Irish, Australians, and West Africans.”⁸³

These similarities emerge when the self-definitions of cultural nationalists are compared. The colonised “claimed to be more humane, more in tune with the elemental and the natural, more vital, and less alienated than the Englishman.”⁸⁴ These responses are a reaction to the colonisers’ belief that the conquered populations were “categorised as brute or vermin at worst and childlike and effeminate at best.”⁸⁵ The colonisers thus disparaged Empire diversity to aggrandise their own self-image.

Innes finds that colonial and postcolonial literature, whether Irish, Nigerian, or Australian Aboriginal, often links the indigenous people to their homelands. In this literature, “the people and the land belong to each other,”⁸⁶ frequently appealing to myths of landscapes and appeals to a real or invented motherland. Innes’s comparison between colonisers’ racist attitudes and the reactive self-definitions of colonial and postcolonial writers in the cases of Ireland, West Africa, and Australia provide a global context for Kiberd’s complementary argument.

The denial of Irish self-sufficiency, competence, or even intelligence and the belief that the Irish merely inhabited a land of fairies, *pucas* (a type of mythical creature

⁸³ C.L. Innes, “Forging the Conscience of their Race,” *An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King. Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 120.

⁸⁴ Innes 122.

⁸⁵ Innes 122.

⁸⁶ Innes 124.

capable of changing shape), and banshees, served also as a strategy for defending the British conquest and occupation of Ireland and to assuage any feelings of guilt. Innes writes that “the colonisers, in order to justify their presence...insisted that the Celt is [not] as capable of reason and self discipline as the Englishman.”⁸⁷ Thus, the Irish were seen and treated as if they were an archetype for the imperialist “white man’s burden”⁸⁸ philosophy.

This tendency to displace unwanted national characteristics onto the Irish became a blueprint for policy toward other colonial populations in Asia, Africa, the West Indies, and Oceania. As Gerry Smyth avers, the coloniser’s efforts to invade and subjugate another population are “as much a matter of cultural representation and psychological perception as...a politico-economic organisation.”⁸⁹ The colonising process adopted a national Darwinist approach, attempting to establish the role of the economically, militarily, mentally, and psychologically superior coloniser and the inferior colonised to justify their occupation to colonists and themselves. The qualities which defined the Irish, such as incivility, hot temper, and rudeness, were foisted upon other distrusted conquered populations; “English colonisers in India and Africa would impute to the ‘Gunga-Dins’ and ‘Fuzzi-Wuzzies’ those same traits already attributed to the Irish.”⁹⁰

Whilst the Irish were not taken seriously in terms of crucial matters of money and politics, they soon became objects of curiosity for their supposed sentimentality and

⁸⁷ Innes 123.

⁸⁸ This much-quoted line regarding the notion of Anglo-Saxon superiority is extracted from Rudyard Kipling’s “Take Up The White Man’s Burden,” addressed to the United States during the Spanish-American War of 1898 (see Judd 146).

⁸⁹ Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*. (Chicago: Pluto, 1997) 36.

lyricism, qualities which were not admitted to form part of the practical British mindset. Ireland and the Irish began to represent the creative imagination; "if the Irish had failed to master pragmatic affairs, that was simply attributable to their superiority in matters of the imagination."⁹¹ The image of the Irish as an antiquated, nomadic people speaking an exotic language, playing mournful pentatonic melodies on the plaintive bagpipes, and roaming the misty hills and dales of an unseen island across the Irish Sea was not without appeal for British audiences longing from a respite from the urban grime and growling machinery of rapidly industrialising cities. This mysterious Other became especially well-suited for the growing taste for horror literature in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The English were not solely responsible for the promulgation of this image of the Irish Celt as emotional bumpkin. The Irish also played a large role in this misconception of their country and compatriots. Drawn to England for greater economic and social opportunities, the Irish often did not question the British attitudes toward them. In 1818 John Keats wrote that "the Irish are sensible of the character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen."⁹² Indeed, Kiberd writes that instead of relying on the greatness of Irish culture and correcting the incorrect assumptions of their colonisers, many Irish in Britain "found it easier to don the mask of the Paddy than reshape a complex urban identity of their own."⁹³ Probably most of the British subjects to whom

⁹⁰ Kiberd 15.

⁹¹ Kiberd 32.

⁹² Kiberd 29.

⁹³ Kiberd 29.

these masquerading Paddies deferred would have been bewildered to learn the intricate complexities of the culture to which the Irish belonged.

In addition, Irish cultural revivalists, swept up in the spirit of nationalism pervading mid- and late-nineteenth-century Europe, occasionally asserted their national pride using the very stereotypes assigned by the English; “many cultural nationalists celebrated the very characteristics for which they were disparaged—emotionalism, irrationality, primitiveness.”⁹⁴ These nationalists, however, often justified this use of the coloniser’s language with a mysterious semantic turnabout; they simply placed a positive spin on the insults. It is worth noting here that other disparaged groups have similarly “reclaimed” epithets to their advantage; for example, certain homosexuals proudly refer to themselves as “queer.” Embracing “the more insulting clichés of Anglo-Saxonist theory on condition that they could reinterpret each in a more positive light”⁹⁵, cultural nationalists declared that the Irish were religious, traditional, and emotional, as opposed to superstitious, backward, and irrational. Gayatri Spivak has explored this strategy in great depth, discussing ‘strategic essentialism’ in such essays as “Can the Subaltern Speak”:

When we come to the concomitant question of the consciousness of the subaltern, the notion of what the work *cannot* say becomes important. In the semioses of the social text, elaborations of insurgency stand in the place of ‘the utterance.’ The sender-‘the peasant’- is marked only as a pointer to an irretrievable consciousness. As for the receiver, we must ask who is ‘the real receiver’ of an ‘insurgency?’ The historian, transforming ‘insurgency’ into ‘text for knowledge,’ is only one ‘receiver’ of any collectively intended social act. With no possibility of nostalgia for that lost origin, the historian must suspend (as far as possible) the clamor of his or her own consciousness (or consciousness-effect, as operated by

⁹⁴ Innes 126.

⁹⁵ Kiberd 32.

disciplinary training), so that the elaboration of the insurgency, packaged with an insurgent-consciousness, does not freeze into an 'object of investigation,' or, worse yet, a model for imitation. 'The subject' implied by the texts of insurgency can only serve as a counterpossibility for the narrative sanctions granted to the colonial subject in the dominant groups. The postcolonial intellectuals learn that their privilege is their loss. In this they are a paradigm of the intellectuals.⁹⁶

Kiberd's ideas about Britain's invention or reinvention of Ireland are similar to those of Homi K. Bhabha in his essay "Signs Taken For Wonders." Bhabha contends that the English book is one of the puissant means, the 'signs taken for wonders,' by which Britain controlled the cultural and social imagination of the Empire. Bhabha writes that "the discovery of the English book establishes both a measure of mimesis and a mode of civil authority and order...it is in between the edict of Englishness and the assault of the dark unruly spaces of the earth, through an act of repetition, that the colonial text emerges uncertainly."⁹⁷

In wielding its power, the English book constructs differences between the supposed truth of the colonial power and the stereotyped identity of the conquered nation. Hence the British colony becomes a mock-Britain, yet the indigenous people possess some quaint flaw by which they may be readily recognised. Bhabha continues that "those discriminated against may be instantly recognised, but they also force a recognition of the immediacy and articulacy of authority—a disturbing effect that is familiar in the repeated hesitancy afflicting the colonialist discourse when it contemplates its discriminated

⁹⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 28.

⁹⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Taken For Wonders," *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 32.

subjects: the *inscrutability* of the Chinese, the *unspeakable* rites of the Indians, the *indescribable* habit of the Hottentots.”⁹⁸ One might add to Bhabha’s list the *unbelievable* superstitions of the Irish. Bhabha, however, argues that such stereotyping unwittingly distinguishes, even if unflatteringly, the existence of a pre-colonial civilisation in conquered lands, thus creating an atmosphere of cultural hybridisation. Ultimately, Bhabha argues, this perceived mimicry on the part of the colonised people, as well as the persistence of stereotypes, leads to effective subversive opposition.⁹⁹ This opposition, fermenting for hundreds of years, may have fuelled the ultimate drive for Irish independence in the late nineteenth century.

The concepts established by Kiberd and Bhabha are seconded by Spivak, who writes that

it should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England’s social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English. The role of literature in the production of cultural representation should not be ignored. These two obvious ‘facts’ continue to be disregarded in the reading of nineteenth-century British literature. This itself attests to the continuing success of the imperialist project, displaced and dispersed into more modern forms.¹⁰⁰

The stereotypical ideas about Ireland held by English readers are evident in “Hertford O’Donnell’s Warning,” written by Charlotte Riddell, an Irish expatriate living in England. The story is narrated in first-person, and Riddell’s own Irish origins seem to give her *carte blanche* to paint her characters with credibility, regardless of how little they

⁹⁸ Bhabha 35.

⁹⁹ Bhabha 35

¹⁰⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,” *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 269.

conformed to the “true Irishman” or “true Englishman.” Not only is the supernatural banshee of the story a fantasy, but the portrayals of the characters and landscapes, comparing sophisticated, urban London to wild, dramatic Ireland are also written to suit Victorian expectations.

The protagonist, Hertford O’Donnell, is regarded as a skilful surgeon, but merely because of his lack of “sentiment and...sympathy.”¹⁰¹ Riddell’s description of O’Donnell’s steeliness in the face of “screams of agony...faces white with pain, and teeth clenched in the extremity of anguish,”¹⁰² suggests the inherent cruelty of a subhuman savage. Riddell’s description conforms to the colonisers’ rhetoric of the Irish lack of compassion, which is conversely found in the more civilised, humane English. Oddly enough, this description contradicts the commonly stereotype of the Irish as being overly sentimental. Perhaps in this paradox, the notion of Irish as being native “savages” overrides their supposed tendency to be excessively emotional to ensure that the English character, emotional or not, may be viewed as superior to that of the Irish.

Thus, the idea that O’Donnell is a skilled surgeon is actually a backhanded compliment, represented by Riddell’s tongue-in-cheek comparison. She writes that “precisely as Brunel loved the Thames Tunnel, or any other singular engineering feat, so O’Donnell loved a patient on whom he had operated successfully, more especially if the ailment possessed...were of a rare and difficult character.”¹⁰³ Riddell likens Brunel’s

¹⁰¹ Charlotte Riddell, “Hertford O’Donnell’s Warning,” *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O’Gríofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 120.

¹⁰² Riddell 120.

¹⁰³ Riddell 120.

laudable love of creative, productive engineering to the wild Irish passion for the grisly, macabre details of pathological anatomy.

O'Donnell's character also suffers when juxtaposed with the stereotypical English norms. Riddell betrays her origins when writing that "he was Irish-not merely by the accident of birth, which might have been forgiven, but by every other accident and design which is objectionable to the orthodox and respectable and representative English mind."¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, O'Donnell's Celtic identity is contrasted not only against English sensibilities, but also those of the respectable Anglo-Irish. Riddell's distinction between the Irish "by birth" and the Irish who are Irish in terms of character distinguishes the Protestant Anglo-Irish, with some ethnic and religious ties to England, from the maligned poor Catholic majority, who constituted what may be perceived as a non-Protestant Celtic Other.

O'Donnell plays the role of quintessential Paddy "in modes of speech, appearance, manner, taste, modes of expression, habits of life."¹⁰⁵ Despite the Act of Union and despite O'Donnell's stated resolution never to revisit Ireland, Riddell refuses to allow O'Donnell to assimilate. O'Donnell is merely the exotic Other.

The recklessness attributed to the Irish is expressed in O'Donnell's disastrous financial affairs. Although the Irishman has found a niche in hectic London society, he cannot manage his alleged success. Riddell writes that "he was making money, and he

¹⁰⁴ Riddell 122.

¹⁰⁵ Riddell 122.

was spending it; he was over head and ears in debt...useless, vulgar debt, senselessly contracted, never bravely faced."¹⁰⁶ Again, Riddell insinuates that the Irish are not only financially incompetent, but also cowardly, thus justifying British or Anglo-Irish rule over the imagined Irish buffoon.

Furthermore, Riddell also creates an atmosphere of fantasy in her depiction of the pastoral Irish landscape as contrasted with the metropolis of London. Describing O'Donnell's youth, Riddell's account of the Irishman's exploits reads like a travelogue, designed to offer a visual escape to jaded London readers. Riddell writes that O'Donnell "had ridden like a centaur over the loose stone walls in Connemara...danced all night at the Dublin balls...had walked across the Bennebeola Mountains...had led a mad, wild life in Trinity College."¹⁰⁷ These descriptions recall images of thrilling, perhaps carefree pleasures which suggest a return to an romanticised, simpler existence untainted by the Industrial Revolution.

Toward the end of the story, Riddell introduces the myth of the banshee, of which O'Donnell is frightened; "he was not afraid of death, he was not afraid of trouble, he was not afraid of danger, but he was afraid of the banshee."¹⁰⁸ This ironic statement reiterates the stereotypes of the superstitious Celt, whose nonsensical beliefs bring about his/her downfall. Moreover, O'Donnell mentally catalogues an extensive list of incidents involving the dreaded banshee. The dramatic contrast between Irish superstition and

¹⁰⁶ Riddell 123.

¹⁰⁷ Riddell 126.

¹⁰⁸ Riddell 132.

English rationalism is perhaps best exemplified by the English house-surgeon, “who had an idea, nevertheless, that Hertford O’Donnell’s banshee lived in a whiskey bottle.”¹⁰⁹

O’Donnell is shown to have an honourable character at the end of the story, preferring to marry for love rather than desperately needed money. Despite the happy ending, O’Donnell’s appeal is perhaps due to his role as the endearing “noble savage,” a caricature of the Irish presence in London.

Although Riddell’s use of stereotypes attempts to justify Anglo-Irish rule and the superior rationality and civilisation of her English readers, the notion of Ireland as England’s fantasyland was not only promulgated by self-interested Anglo-Irish writers. Catholic Gerald Griffin paints a similar disparaging image of his compatriots; his “Unburied Legs,” a tale which combines comedy and the supernatural, again emphasises picturesque Irish settings and the image of the Irish peasants as superstitious, bucolic papists.

Griffin’s scenes of Kerry provide an innocuous picture postcard rather than an accurate tale of the grim settings of massive rural poverty. The tale opens in a “little cabin, romantically situated amidst a little group of elder and ash trees in the village of Abbeydorney.”¹¹⁰ The protagonist, Shoresha Hewer, subsequently witnesses the supernatural legs, perhaps symbolic of the Celtic motif of bodiless legs still visible on the Manx flag. The legs “hopped over a trench, picked their steps through a patch of bog or

¹⁰⁹ Riddell 139.

pushed through a thicket.”¹¹¹ The journey continues through tangled underwood, along the river Flesk, and through blackthorn and briar bushes. This depiction, especially combined with the stated “dewy hour of the morning,”¹¹² creates an eerie setting with endearing natural charms. The wild, sparsely inhabited landscape, evocative of the exotic imagery of Lady Douglas and Charles Maturin, prepares the metropolitan English imagination for the ensuing ghostly apparition. The imagery is also deeply rooted in the Romantic frame of mind, which pervaded contemporary landscape painting with dramatic, transcendental scenes of nature.

The idea of Ireland as the home to vast ruins and anachronistic remnants of a romantic past is explored in the story’s inclusion of the “remains of an old church.”¹¹³ This scene is the setting for the story’s climax, wherein the legs simply vanish, and the disappearance of the legs may be seen as an allegory to the end of Celtic civilisation in Ireland. The atmosphere of Griffin’s church also suggests the heightened emotion of unrestrained loneliness; “and close to where the west gable formerly stood is one solitary tree which, in that unwooded and almost uninhabited region, only adds to the universal loneliness.”¹¹⁴ At this site are a few neglected graves, symbolic monuments to a forgotten past which would have appealed to English antiquarians.

The inhabitants of Griffin’s idyllic setting are the epitome of Irish superstitiousness, Catholicism, and incompetence. Hewer leaves his home “to overtake

¹¹⁰ Gerald Griffin, “The Unburied Legs,” *Great Irish Tales of Horror*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992) 128.

¹¹¹ Griffin 129.

¹¹² Griffin 130.

¹¹³ Griffin 131.

an early mass in the village of Abbeydorney,”¹¹⁵ although it becomes clear that the bumpkin also plans to further a love interest during the service. He is soon joined by a neighbour who is journeying to Listowel “for the priest to christen his child.”¹¹⁶ The Catholic motif is furthered by the symbolism of the “cross-road”¹¹⁷ of a travel, with the word cross semantically resembling the Catholic crucifix, the comparison of the party chasing the errant legs to “the congregation of some little village chapel,”¹¹⁸ and the above-mentioned church at the story’s climax.

The repeated illusions to Irish Catholicism are accompanied by the peasant’s devotion to irrational, supernatural forces. The combination of Catholicism and superstition is most succinctly expressed by Hewer’s invocation of the Holy Virgin when he sees the legs; he cries “Blessed mother in heaven, is it awake or dreaming I am!”¹¹⁹ Hewer subsequently abandons his journey to mass in favour of the supernatural chase. Hewer’s abandonment of his journey perhaps is an attempt to employ the English stereotype of the Irish as lacking in responsibility and believing in mythic nonsense, in contrast to the English love of reason. Furthermore, the inability of the villagers to apprehend or understand the legs restates the theme of Celtic ineptitude.

The only individual who may explain the phenomenon happens to be “one old blind woman...wrinkled and grey.”¹²⁰ The inclusion of this aesthetically unattractive

¹¹⁴ Griffin 131.

¹¹⁵ Griffin 128.

¹¹⁶ Griffin 129.

¹¹⁷ Griffin 129.

¹¹⁸ Griffin 130.

¹¹⁹ Griffin 129.

¹²⁰ Griffin 131.

female storyteller thus insults the significant role of women¹²¹ in ancient Celtic civilisation. The transformation of Celtic female bard to withered hag, also seen in Maturin's "The Doomed Sisters," casts scorn and ridicule upon this vital figure. The story she tells is effectively a parody of the Celtic oral storytelling tradition. Instead of the legends of heroes and divine intervention of the Mythological Cycle, the hag recounts a gruesome story of a love triangle leading to murder. The depiction of the murder portrays the Irish as savage and comically stupid; "in came the fellow with the hatchet and struck a blow that he thought must have severed the head from the body, but it was the two legs he had cut off."¹²²

The ghostly legs of the murder victim make their appearance on the wedding night of the bridegroom and his beloved, employing the wedding tragedy motif used in other Gothic horror tales, including Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). The image of the bodiless legs chasing the bridegroom who is, in turn, searching for the assassin, however, yields far less pathos or suspense. Indeed, the inclusion of the scene not only provides a supernatural explanation for the story's plot, but also pokes additional fun at the stereotyped bloodthirstiness and superstitiousness of rural Irish peasants.

"The Doomed Sisters," written by Irish Protestant Maturin, employs an "I know my natives" pseudo-authenticity with anti-Catholic invective. The story was originally published with the claim that the events that it narrates had occurred in Maturin's own

¹²¹ Powerful women, such as Eachtach and Queen Medb, illustrate the respected role of women in ancient Irish civilisation and mythology.

family, ostensibly to increase the author's credibility and, hence, sales. To separate himself from his Catholic subjects and to gain the respect of English readers, Maturin constructs a narrative that appeals to English, as opposed to Celtic, cultural norms. He painstakingly explains the role of the hag, known as the Collogue, "a name equivalent to Gossip in England or Cummer in Scotland."¹²³ He also explores the significance of the Samhain rites, didactically imparting to the English reader that "the period fixed upon for the performance of these unhallowed rites was now approaching-it was near the 31st of October, the eventful night when such ceremonies were, and still are supposed, in the North of Ireland, to be most potent in their effect."¹²⁴

The author continues with the rhetoric of the coloniser in his explanation of the socio-political conditions of his setting, one hundred years before the story's publication in 1825. The time lag conveniently removes the events from emerging Catholic nationalism, which was already threatening to usurp Ascendancy privilege. Maturin condescendingly opens the tale with a disclaimer, "the tranquillity of the Catholics of Ireland during the disturbed periods of 1715 and 1745 was most commendable, and somewhat extraordinary, to enter into an analysis of their probable motives is not at all the object of the writer."¹²⁵ Indeed, Maturin's object is to justify the dream of Anglo supremacy in Ireland whilst casting a suspicious eye at the Catholic menace.

¹²² Griffin 132.

¹²³ Charles Maturin, "The Doomed Sisters," *Irish Tales of Horror*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992) 36.

¹²⁴ Maturin 36.

¹²⁵ Maturin 32.

Once Maturin's neat distinction between coloniser and colonist has been established, with the author clearly sympathising with the "right" side of the Protestant English, he paints a verbal portrait of the gloomy Irish landscape and Castle Leixlip. The castle is an ancient relic of interest to the antiquarians of Maturin's time period and also a sign of Irish submission to the English Crown. In fact, Maturin highlights "King John's Tower, where it is said that monarch received the homage of the Irish princes as Lord of Ireland and which, at all events, is the most ancient part of the structure."¹²⁶

The story also emphasises the structure's walls as a symbol for Ireland's role as England's fantasyland, with Ireland immured by the Act of Union. The fortified walls, whether surrounding the castle churchyard or the claustrophobic chambers through which Anne, the Catholic heroine, passes, are the ancient boundaries constructed by the Celts to repel invaders. Yet the walls have fallen into English hands and represent the separation of the Ascendancy from the disenfranchised Celtic majority. The walls also represent the restrictive superstitions and Catholicism behind which the traditional Celt is entrenched and which inhibit attainment of exalted Enlightenment knowledge.

Moreover, the story treats the urban English reader to a lush, haunting landscape. The Castle, replete with turrets, gardens, extensive foliage, and proximity to the appealing ruins of Comfy Castle, "has all the sequestered and picturesque character that imagination could ascribe to a landscape a hundred miles from not only the metropolis but an inhabited town."¹²⁷ This distance from civilisation serves as a metaphor for the

¹²⁶ Maturin 37.

¹²⁷ Maturin 33.

intellectual and moral chasm between the backward Celts and the sophisticated English character.

The inhabitants of Maturin's manufactured world are also embodied with the emotion and superstition attributed to the Wild Irish. The daughters of Catholic Baronet Blaney each suffer enigmatic, if not tragic, fates. The first daughter is abducted by "an old woman, in the Fingallian Dress [who] suddenly started out of a thicket and took Jane Blaney by the arm."¹²⁸ The wedding night of the second daughter, recently married to another Irish Catholic, is cut short by the "sudden and most horrible paroxysm of insanity,"¹²⁹ in which the groom massacres his bride.

The fate of Anne is slightly preferable, although she, "partaking only of the very limited education of that period, was left very much to the servants, among whom she increased her taste for superstitions and supernatural horrors."¹³⁰ Anne is advised by the Collogue to participate in the Samhain mysteries to divine her future bridegroom. The tendency for superstitiousness consequently takes on more shocking characteristics in light of the Biblical prohibition against divination¹³¹ and allusions to necrophiliac sexuality. Anne's vision of her future husband transforms into a nightmare when she imagines "I shall be the bride of a corpse...for he I saw tonight is no living man."¹³² This association between the taboo of necrophilia and Catholicism as propaganda is also

¹²⁸ Maturin 34.

¹²⁹ Maturin 35.

¹³⁰ Maturin 36.

¹³¹ See Deut. 18:10.

¹³² Maturin 41.

evident in English Gothic writer Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*, written thirty years before Maturin's work.

Anne's husband, however, is no corpse, but a baronet heralding from Scotland, another romantic, Celtic land occupied by the English Crown. The Scotsman, a native of the rugged highlands, provides an additional source of violence and emotionalism not unlike those same qualities when attributed to the Irish. Indeed, the baronet is guilty of fratricide and cowardly flight from his crime, hoping to be spared "the vengeance of the clan."¹³³

The story explains that during her participation in the Collogue's divination ritual, Anne received the knife with which the baronet had killed his brother. Thus, in this supernatural tale, Maturin combines not only romance and horror, but also manages to malign both the Scots and the Irish for the benefit of entertaining English readers whilst assuring them of the benefits of an English-controlled United Kingdom. Furthermore, critic Katie Trumpener adds that the story represents that "in Scotland as well as in Ireland, then, the regression of Jacobite aristocrats reflects a cataclysmic political defeat and the latent regressiveness of Highland and Milesian culture...the Irish and the Scottish baronets try in vain to flee the political fallout from the '15 and the bellicosity of clan society."¹³⁴

¹³³ Maturin 43.

¹³⁴ Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. Press, 1997) 224.

American horror writer H.P. Lovecraft explains how the preconceived notions of Celtic weirdness and sentimentality assisted Maturin's literary aspirations; "less sophisticated emotions and strains of Celtic mysticism gave him the finest possible natural equipment for his task"¹³⁵. Although Lovecraft's view reads as little more than a confirmation of anti-Celtic racism, Maturin's Irishness, even if it was Anglo-Irishness, could not have hurt his popularity. Whilst Maturin's most famous work is not distinctively Irish in terms subject or inspiration, his short stories, also popular among English readers, often benefited from Maturin's Irish experience, as "it was appealing for those who wanted to exploit the Irish difference-as a romantic race-for an English audience"¹³⁶.

Other authors continued to reinforce these stereotypes throughout the nineteenth century. For example, Joseph Sheridan LeFanu's "The Spectre Lovers" describes the main character, Peter, as an irresponsible youth. LeFanu writes that Peter is a "good-natured slob of a fellow, much more addicted to wrestling, dancing, and love-making than to hard work and fonder of whiskey punch than good advice."¹³⁷ Later, when Peter views spectral soldiers, his first impulse is to blame the apparition on intoxication. Such a characterisation, especially provided by Anglo-Irish LeFanu, could only reinforce the English myth of the Irish peasant as nothing more than a reckless, drunken fool.

¹³⁵ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror In Literature* (New York: Ben Abramson, 1945) 85.

¹³⁶ Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. Notre Dame Press, 1986) 94.

¹³⁷ Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, "The Spectre Lovers," *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 18.

The descriptions of the Irish landscape by Irish writers of the genre exploit the rural, mystical element of the land, often described with melancholy inspired by the moody descriptions of both British Gothic romance and Celtic legend. Thomas Crofton Croker's "The Legend of Knockgrafton" begins by introducing the reader to "a poor man who lived in the fertile glen of Aberlow, at the foot of the gloomy Galtee mountains"¹³⁸. Interestingly, the Anglo-Irish author contrasts "poor" with "fertile," thus insinuating that the man's poverty is due only to his own failures, as the land is obviously capable of bearing harvest. This implied blame cast upon the character would thus exonerate any English readers who were perhaps concerned with any responsibility of British policy for impoverishing the Irish peasantry.

The fantasy of the Irish countryside being suitable for crops and a lively economy is also handled by the anonymous tale, "The Witch Hare," published in 1839, just before the onset of the tragic potato famine. The writer describes the setting as follows: "the luxuriance of the pasture lands in this neighbourhood has always been proverbial, and consequently, Bryan's cows were the finest and the sweetest, and brought the highest price at every market at which he ordered these articles for sale"¹³⁹. As with Croker's story, the image provided by this story reinforces the idea that rural Ireland was thriving during nineteenth-century British rule.

Also for the benefit of the English reader, Irish writers often provided travelogues as part of their stories, creating visual road maps of the countryside that rendered it

¹³⁸ Thomas Crofton Croker, "The Legend of Knockgrafton," *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O'Gríofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 54.

enchancing and idyllic. One writer who served to guide the English readers through the fantasyland was the above-mentioned Croker, who serves as the unnamed narrator in the first-person account of "Daniel O'Rourke." The Irish Croker identifies more with the English tourist, announcing that he heard the tale whilst being waylaid during his wanderings; "I was going to visit the caves in Dursey Island, having spent the morning at Glengariff"¹⁴⁰. The narrator is later described as whimsically "crossing the stepping-stones of the ford of Ballyashenogh"¹⁴¹. Hence, the reader may easily share in Croker's amusement and interest at this strange race in a classic example of the "I know my natives" mentality, which served the purpose of the British imperialist project as it is "uttered in the occupiers' language."¹⁴²

In other stories, the journey, both serving as a travelogue and perhaps an extension of the metaphor for the mythical journey later analysed by Joseph Campbell, is undertaken by the protagonist or other character. The attribution of psychological qualities to landscapes and natural objects, in fact, was often employed by English poet William Wordsworth, as in his "Duddon Sonnets" (1820). In Croker's "The Legend of Knockgrafton," the hunchback Lushmore "was returning one evening from the pretty town of Cahir toward Cappagh...it was quite dark when he came to the old moat of Knockgrafton"¹⁴³. The appeal of this somewhat whimsical description lies in its reference to a "pretty" locale with an exotic, non-Anglo-Saxon name and the use of an anachronistic "moat," indicative of the Gothic influence.

¹³⁹ "The Witch Hare," *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O'Griofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 23.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Crofton Croker, "Daniel O'Rourke," *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O'Griofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 69.

¹⁴¹ Croker, "Daniel O'Rourke" 70.

¹⁴² Kiberd 31.

In William Carleton's "The Three Wishes," the journey appeals more to the melancholic, lonely image of the Irish countryside, as Billy Dawson "was walking...before he stopped...in the bottom of a lonely glen"¹⁴⁴. The story also incorporates the landscape into the ending, thus heightening the eerie effect of the curse; Billy Dawson is doomed to "seek the coldest bogs and quagmires in order to cool his nose"¹⁴⁵. Perhaps the substitution of a dairy and tobacconist's shop in metropolitan London for Carleton's damp, mossy locales would have perhaps provided less ambience for the reader.

Griffin continues with the theme of loneliness in "The Brown Man," which he opens with the image of "a lonely cabin in a lonely glen, on the shores of a lonely lough, one of the most lonesome districts of west Munster [, wherein] lived a lone woman named Guare."¹⁴⁶ Here Griffin seems to be appealing to the English reader's predilection for wild, woolly settings for horror fiction whilst also extensively using alliteration and sentimentality to confirm the reader's idea of the Celt as an emotional bard.

The fantasy that Ireland offered English readers in search of adventure coincided neatly with the fantasy that was currently in vogue with the rise and popularity of Gothic horror novels, a tradition which was born with Walpole's semi-satirical 1765 work *The Castle of Otranto* and continued with the enormously popular *The Mysteries of Udolfo* by

¹⁴³ Croker, "The Legend of Knockgraston" 54.

¹⁴⁴ William Carleton, "The Three Wishes," *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O'Gríofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 94.

¹⁴⁵ Carleton 118.

Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*. Hopeful Irish writers learned to capitalise on the current interest in horror; Charles Maturin's seminal 1820 work *The Wanderings of Melmoth* was written partly as the author's personal escape from his grim Dublin surroundings.

Ireland, however, being a distinct island across the sea, yet close enough for visits, provided the ideal combination of mysterious and familiar. Ireland was familiar enough for readers so as not to be frightening. The Act of Union of 1800 had brought Ireland into the United Kingdom, and its residents physically looked like the English. Indeed, the Anglo-Irish hegemony had created a society with elements that often resembled their English counterparts. Contrasting the idea of Ireland as a convenient escape from English ordinariness with Bakhtin's carnival, King states that these novels and stories "can all too readily degenerate into a kind of fictional zoo—a space where the sophisticated English reader may visit to marvel at the sheer Otherness of Ireland before returning once again to the security of metropolitan normality"¹⁴⁷. Devin A. Garrity has also commented on the juxtaposition of familiar and exotic in Ireland that proved to be so irresistible to English readers, claiming that in Ireland "nowhere is...magic more in evidence than in (Irish) short stories—stories that combine lyricism, humour, and tragedy with rare imagination set in simple backgrounds, without resort to props."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Gerald Griffin, "The Brown Man," *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 316.

¹⁴⁷ Smyth 45.

¹⁴⁸ Devin A. Garrity, introduction, *Irish Stories and Tales*, ed. Devin Garrity (New York: Pocket Books, 1957) vii.

Whilst the uncanny and marvellous represented opportunities for readers to find consolation or escape in a world of rapid change, the fantastic element of the stories also extended to the representation of Ireland itself. The “enchanted, pastoral quality”¹⁴⁹ of the Ireland of the stories of Croker and Griffin was nothing more than a fantasy; real contemporary Ireland was a land where centuries of British occupation and abuse had led to devastating consequences for the majority of the Celtic population in the country, not the least of which was the virtual loss of their language and property. Seamus Deane characterises this fantasy as a “winsome view of the Irish as an entertaining people rather than a people horribly mutilated and demoralised by English misrule.”¹⁵⁰

Ironically, the English readers who were vicariously horrified through the terror facing Irish characters in horror tales were probably blithely ignorant of the real social frights facing the majority of the Irish populace. Thus, these decidedly unmimetic works provided a double fantasy: the situational fantasy of supernatural deeds and the social fantasy of Ireland as “sometimes...an Edenic, sometimes...a Utopian place.”¹⁵¹

The almost invisible distinction between cultural epithet and affirmation has provided difficulties for both novelists and critics, as portraying Ireland in literature “can easily fall into the trap of reproducing the stereotypes of colonialist discourse, only this time with a fragile positive emphasis”¹⁵². Irish Gothic and Romantic horror, whether written in accordance with English stereotypes of an exotic land of flawed sensitivities or

¹⁴⁹ Deane 104.

¹⁵⁰ Deane 114.

¹⁵¹ Deane 8.

¹⁵² Smyth 36.

as a reclamation of cultural nationalism and identity, treats the stereotypes of Ireland as Britain's fantasy as valid, again pandering to the expectations of the English reader.

Finding only a limited market for their writings in Ireland, especially since "those Irish who were literate in English were not great buyers of books,"¹⁵³ Irish writers, such as Gerald Griffin and Bram Stoker, headed for Britain, hoping to burst onto the literary scene. These expatriate novelists and short story writers, as well as the creators, such as J. Sheridan LeFanu, of horror fiction who remained in Ireland, wrote "with one eye cocked on the English audience,"¹⁵⁴ since the English literary market was indeed the largest and most lucrative in the British Isles. Consequently, Irish writers of horror often found themselves in the precarious position of balancing "private vision and public consumption,"¹⁵⁵ the latter demanding tales of an exotic, Celtic land of mystery, ghosts, and wildness.

Interestingly, the novel itself was perceived to be a British import to Ireland, as opposed to the Celtic oral tradition; in fact, many Irish cultural nationalists even criticised the form for having "emerged specifically from the concerns of British cultural history and the existence of a leisured middle class."¹⁵⁶ Irish writers who sought fame and profit, however, quickly adapted to this foreign literary form to capitalise on "the vogue for Celtic civilisation"¹⁵⁷ and legends. Smyth claims that the practice of writing for the English reader has continued until the present day, "revealing a discourse in which all

¹⁵³ Kiberd 115.

¹⁵⁴ Kiberd 115.

¹⁵⁵ Smyth 44.

¹⁵⁶ Smyth 25.

¹⁵⁷ Smyth 40.

manner of special pleading, cultural pandering, and subtle manoeuvring is directed at an encoded English reader.”¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, most of these writers “came, inevitably, from the upper classes and their commerce with the full range of Irish society was very limited.”¹⁵⁹ Consequently, Anglo-Irish writer hailing from Phoenix Park in Dublin would perhaps have much more in common with relatives in Yorkshire than with compatriots from the Gaeltacht; consequently, their tales may give an incorrect perception of life in the countryside. Furthermore, these writers, seeking to appease English readership, provided a psychological comfort by portraying the Irish as an incompetent, bucolic race; they “produced a literature of the ‘I-know-my-natives’ kind, a set of texts purporting to record native psychology as quaint as reassuring to readers who might otherwise have feared”¹⁶⁰ the true drawbacks to life in colonial Ireland. The fact that these writers hailed from the Emerald Isle gave a false stamp of authenticity to their work.

Most members of the English literary audience were perhaps not concerned about complete accuracy in the representation of Ireland in horror novels. Readers were likely not looking for a deep political or socio-cultural discourse about the Celts; they were merely using Ireland much as they had used Sir Walter Scott’s Scottish settings or Emily Bronte’s moors, as an exotic setting conducive to exhilarating adventure. Seamus Deane compares the ease of misrepresentation within Scottish and Irish, as both societies were portrayed for an occupying civilisation, leaving the novelist in a “politically and

¹⁵⁸ Smyth 44.

¹⁵⁹ Smyth 136.

aesthetically difficult, if not perilous position”¹⁶¹. Deane opines, however, that Scott is indeed successful at his effort, having learned much from Irish Maria Edgeworth.

Edgeworth, author of *Castle Rackrent*, was one of the few Irish writers who objected to the continuous use of degrading stereotypes for the Irish. In the “Essay on Irish Bulls,” co-penned by Edgeworth and her husband, they satirise the English literary expectations, claiming that the typical English reader “should have nothing to drink in Ireland but whiskey, that I should have nothing to eat but potatoes, that I should sleep in mud-walled cabins, and that I should know nothing but the Irish howl, the Irish brogue, Irish answers, and Irish bulls”¹⁶². Edgeworth, as Jonathan Swift had done in his satirical solution, “A Modest Proposal,” supports her socio-political views by shocking English readers with honest, stark visions of rural Irish poverty.

Most horror writers, with the exception of George Moore, did not share Edgeworth’s bold convictions or honesty when describing the daily life of the Irish peasants, preferring to meet “the perennial pressure of audience expectations in England.”¹⁶³ Seamus Deane states, as I observed earlier in my argument, that these tales even served, through their misrepresentation of Irish society and conditions, to free the average English reader from any blame for misrule; the stories were “the perfect escape hatch for those who found the condition of Ireland intractable and would take no responsibility for it.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Smyth 50.

¹⁶¹ Deane 94.

¹⁶² Foster 260.

¹⁶³ Foster 261.

¹⁶⁴ Deane 94.

Moreover, the British audiences were well aware of the “fascination with fantasy, dreams, and visions”¹⁶⁵ attributed to Irish culture and in fact quite prevalent in Gaelic folklore. As a result, readers relished the invention that proclaimed that that Ireland matched what life in the Celtic fringe “‘should be’: wild, rural, haunting, and overly emotional. This idea of Celtic civilisation offered the possibility of “healing the rift between Nature and an overly refined European civilisation in danger of complete enervation”¹⁶⁶.

The appeal of Irish Gothic and Romantic horror may be indicative of the appeal of romanticism in general in late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Europe. A well-groomed Victorian gentleman or gentlewoman observing the strictly defined social niceties of his or her civilisation, all the whilst being astonished with the increasing use of electric lights, daguerrotypes, and railways may have bemoaned the loss of what was perceived as a more sentimental, gentler, slower-paced era. Cockshut discusses the “generation gap” between Romantic John Stuart Mill and his more “rational” father:

To a large extent...Mill was an unconscious rebel against his father's authority. His father regarded the passionate and sentimental relations between the sexes with contempt; the son believed his wife to possess superhuman gifts and virtues. The father had the usual Utilitarian distaste for art; the son's essay on poetry shows a romantic taste and treats poetry as a private voice of pure feeling, overheard by the reader rather than publicly presented by the poet.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Smyth 44.

¹⁶⁶ Smyth 45.

¹⁶⁷ Cockshut 12.

The attack on the seemingly mundane was also fuelled by the writings of Wordsworth, whose bucolic imagery may remind the reader of the works of American poet Walt Whitman. Furthermore, Smyth claims that “the pastoral myth invoked by Irish cultural nationalism owed much to the Romanticism of English writers such as... Wordsworth.”¹⁶⁸ Similarly, political philosopher John Ruskin attacked industrialism for supposedly having “set up a gulf between Christianity and *laissez-faire* economics. Ruskin solemnly accused the commercial classes of having set up a doctrine systematically opposed to the first principles of their professed religion.”¹⁶⁹

As the Industrial Revolution took its toll on Britain, dislocating rural farmers and exacerbating pollution, noise, and urban blight in the cities, readers eagerly consumed works of literature which would transport them to the realms of the imagination. King writes that “the image of a romantic Celtic fringe was developed in the latter half of the eighteenth century as a foil for England’s own pragmatic, progressive identity and to provide a space where the jaded metropolitan imagination could take occasional holidays from the rigors of the imperialist project.”¹⁷⁰

The Irish horror fiction of this era was seen as a welcome invasion of surreal forces in a society hopelessly dedicated to the expansion and aggrandisement of the empire. Whereas the proper British reader denied excess emotionalism in his- or herself, Irish horror provided a needed dose of catharsis, “a combination of narrative complexity, emotional hysteria, and the incursion of supernatural systems on a hopelessly flawed and

¹⁶⁸ Smyth 59.

¹⁶⁹ Cockshut 22.

corrupt real world.”¹⁷¹ By living vicariously through the thrilling adventures of Stoker’s Mina Harker or LeFanu’s Maud Ruthyn, the reader effectively finds “a site where the fears and desires repressed under the pressures of the real world of capitalism and imperialist politics surface”¹⁷².

To understand the reaction of the reader to these texts, it might be useful to explore the structuralist theory of Tzvetan Todorov. Todorov has written extensively about the fantastic in fiction, attempting to define the genre; he acknowledges the position of many theorists, including Lovecraft, to consider the fantastic in terms of the reader, “not the reader implicit in the text, but the actual person holding the book in his hand.”¹⁷³ The actual reaction of fright or wonder provoked by an author’s work is seen as necessary core of all horror fiction. Roger Callois affirms that this core may be interpreted as “the touchstone of the fantastic...the impression of irreducible strangeness.”¹⁷⁴

Todorov also states that the reader is then challenged to decide between reality and surrealism, between sanity and madness. As the reader follows the actions and reactions of the stories’ and novels’ protagonists, vicariously placing himself or herself in the plot, he or she will have to decide if the supernatural happenings in the stories are occurring inside or outside the minds of these characters and, hence, themselves.

¹⁷⁰ Smyth 44.

¹⁷¹ Smyth 52.

¹⁷² J. Michael Dash, “Psychology, Creolisation, and Hybridisation,” *An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King. (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 45.

¹⁷³ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structuralist Approach to the Literary Genre*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975) 34.

¹⁷⁴ Todorov 34.

Occasionally the “supernatural” element is explained at the end of the story, as in LeFanu’s *Wylder’s Hand* or *Uncle Silas*. In other stories, often more faithful reproductions of folk elements, such as the same author’s “The White Cat of Drumgunniol,” the supernatural remains inexplicable and still fantastic. Todorov claims, however, that at the end of the novel, the reader always emerges from the fantastic, deciding that the events of the novel are uncanny, or explainable in terms of the laws of nature, or marvellous, meaning that “new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena.”¹⁷⁵

Todorov has thus constructed a structuralist classification by which these works of horror may be categorised, with the uncanny, a rational explanation for the fantastic at one end of the spectrum, and the marvellous, with no “rational” explanation, at the other extreme. Between both categories are the categories “fantastic-uncanny” and “fantastic-marvellous.” The “fantastic-uncanny” classification involves characters and readers who believe that events are supernatural but are later proven to be rationally explained, revealing the characters and readers to be “unaccustomed.”¹⁷⁶ This technique, also explored by Jacqueline Rose, is characterised usually by use of coincidences, human limitations in understanding the unseen forces behind the events, and even use of taboos, such as murder or incest.

The above-mentioned *Wylder’s Hand*, along with other examples of LeFanu’s sensation novels, is an example of this characterisation, with a ghost revealed to be a

¹⁷⁵ Todorov 40.

¹⁷⁶ Todorov 44.

highly contrived case of mistaken identity. The book's popularity in Victorian times perhaps was due to readers' identification with the rationalism that explains the uncanny. It may have also been appreciated by readers who were constantly forced to look at and redefine their rapidly changing society.

In contrast, the "fantastic-marvellous" category reveals events to benefit from no known rational expectation, thus prompting an acceptance of the supernatural. The marvellous elements may be defined by their hyperbolic dimensions, which exceed natural possibilities. The marvellous may also be defined in terms of the exotic marvellous, usually with recourse to places where "the implicit reader is supposed to be ignorant...consequently has no reason for calling [events] into question."¹⁷⁷ The use of folk elements, such as banshees and fairies, in Irish horror exemplifies the exotic marvellous, especially since British readers, as has been previously stated, considered Ireland as a fantasyland.

Furthermore, Todorov adds two further dimensions to the marvellous, including the instrumental marvellous and the scientific marvellous. The instrumental marvellous involves tools or inventions that, whilst technically possible, provide supernatural effects due to the fact that such items do not yet exist. A magic potion or amulet would serve as examples of the instrumental marvellous. Similar, yet distinct, is the scientific marvellous, known today as science fiction. In these stories, the supernatural is explained rationally, yet beyond the limits of known science. Darko Suvin, who has distinguished science fiction from fantasy, claiming that the former may be cognitively explained and

the latter is inherently irrational, has also formulated a satisfactory definition of this type of writing. Suvin states that it constitutes “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment.”¹⁷⁸

Again, LeFanu's psychological horror stories, often involving the experiments of Dr. Hesselius, such as “Green Tea,” serve as models of the scientific marvellous. English readers again would have found these stories appealing in an age of discovery and industrialisation where what was previously seen as supernatural, such as electricity and the telephone, were suddenly placed in the natural realm.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, however, Victorian horror adopted new facets, including increased subtlety and greater use of psychological menace. Comparing Gothic and Victorian horror, Ruth Jeffries notes that “although drawing on the Gothic tradition, realistic [Victorian] horror fiction presents characters in the drawing rooms and at their places of work instead of distancing them in exotic settings such as mediaeval castles or subterranean passages.”¹⁷⁹

The change from the Italian setting of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, the Provencal and Italian settings of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolfo*, and even Melmoth's vast

¹⁷⁷ Todorov 55.

¹⁷⁸ Darko Suvin, quotation. *The SF Book of Lists*. eds. Malcolm Edwards and Maxim Jakubowski, (New York: Berkley, 1982) 258.

¹⁷⁹ Ruth Jeffries, “The Marginalised Genre: Diversity in the Victorian Short Story,” *Mysterious Bytes* May 1995: 4.

wanderings in Maturin's novel to innocuous-appearing villages and estates represents a maturing or deepening in the concept of horror. Moreover, "this ordinariness has the effect of heightening the horrific when it is introduced."¹⁸⁰ The contrast between the mundane and the terrifying has survived to contemporary horror, with such examples as Stephen King's *The Shining*. Prolific author King has analysed the horror genre of literature and film in *Danse Macabre*, in which he writes that

horror appeals to us because it says, in a symbolic way, things we would be afraid to say right out straight, with the bark still on; it offers us a chance to exercise...emotions which society demands we keep closely in hand...Perhaps more than anything else, the horror story...says it's okay to join the mob, to become the total tribal being, to destroy the outsider.¹⁸¹

The new element of realism to Victorian horror also allows "the supernatural element [to be] used in new ways to address contemporary problems of Victorian society."¹⁸² The conflict between scientific and supernatural in ordinary existence perhaps suggests the lively struggle between the previous century's enlightenment thought and a more innocent tradition in Victorian England. These stories placed "sceptical rationalism and scientific materialism in competition with belief in the spiritual world and life beyond death."¹⁸³ The tales of horror, "although not necessarily anti-scientific, imply that science cannot 'explain it all'."¹⁸⁴ Whilst they terrified their audiences, perhaps the fantasy also gave them hope in a world vaster and more incomprehensible than the excess industrialisation and rationalism provided by proponents of British enlightenment philosophy and mercantilist economics.

¹⁸⁰ Jeffries 9.

¹⁸¹ Stephen King, *Danse Macabre*. (New York: Berkley, 1981) 31.

¹⁸² Jeffries 7.

Furthermore, with improved technology and transportation, remote realms of the empire were more accessible than in previous centuries. Dealing with British colonials from far-flung regions of the world with unfamiliar cultural backgrounds, languages, and costumes, became an increasing issue for the English public. The use of fantasy in literature also “enabled Victorians to begin addressing their own interaction with the ‘others’ of the Empire.”¹⁸³ Not least significant or foreign of these Others were the Irish.

To claim that Victorian horror was purely a transition from exotic to familiar would be an inherent fallacy. Whilst the settings of Victorian horror may have become less contrived, the sense of the supernatural and the heightened emotion may be described as fantastic. The blend between subtle and overt emerged as “Victorians attempted to combine Romantic emphases upon self, emotion, and imagination with Neoclassicist ones.”¹⁸⁶ Whilst the Neoclassicist period, characterised by reason and order, incited direct rebellion with the Gothic movement, “the Romantic movement revived literary interest in the imaginary and the supernatural.”¹⁸⁷

In a rapidly changing world, with the social dichotomies between rational and irrational which characterised the Victorian era, “the world of the realistic novel [was] inadequate to human needs.”¹⁸⁸ As a result, ghost stories and so-called sensation fiction

¹⁸³ Jeffries 8.

¹⁸⁴ Jeffries 8.

¹⁸⁵ Jeffries 9.

¹⁸⁶ George Landow, “And The World Became Strange: Realms of Literary Fantasy,” *The Georgia Review* Spring 1979: 1.

¹⁸⁷ Jeffries 9.

¹⁸⁸ Landow 1.

became extremely popular, “appearing in such periodicals as *Blackwoods*, *Cornhill*, and *Tinsley*.”¹⁸⁹ To respond to this continuing appetite for supernatural stories, perhaps most writers, both English and Irish, including Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde, wrote at least one piece of supernatural fiction.

Michael Cox claims that “the profusion of ghost stories published in the nineteenth century signifies, at the lowest level, nothing more than a taste for thrills amongst a literate but unsophisticated readership.”¹⁹⁰ The lingering fantasy of Ireland offered this audience what it craved. As opposed to the progress of Britain, Ireland represented a location where pre-Industrial Revolution conditions still reigned; it served as a place where and about which the reader could still dream. The perceived Irish retention of superstition coincided with the goal of horror fiction: to “show the intransigence of immemorial beliefs, or what the rationalist calls superstition.”¹⁹¹ As the nineteenth-century British audiences relished these superstitions, however, they neglected the possible fallacy of the stereotypes; Jose Rabasa later observed that “cultural products should be taken as rhetorical artifices and not as depositories of data from which a factual truth may be construed.”¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Landow 7.

¹⁹⁰ Michael Cox, introduction, *Twelve Victorian Ghost Stories*, ed. Michael Cox (New York: Oxford Press, 1997) viii.

¹⁹¹ Cox viii.

¹⁹² Jose Rabasa, *A-M-E-R-I-C-A: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism*. (Norman, OK: U. of Oklahoma Press, 1993) 9.

CHAPTER TWO: MYTHIC ORIGINS

The stereotype that Ireland holds an ancient tradition of folk tales incorporating ghosts, spirits, fairies, and other creatures stems from the rich annals of Irish myth and legend. Irish writers, however, influenced by the opportunities afforded by the greater European cultural scene, were often inspired by Anglo-Saxon or Continental myths and legends. Consequently, in the nineteenth century, Irish horror literature became a fusion of these diverse, yet intertwined civilisations.

Martin O’Griofa states that “the literature of the Irish Celts has always reflected a preternatural fear of the supernatural, characteristic of both ancient and modern fiction.”¹⁹³ Although the “long and rich oral tradition”¹⁹⁴ of the Irish had begun long before the island’s conversion to Christianity, not until the advent of Roman-style monasticism during the fifth century CE did writing become an integral part of Irish literature. This introduction of “Latin culture into contact with a Gaelic civilisation”¹⁹⁵ soon blended both Christian and Celtic elements. This mixing of cultures and the consequences of multicultural encounters, whether forced or voluntary, are discussed at length by J. Michael Dash in “Psychology, Creolisation, and Hybridisation.” Here Dash writes that “the notion of timeless tradition has given way to a view of all societies as caught up in a process of contact, change, and transformation.”¹⁹⁶ I believe that the blending of Latin and native Gaelic elements might be compared to later colonial encounters between the

¹⁹³ Martin O’Griofa, introduction, *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O’Griofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 7

¹⁹⁴ Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. Notre Dame Press, 1986) 11.

¹⁹⁵ Deane 11.

French settlers and Mohawk Indians of Quebec, to British settlers and the Maori people of New Zealand and perhaps even to American cultural and technological influences that pervade societies around the globe. The linguistic dimension of these cross-cultural encounters will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

As the Christian missionaries often incorporated Celtic lore into Christian tales, the ancient professional class of scholars, including the *file*, or poet, operated synergistically with the newly emerging clergy. The *file*'s function was to record in writing traditional legends, known as *senchas*, and the monastic scribes subsequently reworked these beliefs into a Christian framework, hence easing Ireland's transition from 'pagan' to Christian. The legends, including "the origin stories of Irish history and the great sagas—the Ulster Cycle, centered on Cu Chulainn, the Fenian cycle, centred on Finn Mac Cumhaill, the Cycle of the Kings, including the story of Mad Sweeney, and the Mythological Cycle and the group of Immrama or voyages,"¹⁹⁷ were written down in Irish initially during the sixth and seventh century and subsequently copied and recopied faithfully from original texts.

Lore describing evil spirits and supernatural events were naturally included in the corpus of legends, which were lent a Christian flavour by the scribes and clergy. The tellers of the *senchas*, known as *seanchai*, still "sat around the hearths enthralling their audiences their audiences, young and old, with tales of the wild, grotesque and fantastic

¹⁹⁶ J. Michael Dash, "Psychology, Creolisation, and Hybridisation." *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*. Ed. Bruce King (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996). 45.

¹⁹⁷ Deane 11.

beings prowling just outside their door.”¹⁹⁸ The characters often took on new attributes in their Christian context. For example, the Tuatha De Danaan, discussed below, known as gods in pre-Christian Ireland, were suddenly demoted to heroes and heroines, “although much remained to demonstrate their godlike abilities”¹⁹⁹.

As the Celts were among the first European peoples to formulate a doctrine of the immortality of the soul, a fantastic Otherworld enters into these ancient myths in legends. Peter Berresford Ellis explains the influence that this sophisticated belief played on the element of the supernatural. He claims that “when a soul dies in this world, it is reborn in the Otherworld, and when a soul dies in the Otherworld, it is reborn in this.”²⁰⁰ The presence of evil spirits, or demons, in this literature is also present. Often the evil spirits are the souls of individuals killed tragically or dramatically. Marie-Louise Von Franz, known for her Jungian perspective, theorises that the presence of such evil represents what may be perceived as a glut of unchecked energy, which has been prematurely blocked due to the body’s unexpected death. As a result, the energy turns hostile, “has not had time to detach naturally from the living, and therefore now has a destructive and dangerous effect in the world of the living.”²⁰¹

Indeed, the element of the macabre and otherworldly in Irish myth may be traced back to the ancient cycle based on the deeds of the Tuatha De Danann. This cycle tells of “the fairy race who held Ireland before the coming of the Gaels and who subsequently

¹⁹⁸ Peter Haining, introduction, *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992) 13.

¹⁹⁹ Peter Berresford Ellis, ed., *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (New York: Oxford Press, 1992) 211.

²⁰⁰ Ellis 14.

²⁰¹ Marie-Louise Von Franz, *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales*. Boston: Shambhala, 1995) 159.

disappeared into the landscape,"²⁰² repelled by the Milesians, or the ancestors of the Gaels. Before their disappearance, they had come to Ireland with their leader Nuada from a northern country. While Tuatha De Danann, the folk of the ancient goddess Dana, perhaps embodied goodness and light, their nemeses, the Fomorii, whom they overcame, symbolise the powers of darkness. These Fomorii, the opposite of the Tuatha De Danann, were physically deformed, as well as violent. Eventually, their power was dismantled permanently at the legendary battle of Magh Tuireadh²⁰³.

The fact that the Fomorii were physically deformed symbolises for Von Franz the belief that "evil entails being swept away by one-sidedness, by only one single pattern of behaviour."²⁰⁴ The Fomorii, being portrayed with one eye or limb, thus perhaps metonymically imply that evil is a defective soul, the completion of which would require virtue, goodness, and light. The symbol of physical deformity or lack of completion was later borrowed by LeFanu, who chills his reader with the portrayal of a supernatural hand; "there was nothing but the hand, which was rather short, but handsomely formed, and white and plump, laid on the edge of the windowsill."²⁰⁵ Furthermore, the conflict between light and darkness is also represented by the struggle between God and the devil in traditional Christian thought.

It may be useful to explore the writings of Joseph Campbell, who has described the five major cycles of ancient Irish mythology in his *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*.

²⁰² Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*. (Chicago: Pluto, 1997) 50.

²⁰³ Ellis 211.

²⁰⁴ Von Franz 179.

²⁰⁵ Michael Cox, introduction, *Twelve Victorian Ghost Stories*, ed. Michael Cox (New York: Oxford Press, 1997) viii.

He writes of the Annals of the Milesians, “semi-historical chronicles of the last arriving race.”²⁰⁶ Each of these cycles contains elements common to most Indo-European folklore; thus, the cycles are thought to have been created before the Celts reached Ireland. The Ulster Cycle of the Knights of the Red Branch, deals with the exploits of Cu Chulainn. This second cycle greatly influenced the formation of the Arthurian legend, also revived during Victorian times by Alfred Lord Tennyson in *Idylls of the King* (1859-1872). Campbell explains this influence throughout other Celtic lands, “in Wales, Brittany, and England-the court of Conchobar (the uncle of Cu Chulainn) serving as a model for that of King Arthur and the deeds of Cu Chulainn for those of Arthur’s nephew Sir Gawain.”²⁰⁷ Campbell also mentions the Cycle of the Fianna, heroic warriors who were united under the leadership of charismatic Finn MacCool; the love triangle between Finn, Grianni, and Diarmaid eventually influenced such tales as Algernon Charles Swinburne’s 1881 work, *Tristram of Lyonesse*, a retelling of the Tristan and Iseult romance. Another influential cycle, especially useful for theological propaganda after Ireland’s conversion to Christianity, is that incorporating the lives of the saints.

The final cycle is the Mythological Cycle, which encapsulates the exploits of the Tuatha De Danann. As an analysis of this cycle is crucial for understanding its influence on Victorian horror writers, this chapter will now explore the Mythological Cycle’s use of the mythic mode and symbolic functions. The earliest references to these supernatural folk explain them as having “been banished from heaven, arriving in Ireland in clouds

²⁰⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973) 330.

²⁰⁷ Campbell 330.

and mists.”²⁰⁸ As part of the Irish pantheon, they hold power over agriculture and cattle. After their banishment to the Otherworld, they emerge “now and then to help or to harm mortals,”²⁰⁹ usually as fairies or sprites. These mythological beings are hence known as *aes side*, *daoine sidhe* or *side*, perceived to be the descendants of the Tuatha De Danann or these earlier gods themselves. MacCulloch has drawn a parallel between the *sidhe* and the medieval *contes de fee* of French legend. The *sidhe* derive their name from the *sid*, or mounds of earth through which the original Tuatha De Danann supposedly retreated. Among their deeds among mortals was changing physical shape, occasionally into demons; on one occasion the horrific transformation resulted in “a third of the people dying in fright at seeing them.”²¹⁰

Perhaps a more vivid example of the use of horror in the early myths, which is particularly comparable to the Victorian tales of terror, is the *Echtra Nerai* (Adventures of Nera), which portrays the gods as assuming the forms of demons on Samhain Eve, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In this tale, Ailill the king challenges anyone to tie a band around the foot of a captive’s corpse; several volunteers try but fail due to fear. Nera demonstrates his bravery, although the band supernaturally springs off the foot. The band suggests that Nera attach it to the foot with a peg. Nera succeeds; subsequently the corpse speaks to the hero, asking to be carried to the nearest house for a drink. The first two houses, surrounded respectively by lakes of fire and water, prevent entry, but in the third house the corpse “found water and squirted it on the faces of the sleepers so that

²⁰⁸ J.A. MacCulloch, *Celtic Mythology*. (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1996) 38.

²⁰⁹ MacCulloch 46.

²¹⁰ MacCulloch 58.

they died, after which Nera carried the dead body to the gallows.”²¹¹ The rest of the tale includes the burning of the king’s fort as elfin prophecy and the struggle to destroy the evil side’s dwelling.

The recorded version of the defeat of the Tuatha De Danann has been explained by MacCulloch as symbolic of the acceptance of Christianity over paganism in Ireland. Indeed, in Christian retellings of the myth, “the Tuatha De Danann will soon be reduced in power, for the saint [Patrick] ‘will relegate them to the foreheads of hills and rocks, unless that now and again thou see some pore one of them appear as transiently he revisits the earth.”²¹² The occasional journeys of the fairy people onto mortal territory could thus represent the temptation of the new Irish converts to return to their pagan habits, serving as a warning. As only post-conversion annals of myths survive in written form, one might only surmise how they were told before the arrival of St. Patrick. The tale may be interpreted as representing the English banishment of Gaelic culture to an unseen locale, with flickers of the ancient civilisation still evident in contemporary, oppressed Ireland.

As I have discussed Todorov’s classification of modes in the previous chapter, I shall follow with some of Frye’s distinctions between literary modes, with their protagonists. The story of the Tuatha De Danann would be classified as belonging to the high mimetic, tragic mythic mode. Within this characterisation are myths that often tell of the death or downfall of gods or other divine beings. The result of the banishment of

²¹¹ MacCulloch 68.

²¹² MacCulloch 45.

the Tuatha De Danann is an elegiac mood, “often accompanied by a diffused, resigned, melancholy sense of the passing of time, of the old order changing to a new one.”²¹³ This same, sombre atmosphere pervades much of the Irish horror of the nineteenth century, at the crossroads between past and future, Gaelic and English, including Yeats’s “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” and even LeFanu’s metaphor for the crumbling Anglo-Irish establishment, *Uncle Silas*. Consequently, the Mythological Cycle of ancient Irish lore provides an appropriate archetype for the later works.

I claim that nineteenth-century horror writers often employed low mimesis, or a more figurative telling of the stories, as opposed to the high mimesis, or greater degree of literalness, of the Cycles. While the heroes of the original myths are endowed with supernatural powers, the protagonists or even anti-heroes of the later works are human and paralysed against the forces of the supernatural. In these instances, the stories embody mythical influences “in which the myths represent psychological or subjective states of mind.”²¹⁴ The supernatural thus appeals to the reader as symbolic of his or her highly individualised struggle against nature, preternatural, or supernatural, as opposed to the reader’s real-life struggle against the sweeping changes of progress and empire politics.

Frye later interprets the significance of the demonic imagery, as seen in the archetype *Echtra Nerai* and in the later stories. He discusses the use of terror in the world of the nightmare, “of bondage and pain and confusion; the world as it is before the human

²¹³ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973) 336.

²¹⁴ Frye 60.

imagination begins to work on it.”²¹⁵ This view of the world order is grim and fatalistic, presenting forces, seen or unseen, which require sacrifices, punish mortals on whims, and create apocalyptic conflicts for humanity. The logic behind these supernatural powers may not be comprehensible, but their impact on humankind can be deadly.

At one end of the nightmare world is the tyrant-leader, at the other is the sacrificed victim; the stories of their interactions frequently blend traditional tragedy with hopeless irony, as in the capture of teenager Maud Ruthyn in LeFanu’s *Uncle Silas*. Within demonic imagery and encompassing these forms, Frye includes the “metaphorical identification of vegetable, animal, human, and divine bodies,”²¹⁶ each taking on sinister characteristics. Such metaphors would thus provide much needed explanations or opportunities for psychological displacement of frustration for the audiences during pre-Christian, warring Ireland and the rapid industrialisation of the Victorian era. However, Marxist critic Terry Eagleton, who has criticised Frye’s Christian-centric interpretation, claims that “the recycling of ancient mythology, often in sanitised form, provided a cultural frame within which actions such as the Easter Rising could be deciphered and imaginatively deepened...from Young Ireland to the Revival, culture was often grasped in idealist terms.”²¹⁷ Although I agree with Eagleton’s assertion that Frye’s somewhat reactionary interpretations may be too narrow, I believe that both critics’ views with regard to Irish myth are helpful within the scope of my thesis. While I maintain that

²¹⁵ Frye 147.

²¹⁶ Frye 148.

²¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture*. (New York: Verso, 1996) 227-8.

Frye's concept of modes and notions of imagery are valid, interpretations from other schools of literary criticism perhaps should not be excluded.

These legends and myths hence have indeed remained intact since the Middle Ages and were instrumental during the Celtic revival of the nineteenth century, used often in new stories and novels as a means of inspiring nationalist spirit. These tales, known to the English conquerors, appealed with their mystery and exoticism, as shown in the previous chapter; these myths hence gained great popularity during the Romantic revival. Largely responsible for this vogue was the publication of James MacPherson's *Fingal* and *Temora* during the late eighteenth century. As a result of MacPherson's writings, "Fionn became one of the Celtic heroes of Romanticism long before Cu Chulainn was retrieved for the Irish revival at the close of the European Romantic era."²¹⁸

Haunting Irish lyric poetry, with its themes of longing and melancholic descriptions of locales, effects which pervaded the Gothic and Romantic horror stories, began in the ninth century. At this time, monastic scribes "would insert in the margins of the Latin treatises they were transcribing lyrics on occasional subjects-the song of a blackbird, the sunlight flickering on the pages of the manuscript, a bell ringing on a windy night."²¹⁹ With more ascetic reforms in the ninth century, monks retreated into an existence of greater solitude, which associated them more in lifestyle and reputation with the mysteries of the natural world. The themes of exile and longing for a native land, so evident in Charlotte Riddell's "Hertford O'Donnell's Warning," is evident in the writings

²¹⁸ Deane 13.

²¹⁹ Deane 13.

of St. Colmcille. This monk, who converted Scotland and northern England to Christianity, “lamented the homelands of Gartan and ‘angel-haunted’ Derry, which he would never see again.”²²⁰

From these beginnings emerged an entire tradition of religious and secular poetry using syllabic meters and elaborate alliteration to describe vivid images. Although romantic poetry flourished after the Norman French arrived in Ireland, the heroic and monastic images were softened by the “European traditions of Romance literature.”²²¹ Despite these far-reaching foreign influences, until the sixteenth century, poetry in Ireland served to record heroic virtue and family legacies. While fanciful, romantic literature was being written down, the traditional horror myths continued, always transmitted orally.

The arrival of the New English in the sixteenth century transformed the nature of Irish literature, as English conquerors now sought to destroy the influence of Irish language and culture. Nonetheless, the Gaelic poets, steeped in tradition, “seemed to be unaware of the growing threat to them and the culture which they conserved.”²²² As a result, the oral tradition survived in these arcane circles which even the English could not destroy. The supernatural mythic tradition at this time endured, despite the efforts of the English invaders to eradicate it. Despite the tenacity of the Gaelic poets, the struggle to preserve the Irish oral tradition became more overt in the seventeenth century as the New English became more aggressive in their efforts to rid Ireland of Gaelic civilisation and Catholic influence. In the early years of the seventeenth century, especially after the

²²⁰ Deane 13.

²²¹ Deane 14.

devastating Battle of Kinsdale in 1601, “the leaders of Gaelic Ireland...despaired and, in the famous Flight of the Earls, had fled to the continent...many scholars also emigrated.”²²³

The Irish poets, seemingly defenceless, soon found leadership in the Counter-Revolutionary forces of the Franciscan College of St Anthony at Louvain. In addition to the valiant campaigns on the part of religious reformers to distribute Irish Catholic literature and verse to a widely illiterate peasantry, the heroic tradition was also revived. A supernatural, or divine, element is evident in the writings of Geoffrey Keating, who “attempted to explain the defeat of Catholic and Gaelic civilisation and to provide a millenarian hope that the day of the Gael would come again after the crisis had passed.”²²⁴ His *Tri bior-ghaoithe an bhais* uses the symbolism of sword, plague, and famine to represent the supernatural punishment which was afflicting Ireland.

During the next 150 years, the Gaelic poets fought heroically against the spread of the English language and culture and against the Irish who affected English manners. These challenges energised Irish literature of the period with the need to “fashion myths of recovery or cede to the tragic recognition of culture’s failure.”²²⁵ The themes of these poems, reflecting the increasing loss of a national culture, included “grief at parting, lament for death, drinking, hymns.”²²⁶ Thus, the melancholy and supernatural influences long present in Celtic literature became a new, powerful metaphor.

²²² Deane 17.

²²³ Deane 18.

²²⁴ Deane 19.

²²⁵ Deane 23.

²²⁶ Deane 23.

An example of this branch of poetry was the *aisling* [dream poem], established in Munster by O'Rathaille and perfected by Eoghan Rua O'Suilleabhain. In the *aisling*, the poet envisions a dream woman who approaches him in a vision; she symbolises Ireland and speaks of a new era, when she will be saved by overseas assistance. One such *aisling* is the mid-eighteenth century "Ceo Draiochta" [A Magic Mist], written by O'Suilleabhain and representing a hope of the return to rule of the Stuarts. The concept of the *aisling* survived into the nineteenth century, appearing in LeFanu's "The Spectre Lovers," which will be discussed later in this thesis. In Ulster, where Gaelic poets were even more politically vulnerable than in Munster, the dream woman often did not offer hope, just a desperate plea to "join the silence of the Gaels of Tyrone."²²⁷ Thus, the mythic tradition in Ireland was enriched and transformed to suit the new demands of each century.

Although Seamus Deane claims that by the end of the eighteenth century Gaelic culture had reached its deathbed, he maintains that "as an idea or ideal it continued to live."²²⁸ The antiquarian movement, which was sweeping through Europe during the early stages of the Romantic movement, inspired a new interest in traditional folktales. In 1789, Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry* was published, just twenty years after the appearance of MacPherson's works. Although this antiquarian interest may be interpreted as a longing for the autonomous Irish culture that flourished before the arrival of the English, I believe that the antiquarians perhaps did not regret the English rule of Ireland, but instead sought to mine the colony for a precious resource: folklore.

²²⁷ Deane 24.

²²⁸ Deane 28.

The task of preserving the original Irish myths, including the appealing tales of the supernatural, nonetheless fell not to Catholic scribes and poets, but to Anglo-Irish Protestant nationalists and antiquarians. As Smyth writes, this first Celtic revival was indeed a “past-oriented cultural nationalism led by gentrified scholars.”²²⁹ However, this somewhat artificial movement did not begin to serve the interests of the Irish population on a whole, but rather to demonstrate the validity of the great, ancient Irish culture and raise the status of Ireland, or rather the Anglo-Irish leadership, with regard to relations with England. Despite the perhaps shady political motives, “a fashion for all things Celtic swept throughout Europe.”²³⁰

Paul de Man describes the Romantic movement as representing “the desire of an aesthetic consciousness...oriented toward its authenticity, which it lost in the fallen world of empirical experience.”²³¹ The Romantics, as stated in the previous chapter and as interpreted by such critics as Christopher Thacker in *The Wildness Pleases : The Origins of Romanticism* (1983), desired a return to nature, rebelling against Enlightenment rationalists and adopting the meditative, contemplative spirit of Rousseau. The Irish myths, redolent of pastoral images, supplied readers with this natural imagery. As MacCulloch states, however, often these supposed retellings and explanations of Celtic myth were fabricated as a means of creating “a pretty but ineffectual mythology of their own, which they foist upon our Celtic forefathers.”²³² An example of this tendency was for

²²⁹ Smyth 15.

²³⁰ Smyth 15.

²³¹ Paul de Man, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) 45.

²³² MacCulloch 21.

antiquarians to “resolve every story into a sun-god or dawn-goddess or ruler of a dark world.”²³³ The perpetrators of this distortion cannot have avoided creating new stereotypes, even if unwittingly.

During the nineteenth century, two separate cultural directions were the focus of the Celtic myth revival. The Anglo-Irish-led First Celtic Revival continued in full force during the Victorian Era, with such contributors as LeFanu and Stoker. During the late nineteenth century, the Second Celtic Revival took place, with such supporters as Yeats and Lady Gregory. Unlike the First Revival, this movement supposed a future-oriented culture, relying on the greatness of ancient Irish myths as a basis on which a new, free Ireland could be founded, as evidenced by Yeats’s “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows,” which will be discussed later in this thesis. As Smyth states, the role of the supernatural myths “moved from being representational to being interventionist.”²³⁴ In other words, while tales of Cu Chulainn and the Tuatha De Danann may have been read out of antiquarian interest in 1820, by 1890, they were used as allegory in polemical politics.

This chapter will now explore the use of myths in nineteenth-century Irish horror literature, indicating how they were used to strengthen British rule or Irish cultural nationalism. One of the most famous Irish myths world wide is that of the banshee or *bean sidhe*. In the *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*, Ellis states that “after the gods went underground and were transformed, the banshee became a female fairy attached to a

²³³ MacCulloch 20.

²³⁴ Smyth 16.

particular family; she warned of approaching death by giving an eerie wail.”²³⁵ At other times, the banshee is described as more demonic, uttering a horrible shriek, which causes the hearer to die instantly. The legend of the banshee has followed Irish emigrants around the world, apparently “seen by Irish families as far away from their native soil as Europe, America, and Australia.”²³⁶

The use of the banshee in Irish myth, as well as its counterpart the *bean nighe* in Gaelic Scotland, may well have been used to both ease and comfort during the grieving and separation process. The gentle wail of the banshee, especially one who is considered an extended member of the family, could psychologically prepare the hearer for the coping process which accompanies death of a family member. The fact that the banshee has allegedly been heard in remote areas of the world could also represent the bonds of family and Celtic culture across the seas. Alternately, in its more terrifying form, the myth may symbolise an ironic world view of immediate defeat by supernatural forces explained by Frye; indeed, although the hearer may have led an exemplary life, he or she is powerless against the banshee’s shriek.

The banshee’s gender is also significant, as the importance of her role as a messenger of death reflects the equal status of women in pre-Christian Ireland. However, the banshee has been falsely interpreted as equating womanhood with evil, as presented by the Catholic *Malleus Maleficarum*. As Jung and later Von Franz indicate, the

²³⁵ Ellis 39.

²³⁶ Haining 15.

perception of women as demonic creatures, popularly represented as witches, was used to fight the increasing importance of the Virgin Mary in the Church.

The denigration of the banshee is also an example of “double colonisation” by both the colonising and patriarchal cultures. Jamaican writer Erna Brodber has discussed this phenomenon with respect to the role of Jamaican females; a comparison may readily be made with the portrayal of the Irish banshee. Indeed, “Brodber’s short essay ‘Sleeping’s Beauty and Prince Charming’ (1989) suggests another way of actually theorising the concept of a double colonisation. Texts-the ‘fairy tales’ of Europe-have not only subjectified Jamaican women, but through cultural interpellation effected the erasure of the black female body within Jamaican male culture.”²³⁷ Gayatri Spivak adds that “both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow.”²³⁸ It comes as no surprise that the banshee has been reinterpreted as a ‘hag’ both by the British colonisers and by the Irish Catholic patriarchy within post-pagan Irish society.

The aspect of the banshee as extended family participant who delivers news of death reiterates the pagan Celtic view of women as integral participants in family and society. The banshee also represents the psychically significant death-pull, which occurs after the death of a loved one. Von Franz explains the death pull as “the amount of

²³⁷ Bill Ashcroft et al. *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 250.

²³⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al (New York: Routledge, 1999) 28.

psychic libido which is invested in the relationship...[it] goes back into us and has no other outlet.”²³⁹ The foreknowledge which a banshee provides the hearer may be analogous to premonitions of death which have been reported to appear in dreams or visions; in either case, perhaps this precognition may be seen as an extreme form of the death pull. The reports of the banshee’s wail reaching the United States, Canada, and Australia could highlight the power of these psychic influences.

Riddell’s “Hertford O’Donnell’s Warning” focuses on the theme of the banshee’s wail being heard in London, across the Irish Sea. Desperate and planning to marry a wealthy English gentlewoman to ease his financial burdens, O’Donnell is startled by the banshee’s wail:

A low, sobbing, wailing cry echoed mournfully through the room. No forms of words could give an idea of the sound. The plaintiveness of the Aeolian harp-that plaintiveness which so soon affects and lowers the highest spirits-would have seemed wildly gay in comparison with the sadness of the cry which seemed floating in the air. As the summer wind comes and goes among the trees, so that mournful wail came and went. It came in a rush of sound, like a gradual crescendo managed by a skilful musician, and died away in a lingering note, so gently that the listener could scarcely tell the exact moment when it faded into utter silence²⁴⁰

The description provided by Riddell corresponds to the romantic legend of the banshee. However, Riddell’s imagery appears to have been manufactured to suit the vogue of English Romanticism. She compares the extremes of emotionalism, from the “wildly gay” to the “sadness of the cry.” Furthermore, Riddell employs use of natural

²³⁹ Von Franz 160.

²⁴⁰ Riddell 130.

scenes, with the “summer wind” simile, which exploits the appeal of pastoral images associated with rural locales, namely Ireland. The additional simile of the musician’s crescendo is a timely comparison, perhaps influenced by dynamic nineteenth-century Romantic musical compositions.

Upon hearing the banshee’s cry, Riddell portrays O’Donnell as mentally cataloguing all tales of the banshee’s wail that the protagonist has heard; the occurrences have supposedly happened to both family members and historical figures, such as a General Officer who fought for the British against Napoleon at Waterloo. However, while O’Donnell’s banshee is later revealed to be a messenger of the death of an Irish boy, the instances he initially recalls all portray the banshee’s wail as meaning the eventual doom of the listener. Indeed, rather than immediately dropping dead after hearing the banshee’s cry, the General Officer wistfully confesses to a friend, “I have heard the Banshee, and will not come off the field alive tomorrow.”²⁴¹ Consequently, these tales provide an enchanting, convenient departure from authentic myth. Adding to such inaccuracies are casual sprinklings of tales of “generic hauntings,” such as “the bed in a certain great house in Ireland, which was slept in constantly, although no human being ever passed in or out after dark.”²⁴² These references, having little to do with the banshee, appear placed solely for the benefit of the escapist reader.

At the end of the story, after the banshee appears to O’Donnell and the boy, who is revealed to be his son in a Dickensian coincidence, O’Donnell weakly faints in a show

²⁴¹ Riddell 133.

²⁴² Riddell 133.

of stereotypically Irish powerlessness. The protagonist subsequently reveals his life story, how family animosity separated him from his lover. The banshee's wail, also heard in Ireland, is then employed to pacify the feuding families and allow O'Donnell to be reunited with his lover. The story's Christmastime setting, with O'Donnell's tale of woe ending just as "the bells were ringing for morning service—ringing loudly, ringing joyfully, 'Peace on Earth, goodwill towards men,'"²⁴³ adds to the saturation of Victorian sentimentality.²⁴⁴ Consequently, the mawkish tale uses the banshee merely as an exotic, mysterious plot device for creating harmony out of disunity, much as Dickens' ghosts are used in *A Christmas Carol*, except that the banshee is devoid of didactic purpose.

Along with the banshee, myths of ghosts are often evident in Irish horror literature of the nineteenth century. Haining writes that "there is probably no supernatural figure more widely recorded in the folklore of Ireland than the ghost, known as the *theyshi* or *tash*."²⁴⁵ The Irish *taidhbhse* (ghost) inhabits a middle world between the earthly plane and the hereafter, usually pulled to the world of the living by a type of affection or longing. Often the *taidhbhse* is the spirit of an individual who has died suddenly; the ghost returns, sometimes angry at the living, to cause disturbances and haunt locales associated with the spirit.²⁴⁶ Significant in the formation of this belief is the fact that, although Irish myth presents the Otherworld as an existence of light and freedom, death itself was seen as a grim reality, often predestined, as in the myth of Cu Chulainn.

²⁴³ Riddell 142.

²⁴⁴ Darryl Wadsworth, *Popular Sentiment: Victorian Melodrama, Class, and Sentimentality*. Diss. U. of Pennsylvania, 1996. Philadelphia.

²⁴⁵ Haining 13.

²⁴⁶ "Ghosts and Monsters." <[http:// www.angelfire.com/hc/barnabus13/ghosts.html](http://www.angelfire.com/hc/barnabus13/ghosts.html)> 1.

According to Irish myth, when a person dies, the soul may be taken away by the fairies and is thus considered lost. If the fairies fail to capture the soul, it may fall prey to evil spirits. Very young children are supposedly especially vulnerable to such a fate; the custom of sprinkling blood on thresholds thus began as a means of repelling evil spirits. Ghosts traditionally must obey the commands of the living, however only if the ghost somehow harmed the living person on the earthly plane. Ghosts may take the form of animals, and on every 31 October, or Samhain, the dead roam freely alongside the fairies.²⁴⁷

Samhain was named after an early Celtic god, the brother of Cian and Goibhniu, although the role of this god is not clear. The festival named after Samhain signified the end of one pastoral year and was “an intensely spiritual time, for it was the one period when the Otherworld became visible to mankind and when spiritual forces were let loose on the human world.”²⁴⁸ Samhain is also remembered as the date when the Fomorii overcame the people of Nemed and when the Tuatha De Danann were victorious over the Fomorii at the second battle of Magh Tuireadh. After Ireland became Christianised, the festival of Samhain was celebrated as a harvest festival in honour of St. Martin as well as All Hallows Eve, which survives as Hallowe’en.

The Irish belief in the ghostly return of a soul if the individual has died suddenly conforms to Von Franz’s theory of unused spiritual energy, of a body expiring before its time. Indeed, Von Franz cites parallel myths occurring in ancient Greek and Egyptian

²⁴⁷ “Ghosts and Monsters” 1.

²⁴⁸ Ellis 191.

civilisations. Even today modern American folklore and urban legend suggest that suicides or those who died tragically, such as in violent accidents or battles, are more likely to come back as ghosts or spectres, as they have not yet accomplished their purpose on earth.²⁴⁹ Von Franz offers a convincing psychological argument for the universality and endurance of such myths, as they serve as a means of grief displacement for the victim's community; the frustration loved ones may feel at the sudden parting of the soul may be displaced on the soul itself²⁵⁰. In effect, the soul needs to haunt the living because the living need some earthbound reminder of the deceased.

The lasting appeal of tales of ghosts, whether as displacement or for entertainment, perhaps explains why ghost stories were so successful during the nineteenth century. Discussing the Victorian fascination with melancholia, Gerhard Joseph and Herbert F. Tucker offer another, complementary explanation:

The most remarkable cultural opposition to the regime of Victorian mourning was the one that emerged from within it, born of its very triumph: melancholia, the stock story of mourning minus the scripted denouement; mourning that ceased to be mourning precisely because it would not cease. Letters, diaries, and journals of the period provide ample evidence of chronic grief, wherein mourning no longer *worked* but went instead on permanent detour into the wilds of sorrow. Imaginative enlargements of this cultural disorder appear as the Victorian undead, caricatures of survivorship who command attention...²⁵¹

As the Irish were reputed to possess a treasure-trove of ghost lore in their mythology, English readers not surprisingly gravitated towards ghost stories written by

²⁴⁹ For more information regarding American ghost stories, see Frank McSherry, ed. *Great American Ghost Stories*. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1991.

²⁵⁰ Von Franz 161.

Irish writers who took advantage of the archetypes offered by myth and updating them to suit the needs of themselves or their readers.

One such author was LeFanu, “regarded as the ‘father’ of the modern ghost story.”²⁵² Often selecting as his setting the Dublin suburb of Chapelizod, the author revolutionised the nature of ghost stories by transforming them from tales of contrived, exotic locales with helpless heroines and evil villains to psychological horror stories with “everyday” characters. This alteration in the nature of the ghost story perhaps allowed readers to identify with LeFanu’s characters more easily and displace their own frustrations more conveniently on them.

LeFanu’s “The Spectre Lovers” presents the reader with such an image, with the hero in the form of a reckless Irish youth, Peter Brien, who lives with his aunt Ally Moran. Like the description of Hertford O’Donnell in Riddell’s tale, LeFanu’s portrait of Brien also conforms to the English stereotype of the Irish youth as alcoholic and libidinous. Furthermore, while O’Donnell managed to accumulate debts, Brien has “a mortal hatred of honest labour...Peter [predicted]...that he was destined to find a pot of gold.”²⁵³ This image of the Irish as being lazy and superstitious thus conforms to the British attitude towards their colonials in justifying the need for British rule.

²⁵¹ Gerhard Joseph and Herbert F. Tucker, “Passing On: Death.” *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. Herbert F. Tucker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999) 120-1.

²⁵² Haining 79.

²⁵³ Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, “The Spectre Lovers,” *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 18.

Brien is confronted with the apparition of spectral army one night on his way home from one of his rambles. While the use of a militia in ghostly form recalls the early Irish myths of ghostly warriors who have died unexpectedly, Brien's response smacks of misplaced political fervour and ridiculous naivete. Upon seeing the marching soldiers, Brien gasps, "What on airth is the manin' of all this? Is it the French that's landed at last to give us a hand and help us in airnest to this blessed repale?"²⁵⁴ The representation of the Irish as needing to rely on ghostly assistance to defend themselves again is seen to legitimise British occupation.

The army, however, is not a French unit, but the ghosts of a long-dead Royal Irish unit accompanied by a wicked captain. Before the spectral assembly vanishes, Brien walks with them to an ancient manse, supposedly the site of a treasure, which he is unable to obtain. The notion of Irish stupidity is highlighted at the close of the story, when Brien returns to the old house in search of the suggested treasure after his aged grandmother recalls the tale of the regiment and thus verifying his vision. Brien does not succeed at encountering the treasure; ironically, he falls to his death while searching. LeFanu ends the story with black comedy, claiming that "he, like the other heroes, lies buried in the little churchyard of Chapelizod."²⁵⁵ While thrilling his English or Anglo-Irish readers with a ghost story, LeFanu, through skilful use of the ironic mode, also comments on the failings, in this case self-defeating, of the Irish. Based on the Irish myth that those who die suddenly are destined to come back as ghosts, one may only conjecture as to the spectral return of Brien to befuddle some future dim-witted Irish youth.

²⁵⁴ LeFanu 21.

²⁵⁵ LeFanu 31.

Although presenting some negative stereotypes of the Irish, such as their overweening piety, superstition, and temptation to handle their money in a miserly way, "The Ghosts and The Game of Football," written by LeFanu's protégé Patrick Kennedy, appears to embrace the cause of Irish nationalism. As opposed to the lazy, drunken Brien or the morbid, also drunken O'Donnell, Kennedy's Jack embodies honesty and industry. Indeed, the opening of the story casts Jack as "going to look for service"²⁵⁶ at the house of a local farmer. After establishing himself in the house, Jack is confronted with the image of a ghostly "man, with buckles in his shows and knee-breeches, and a big flapped waistcoat and a three-cocked hat."²⁵⁷ The spectre is soon joined by two identical, equally anachronistic apparitions, the number three perhaps signifying its widespread occurrence in Celtic myth; "the concept of the trinity...nowhere is...more prominent than in Celtic culture."²⁵⁸

Although the costumes appear to represent the British fashions of the eighteenth century, the ghosts interestingly and comically begin to play a game of Gaelic football. To his credit, Jack neither faints nor falters; he announces his belief in fair play and joins in the game. Furthermore, Jack surprises the ghosts by boldly asking their purpose, to which they respond that they have come to rectify a pecuniary wrong. One ghost explains, "from father to son we were too fond of money. We lent it at ten times the honest interest it was worth; we never paid a debt we could get over, and almost starved

²⁵⁶ Patrick Kennedy, "The Ghosts and the Game of Football," *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 32.

²⁵⁷ Kennedy 33.

²⁵⁸ Ellis 208.

our tenants and labourers.”²⁵⁹ This fictional admission, while conforming to the myth of ghosts returning to complete unfinished business, provides an uninhibited reference to the wrongs of the British landowning system in Ireland, criticising the harsh treatment of Irish tenants.

Jack’s duty is to contact the descendants of the ghost and arrange for repayment of the debts; in return, Jack may marry the ghost’s granddaughter. Jack obediently obliges, once again embodying the recurring theme of ‘fair play’ and lives ‘happily every after’ in accordance with the classic romantic mode²⁶⁰, marrying the girl and living comfortably, yet not miserly, in a castle. The story, published in a Dublin magazine rather than in Britain, seemingly champions the Irish character as bold and virtuous and implies that, if the Irish confront their British oppressors, Ireland will benefit from the reward. The story calls for restitution on the part of the British to the Irish civilisation they have abused as well as for bravery on the part of the Irish nation. A very early (1866) allegory for the independence movement, Kennedy’s tale may be interpreted as extremely optimistic propaganda, using the glory of the Irish peasant, the national pastime of Gaelic football, and ancient myth to symbolise the greatness of Irish civilisation.

As with the myths of the banshee and the ghost, fairies also influenced nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction. As the above-mentioned Mythological Cycle and the myth of the Tuatha De Danann establish the basis for fairies in Irish myth, the tales in the horror

²⁵⁹ Kennedy 34.

²⁶⁰ This often used narrative trope follows the plot formula of the beautiful damsel who finds herself in some sort of conflict, only to be rescued by a chivalrous hero. A happy ending for the hero and damsel is almost inevitable, whether in fairy tales such as “Snow White” and “Cinderella” or modern Harlequin romance novels.

genre make ample use of the fairies' mischief or even the legendary existence of "malignant fairies known as the *lianhan sidhe*."²⁶¹ These evil-minded fairies are thus reputed to retaliate against humans if they are attacked or bothered, often resorting to bewitchment or use of *faerie* darts to stun humans and animals.²⁶²

The fairy tale is another cultural form that stems from ancient times. In fact, Jung states that "when you study fairy tales, you can study the anatomy of man."²⁶³ Theorists have analogised the fairy tale to human civilisation in its infancy, hypothesising that it represents the most basic forms of psychology. Von Franz disagrees, contending that if fairy tales were the original literary form, they "would mirror the most basic psychological structures of man to a greater extent than myths and literary products."²⁶⁴ Interestingly, tales of the Tuatha De Danann and their descendants qualify both as fairy tales in the literal sense and as myths in terms of their function within Irish culture. Bruno Bettelheim has written of the overlapping functions of myths and fairy tales, occurring in many societies, in his *The Uses of Enchantment*:

In most cultures, there is no clear line separating myth from folk or fairy tale; all these together form the literature of preliterate societies...some fairy and folk stories evolved out of myths; others were incorporated into them. Both forms embodied the cumulative experience of a society as men wished to recall past wisdom for themselves and transmit it to future generations. These tales are the purveyors of deep insights that have sustained mankind through the long vicissitudes of its existence.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Haining 171.

²⁶² Haining 171.

²⁶³ Von Franz 12.

²⁶⁴ Von Franz 12.

²⁶⁵ Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989) 25-6.

Yeats employs the traditional myth of the *sidhe* to provide an appealing horror story while also allowing the story to serve as a rousing allegory for Irish independence and the hope of a great new Irish civilisation. Although, as stated in Chapter One, Yeats occasionally espoused, even if unwillingly, the English stereotype of the Irish bumpkin, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” is clearly aimed for Irish nationalist readers. The story takes place centuries before Yeats’s era, during the English Puritan invasion of Sligo. Unlike Irish writers who perhaps attempted to please English readers by attributing positive characteristics to them, Yeats unforgivingly portrays the English troops as cruel murderers.

The tale opens with a bloody retelling of the English troops’ massacre of innocent monks at the Abbey of the White Friars; “the troopers, who were the body-guard of Sir Frederick Hamilton, lifted their muskets and shot down five of the friars.”²⁶⁶ The unadulterated brutality of the scene is compounded by the burning of the Abbey. However, before dying, the abbot cryptically warns, “Woe unto all who smite those who dwell within the Light of the Lord, for they will wander among the ungovernable shadows and follow the ungovernable fires.”²⁶⁷ The admonition blends Christian imagery of Jesus Christ as the Light of the World and Celtic druidical fire symbolism, associated with Uisneach, the heart of Ireland.

²⁶⁶ William Butler Yeats, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows,” *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 192.

²⁶⁷ Yeats, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” 193.

Yeats creates mock sympathy for the soldiers, delving into the personal lives and their fear of the military venture. During their rambles in search of rebels, the soldiers encounter another mythical creature, the Lady of the Lake, who appears as “a tall old woman with grey hair flowing over a grey dress...[and] stood up to her knees in water.”²⁶⁸ The Lady or Ladies of the Lake, which are perhaps best remembered in Arthurian legend, are prominent in Irish and Welsh mythology as “they gather about the otherworldly waters just as the ninefold sisterhood of Celtic tradition stand about the cauldron, each gifting the brew with a unique gift.”²⁶⁹ However, sympathy for the soldiers perhaps vanishes as they equate this integral mythological and archetypal force with “the shadows of Satan,”²⁷⁰ an epithet which may be viewed as indicative of the English Protestant disregard for pagan beliefs and folkways.

The soldiers later encounter the sound of a bagpipe, played by an old man whom one of the troopers suspects is “one of the *sidhe*.”²⁷¹ The *sidhe*’s musical skill refers to Irish myth, which states that such supernatural entities are usually adept at the musical arts, with the bagpipe being one of the most common instruments of the entities. The commander dismisses the trooper’s suggestion, psychologically denying any belief in superstition, and forces the *sidhe* to act as their guide, hence harnessing Irish cultural symbols to repress the nation.

²⁶⁸ Yeats, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” 195.

²⁶⁹ “Encyclopedia of the Celts.” <<http://www.celtonet/celtic/celtopedia/1.html>> 12.

²⁷⁰ Yeats, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” 195.

²⁷¹ Yeats, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” 196.

The sidhe emerges victorious from the confrontation as he confuses the troopers through the use of dancing fires and shadows, causing the militiamen to plunge off a cliff to their deaths. At the last moment, the sidhe throws “the reins onto the neck of [his] old white horse and sing[s] a wild Gaelic song.”²⁷² The use of the colour white is significant here, as it is frequently associated with the Otherworld in Celtic myth, as with the White Bull sacrifice within Druidism or the foretelling of death brought by white may blossoms. Furthermore, the horse refers to the ancient Celtic stag cult.

Yeats’s story, making use of the Celtic myths and symbols of fairies, the Lady of the Lake, fire, and the colour white suggests through allegory that contemporary Celtic nationalism, heir to the great ancient Irish civilisation, will prove victorious over English political and cultural rule. As opposed to the portrayal of the English in Riddell’s “Hertford O’Donnell’s Warning,” the English are not seen as paragons of virtue and decency, but instead as barbaric invaders who err by scoffing at the power of Irish myth and destroying the country. Yeats thus appeals to the rising sentiment of Irish nationalism, directing his encouraging tale at Irish readers who support the Second Celtic Revival and Irish home rule. The fairies, far from being a mere plot device or thrilling novelty, ensure Ireland’s salvation.

Perhaps the most misrepresented Irish mythical creature in modern global culture is the leprechaun, “almost totally obliterated under a welter of cute Irish green-wash and...devalued for tourist use.”²⁷³ The leprechaun emerges in the Mythological Cycle as

²⁷² Yeats, “The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows” 197.

²⁷³ “Encyclopedia of the Celts” 12.

the anthropomorphised psychological diminishment of the great god Lugh after the Tuatha De Danann are driven underground. A joke-teller not unlike the Indo-European faun, the leprechaun is a variant of the *Fir Dhearga* (Red Men) and a “potent patron of arts and crafts.”²⁷⁴ A widely held anthropological belief is that they are the last surviving myth of the little people “who once occupied the British Isles, long before the arrival of the larger races from their scattered origins in Europe and Scandinavia.”²⁷⁵ The origin of the word *leprechaun* may be traced either to the Gaelic *luacharma'n* [pigmy] or *leith brogan* [one shoe maker], as the leprechaun is usually portrayed in myth as being a shoemaker.

Von Franz writes that the profession of the shoemaker is often used in folklore as “an archetypal power capable of transforming man and giving him a new attitude, a power which has to do with intelligence and the ability to outwit others.”²⁷⁶ The notion of transformation stems from the fact that the shoemaker creates clothing for feet; as clothing frequently represents the individual’s outward manifestation of behaviour or attitude, the shoemaker serves as the “maker of new attitudes.” The shoemaker is also unique among the fairy trades because of its humility and contact with reality, as shoes are worn, as the basest of clothes, close to the ground. The leprechaun, with the power to trick mortals, is the embodiment of cunning, a quality perhaps valued by the Irish seeking to extract themselves from foreign rule. In addition, the leprechaun is frequently pictured as guarding a treasure, much like the gold-spinning troll Rumpelstiltskin of fairy tales, with this treasure perhaps being interpreted as the glory of Celtic civilisation.

²⁷⁴ Ellis 147.

²⁷⁵ Haining 229.

Croker's "The Haunted Cellar" features a Cork regional variation of the leprechaun, known as the *Clurichaune*, akin to other variants *Luricaune* [Kerry], *Lurigadaune* [Tipperary], and the *Loghery-man* [Ulster]. However, the clurichaune differs from the 'conventional' leprechaun of myth in that this creature is reputed to be fond of alcohol, frequently haunting wine cellars and proving to be a nuisance to homeowners. Croker's tale tells of the clurichaune haunting the wine cellar of the MacCarthies, "one of the real old Irish families, with the true Milesian blood running in their veins as thick as buttermilk"²⁷⁷ This appeal to yet another myth to add legitimacy to the MacCarthies' Irishness again recalls the "I know my natives" mentality of early nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish writers.

The tale then tells of the MacCarthies' difficulties in retaining the services of a butler, despite the splendour and wealth of the estate, providing a deceptively rosy view of conditions in Ireland under British rule. Even after Mr MacCarthy finally finds a suitable butler, disturbances in the wine cellar continue, with the master of the house or his staff unable to cope with them. The end of the tale finds Mr MacCarthy confronting the source of the disturbances after one too many dinner parties is ruined. Announcing his resolution to quit the house in search of a calmer existence, Mr MacCarthy finds himself once again unable to shake the creature. Indeed, the clurichaune taunts him, asking "a'n't we going to move tomorrow?"²⁷⁸ Consequently, Mr MacCarthy decides that

²⁷⁶ Von Franz 73.

²⁷⁷ Thomas Crofton Croker, "The Haunted Cellar," *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 238.

²⁷⁸ Croker, "The Haunted Cellar" 254.

he has no other option except to stay in his current abode, and Croker assures the reader that the clurichaune accompanied the master of the house until the death of the latter.

However, “for some years after [he] had always to fetch the wine for his table himself.”²⁷⁹

Croker, one of the leading exponents of the antiquarian movement in Ireland, became enormously popular in Ireland, England, and the European Continent with his 1825 collection *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, in which “The Haunted Cellar” was first published. Although Croker helped to inspire a native interest in folktales in Ireland, perhaps influencing the Second Celtic Revival, his tales clearly belong to the Anglo-Irish First Revival, encouraging British rule over Ireland and raising consciousness of the Anglo-Irish by portraying Ireland as a distinct society. However, Croker’s description of Mr MacCarthy appears to corroborate the English stereotype of Irish powerlessness and ineptitude, demonstrated in his inability to exorcise the clurichaune. “The Haunted Cellar” indeed offered English readers the stereotype that Ireland was a fantasyland populated by bumbling, yet thriving rustics and mischievous, exotic creatures.

Thus, this chapter has established that nineteenth-century Irish horror writers made extensive use of Irish myth, with the Mythological Cycle of ancient Ireland serving as an archetype for the updated tales. These stories may be categorised as belonging to either the First or Second Celtic Revivals. The horror tales of the First Celtic Revival often diluted the original myths to provide for convenient plot devices or appealing exotic ornaments in stories which furthered the Unionist agenda by portraying the Irish as

incompetent, superstitious, and emotional. In contrast, the horror tales of the Second Celtic Revival often employed Irish myth to strengthen the cause of Irish nationalism, relying on the greatness of the lore as the symbolic basis for the free Ireland which was achieved in the coming century.

In addition to Irish myth, legends and myths from other European sources were also employed by Irish horror writers, perhaps highly influenced by literary trends in England and the Continent. For example, Stoker's *Jewel of the Seven Stars* capitalises on the vogue for Egyptian lore and artifacts in late Victorian England. Similarly, LeFanu's "Schalken the Painter" combines the pan-European legend of the revenant with a latter-day image of the industrious Dutch painter in the spirit of the Northern Renaissance. This chapter will now explore the use of two of the most popular imports in Irish horror, European Gothic literary conventions and the vampire myth.

The Gothic tradition emerged in Germany in the mid-eighteenth century with "a whole new horror aesthetic in the works of the *Sturm-und-Drang* writers."²⁸⁰ These authors, stressing emotion, passion, and rebellion of the spirit, combined such German folklore as the Bleeding Nun with contemporary plots involving "ghosts, murders, rapes, secret societies, devils, and tortures."²⁸¹ Among the leading proponents of the *Schauer-Romantik* [horror romantic] were Schiller, Goethe, and Veit Weber, and their works impressed such future literary sensations as Matthew Lewis and Ann Radcliffe.

²⁷⁹ Croker, "The Haunted Cellar" 254.

²⁸⁰ Emma McEvoy, introduction, *The Monk*, by Matthew Lewis (New York: Oxford Press, 1995) xii.

As translations of these innovative German stories became extremely popular for English readers rebelling against Enlightenment rationalism, a new breed of English Gothic horror writers came into existence. These Gothic writers established a framework which externalised the passionate symbols that the later Romantics would subtly internalise.²⁸² The frequent use of darkness and long-winding passages underground perhaps symbolises the imprisonment of the unconscious or subconscious during the Enlightenment; the use of ghosts might suggest the repressed imagination haunting conscious thoughts. Furthermore, the frequent images of virginal maidens menaced by evil villains may also signify an appetite for sexually explicit or implicit material espoused by the era's libertines, the established sacredness of virginity and the repressed, passive image of womanhood.

The English Gothics added to the Continental tradition "grisly descriptions and real devils."²⁸³ The degree of sexual perversion, including incest and necrophilia, in Lewis' *The Monk* or the anticipation of horror in Radcliffe's *The Castle of Otranto* rendered the genre even more popular. The English Gothic was in turn mimicked by Irish writers who wished to attain popularity in England. Maturin, the first Irish Gothic horror writer, recognising that the tactical error of Lady Morgan's "nationalism which would exclude her...from the affections of the English public,"²⁸⁴ slavishly imitated the efforts of his English and Continental predecessors. However, the exotic Gothic settings of Lewis' Spain and Radcliffe's Italy were transferred to Ireland, which English readers perceived

²⁸¹ McEvoy xii.

²⁸² McEvoy xvi.

²⁸³ McEvoy xiii.

²⁸⁴ Deane 99.

as equally mysterious. As a result, Maturin combines Goethe's Faustian images with Irish settings and myth in such works as *The Wild Irish Boy* and *The Milesian Chief*. Indeed, Maturin's exploitation of his homeland proves to be effective, as "Maturin's Irish landscapes are more menacing in anything in *Lady Morgan*."²⁸⁵ Consequently, Maturin gives new literary energy to a German folk tradition imported to Ireland by way of the English Gothics. His most successful work, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, deals with the subject of selling one's soul to the devil, influenced directly by the German legend "Doctor Faustus," also the inspiration for Goethe's *Faust*. The original myth tells of "a scholar who sells his soul to the Devil for untold power and knowledge,"²⁸⁶ the archetype being the Biblical tale of the serpent's temptation of Eve.

Furthermore, while the formulaic Gothic novel was considered to be a cliché as early as the last decade of the eighteenth century, LeFanu preserved the form in popular novels such as *The House by the Churchyard* and *Uncle Silas* as late as the 1860s. Yet while the setting of the foreboding manse with dark, terrifying hallways survives in LeFanu's novels, the terror becomes psychological, with such issues as alienation and entrapment in *Uncle Silas*, rather than the very real demons of the early Gothics.

Another European folk element which influenced the creation of Irish horror stories of the nineteenth century was that of the vampire. The Gothic and Romantic "preoccupation with the culture of the 'folk'"²⁸⁷ led to the popularisation of the Eastern European vampire myth; "according to the villagers of Serbia and Hungary their

²⁸⁵ Deane 100.

²⁸⁶ Frank J. Fenimore, *Devilish Doings*. (New York: Gramercy, 1997) viii.

vampires were bloated, shaggy, foul-smelling corpses who preyed on their immediate neighbours and relatives.”²⁸⁸ The myth, which also occurs in the indigenous cultures of Indonesia, China, and the Philippines, perhaps stems from the need of early cultures to explain that “the dead may bring us death.”²⁸⁹ At the same time, vampires have been interpreted in many different ways, as Thomas B. Byers believes that vampires represent men's fear of female sexuality as well as their own vulnerability; Christopher Craft believes the vampire, especially *Dracula*, as a pejorative symbol of a homoerotic desire, as a grossly inverted form of heterosexuality; Marxist and feminist interpretations of vampires have been offered by Burton Hatlen and Gail B. Griffin, respectively.²⁹⁰ As Barber writes, “the common course...is to blame death on the dead, who are apt to be observed closely for clues as to how they accomplish their mischief...our sources, in Europe as elsewhere, show a remarkable unanimity on this point: the dead may bring us death. The lack of a developed understanding, in preliterate cultures, of modern notions of contagion and pathology created a need to illustrate that diseased corpses may infect the living; the vampire served to embody this very real threat. To prevent this we must lay them to rest properly, propitiate them, and, when all else fails, kill them a second time.”²⁹¹ Once a vampire is extinguished, the threat of the dead fades with it.

The living dead, or revenant, occurs in Irish legend; however, its function differs from that of the Continental vampire. Haining writes that “in Irish lore it is believed that Revenants may be of either sex, of any age and from any social background...they return

²⁸⁷ R.F. Foster, *The Oxford History of Ireland*. (New York: Oxford Press, 1992) 159.

²⁸⁸ Robert Morrison, ed. *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. (New York: Oxford Press, 1997) xii.

²⁸⁹ Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) 3.

²⁹⁰ For a further discussion of these and other critical interpretations, see Margaret L. Carter, ed. *Dracula: the Vampire and the Critics*. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Press, 1988).

to complete unfinished business: to warn or inform, to revenge or protect, and in some instances even to re-enact their own deaths.”²⁹² Griffin’s “The Brown Man,” written in the antiquarian tradition, is based on the Irish Revenant; however, the more successful *Dracula* by Stoker and “Carmilla” by LeFanu owe their creation to the Continental myth of bloodsucking vampire.

Stoker bases his phenomenally popular novel on Eastern European folklore as well as the barbaric exploits of Transylvanian Vlad Tepes, a historical figure known for his cruelty but not for vampirism. Indeed, Stoker painstakingly studied the relevant aspects of Eastern European history and anthropology at the British Museum before beginning his novel; furthermore, the victims in *Dracula* are English rather than Irish. Furthermore, both Stoker and LeFanu distort the folk belief of vampires’ humble village origins into the creation of “the glorious career of the aristocratic vampire,”²⁹³ respectively in the characters of Countess Mircalla Karnstein and Count Dracula. This innovation was directly borrowed from Polidori’s English Gothic tale “The Vampyre.” Polidori’s Lord Ruthven is portrayed as the consummate titled rake; he “was profuse in his liberality; the idle, the vagabond, and the beggar, received more than enough to relieve their immediate wants.”²⁹⁴ Furthermore, Polidori’s tale displays another shift in terms of the increasingly active villain, later to influence later nineteenth-century horror writers. Bleiler writes that “Polidori’s *Vampyre* showed the direction that Romantic supernatural fiction was taking...[the] novel marks a stage in the gradual shift of interest away from the earlier

²⁹¹ Barber 3..

²⁹² Haining 311.

²⁹³ Morrison xii.

²⁹⁴ John Polidori, *The Vampyre*. (New York: Dover, 1966) 267.

'hero,' who was a passive, suffering figure, to the more dynamic, action-initiating 'villain.'²⁹⁵

The vampire stories by Stoker and LeFanu, while capitalising on the English fascination with vampire tales instigated by Polidori's work, also reinforced an English fear of the "un-English," which seemingly contradicts the English fascination with the "exotic" Irish. As the first chapter discusses the disparaging qualities attributed to colonials by English writers, the vampire myths portrayed the menace inherent in the more exotic peoples of Eastern Europe. The threat of Countess Mircalla Karnstein or Count Dracula thus signifies possible dangers awaiting unsuspecting English tourists abroad; the vampire myth also allows Eastern Europeans to be viewed as suffering from the same superstitiousness already cast upon the Irish.

Furthermore, Stoker presents a sexualised image of the vampire's attacks occurring intimately in his female victims' bedrooms and thus reiterates the pre-Romantics' preoccupation with virginity, all the more relevant in the context of the sexual repression of the Victorian Era. Interestingly, LeFanu's female vampire, who also attacks female victims, presents the threat of feminine sexuality and the perceived perversion of lesbianism. Thus, Stoker and LeFanu employ Eastern European myth to reinforce Victorian mores.

Irish horror writers of the nineteenth century frequently employed myth, extracted from both Irish and Greater European cultural symbols, in their works, usually with the

author's audiences in mind. While the First Celtic Revivalists used Irish myth to satisfy their readers' antiquarian interests and justify Anglo-Irish rule in Ireland, the Second Celtic Revivalists, targeting Irish readers, employed Irish myth as the symbolic basis for a future, greater Irish civilisation founded upon self-rule. Meanwhile, authors such as Maturin, Stoker, and LeFanu borrowed myths and legends, such as the German folklore which inspired the *Schauer-Romantik* and the Eastern European vampire myth, both altered through English interpretation, to appeal to Gothic and Romantic literary trends and expectations of English readers.

Furthermore, these myths and legends aided in the shift between Gothic and Romantic forms. Whilst Gothic horror stories largely employ the disinheritance plot, the Romantic horror story is often focused more on "local colour and folklore."²⁹⁶ For this change, myths, such as those collected by antiquarians or resurrected by Revivalists, were essential. Myths were also used extensively as supernaturalism ceased to be explained as merely an illusion, but merely accepted as an otherworldly phenomenon.²⁹⁷ Myths, however, serve a far greater purpose than merely assisting a shift in literary preferences; perhaps they are part of the Jungian collective unconscious. It is certain, however, that myths, as expressed in literature and other media, serve as powerful political and cultural tools; perhaps part of their power lies in the possibility that myths allow individuals to express their deepest convictions or to articulate what they fear to admit using a more direct approach.

²⁹⁵ E.F. Bleiler. Introduction. *The Vampyre*. John Polidori. (New York: Dover, 1966) xxxix.

²⁹⁶ Bleiler xxxix.

CHAPTER THREE: CHURCH VERSUS BIG HOUSE, UNIONIST VERSUS NATIONALIST

As seen in Chapter One, religion and imperialist politics played a significant role in the development of Anglo-Irish relations and discord. As Chapter Two discusses, pre-Christian Celtic mythic influence was nevertheless still a vital force in the creation of nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction. This chapter will subsequently explore the use of religious and political ideology and stereotypes in Irish horror. While a small number of Catholic writers used the medium to voice their opinions, the majority of works were composed by Anglo-Irish Protestant writers, both as a unique expression of Protestant theology and as a vehicle for anti-Catholic propaganda. Other writers, meanwhile, including both Protestants and Catholics, used horror fiction, frequently also employing anti-Catholic images, as a means to call attention to the sufferings of Irish peasants and the cause of Irish Home Rule. This chapter will demonstrate, however, that although religious propaganda was a significant mobilising force and the chasm between Protestants and Catholics was often very pronounced, an even deeper division was that between Unionists and Home Rule supporters.

Before delving into the religious and political allegories and ideology which pervaded these works, a brief survey of attitudes toward politics and religion, which were intertwined in terms of the Irish question, is relevant to the chapter's discussion. Indeed, an overview of these two elements is essential for an understanding of the context in which the stories and novels were written. Religious clashes have shaped the course of

Irish history with the Christian conversion of Celtic pagans, the occupation and colonisation of Catholic Ireland by Anglican England, and the presence of Presbyterian settlers in Ulster. Although this chapter will discuss the relationship between Catholics and Protestants in nineteenth-century Ireland, it is important to keep in mind that the literature discussed later in the chapter will highlight conservative [Crown loyalty] versus Home Rule supporters; these differences in political opinion did not always follow differences in religious affiliation.

As literature was often used in the nineteenth century to express these political attitudes, the novel and the short story served to represent myriad views ranging from loyalist to Home Rule radical. Horror fiction was a particularly flexible genre with characteristic fantasy and called for suspension of the reader's belief; this freedom allowed for immense potential for allegory and disguised or overt ideological propaganda. Thus, both Protestants and Catholics used horror fiction to demonstrate Unionist or liberal religious and political attitudes.

The Ireland of Maturin, LeFanu and Yeats was marked by alternating hope and despair on political and social fronts; I shall again discuss the momentous Act of Union because it marked the beginning of a new stage of Irish history, that in which the nineteenth-century horror works were composed. This Act promised a free trade zone between newly united Britain and Ireland and greater opportunities for Catholic merchants, yet many Catholics were disappointed by the continued second-class treatment that they endured. For nearly the first three decades of the Union, "the

apparent exploitation of the less developed economy, together with the continuing failure to grant Catholic emancipation, created the terms in which nationalist rhetoric denounced the Union."²⁹⁸ The immediate goal of full Catholic emancipation, desired by Roman Catholic Union supporters and such Protestants as statesman Henry Grattan, was thwarted by King George III, "who remained inflexibly opposed to Roman Catholic claims."²⁹⁹

The Anglo-Irish Ascendancy still enjoyed special privileges in terms of the civil service examinations, employment in the legal profession, and local government. However, not all Protestants were satisfied with the results of the Union. In 1782, the Protestant Ascendancy had been granted a degree of self-rule, with the creation of its own parliamentary body. Yet, as J.C. Beckett writes, "the Irish parliament survived the establishment of its independence by a mere eighteen years; for more than half that time the shadow of revolutionary France hung over its deliberating...finally it was bribed, bullied, and frightened into voting itself out of existence."³⁰⁰ Hence, while the Act of Union brought the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy more closely into the Protestant British fold, their control over their own country was curtailed. Beckett continues, "before 1800, the Irish protestants had some direct control, however imperfect, of their own destiny, the destiny of the country[;] after 1800, though they continued to exercise as much influence, their power of independent action was gone."³⁰¹ The frustration due to the loss of this at least partial autonomy would later be revealed in horror works, such as LeFanu's *Uncle*

²⁹⁸R.F. Foster, *The Oxford History of Ireland*. (New York: Oxford Press, 1992) 155.

²⁹⁹J.C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland: 1603-1923*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975) 295.

³⁰⁰Beckett 224.

³⁰¹Beckett 287.

Silas, perhaps one of the most representative horror novels discussing the Anglo-Irish Establishment, or *Big House*, which I shall discuss later.

During the nineteenth century, Irish governmental structures, educational system, and health care were improved for the benefit of all residents of Ireland, yet these improvements could not prevent the growing demands for Home Rule, espoused by such writers as Yeats. The Church of Ireland was reorganised, with the required tithe to the Anglican Church, bitterly resented among Catholics, commuted. In addition, after 1829, Catholics could sit in Parliament and hold senior legal positions. Also in 1829, pressured by threats of a potential civil war in Ireland, the British government passed the Catholic Relief Act. In the 1840s, the Irish Catholic Church was also reorganised “in terms of the making of charitable requests and in endowing seminarian education.”³⁰² Following the devastating famine of the same decade, the 1850 Reform Act created a new, distinct Catholic political culture which accompanied “the new face of the Catholic Church—Romanist, authoritarian, and ready to make pronouncements on any political questions which might be accounted to have a bearing on faith and morals.”³⁰³

During the 1840s, however, the British government paradoxically disenfranchised the Catholics once again and suppressed the Catholic Association; it is no coincidence that these anti-Catholic political tactics were mirrored in horror literature of the period, in works by Unionists LeFanu and Maturin, which will be discussed later. Britain’s Irish policy seemed to antagonise large numbers of Catholics and Protestants, and Home Rule

³⁰² Foster 165.

³⁰³ Foster 169.

supporters espousing either affiliation were increasingly becoming disappointed with the Union. Queen Victoria's 1849 visit to Ireland was met with popular enthusiasm, but "as the two countries approached the end of a half century [of] parliamentary union, they were, perhaps more completely estranged from one another than they had ever been."³⁰⁴

This increased alienation between Britain and Ireland, the continual decay of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy and the frustration of Unionists at the dwindling popularity of the Union are likely to have influenced the rise of Gothic and Gothic-influenced works by Protestant Unionist writers. Smyth theorises that "madness was...a major theme of Anglo-Irish Protestant imagination and the Gothic variations which emerged from its accompanying racial, religious, and gender ideologies."³⁰⁵ This madness is heightened by an augmented sense of confusion and alienation, as the Anglo-Irish were isolated among a majority population with an Otherness in terms of culture, religion, and language. In addition, the Anglo-Irish were also separated from the British Crown, which alternately required their allegiance and yet offered little protection. One may assume that the subconscious lurking of guilt at having misruled and poorly administered a disenfranchised population, combined with a sense of extreme alienation, helped create the distinct Irish Gothic horror form. The Gothic novel, stemming from German tradition and brought to Ireland via England, became rooted in a distinctly Protestant context as it echoed a Northern European cultural trend and at the same time "was caught up in a particularly Protestant imagination of life and death."³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Beckett 350.

³⁰⁵ Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*. (Chicago: Pluto, 1997) 52.

Irish Gothic horror stories, especially in the novelistic tradition from Maturin to Stoker, are “characterised by a combination of narrative complexity, emotional hysteria, and the incursion of supernatural systems on a hopelessly flawed and corrupt real world.”³⁰⁷ The Gothic vision is a doomed perspective where any hope of social redemption is nullified by divine retribution for past sins, claiming that all individuals are “victims of history, only most have not recognised it yet.”³⁰⁸ The victimisation of Protestant and Catholic characters by uncontrollable supernatural forces suggests that the Anglo-Irish of the nineteenth century were victims of the alienation and flawed social paradigms devised by their forefathers. Meanwhile, the Catholics were the more visible sufferers of the unequal social hierarchy. Smyth’s view that Irish Gothic horror represents both the coloniser and colonist as victim echoes the similar postcolonial theory of Nandy.³⁰⁹ The especially grim, unresolved conflicts of the Gothic tales are rendered all the more psychologically disturbing by the writers’ failure “to invest in any consoling vision or compensatory myth, precisely because there is nothing to be done.”³¹⁰

As the Gothic yielded to the Romantic tradition, the theme of madness in the Protestant horror story did not subside. With the turmoil of the nineteenth-century religious and political systems in Ireland, the tragedy of the potato famine, the disestablishment of the Irish Parliament and the Anglican Church, and the support for Home Rule, the Anglo-Irish loyalists must have felt groundless and at the last frontier of a doomed way of life. Furthermore, as Arthur Pollard writes, “if progress is one

³⁰⁶ Smyth 52.

³⁰⁷ Smyth 52.

³⁰⁸ Smyth 52.

³⁰⁹ See Ashis Nandy *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. (Delhi: Oxford Press 1983). 1-48.

Victorian watchword, freedom is another."³¹¹ The Industrial Revolution and these Victorian priorities also psychologically jolted the framework of the Anglo-Irish establishment, deeply rooted in past waves of occupation, settlement, and plantation. This psychological anguish would subsequently nourish the Gothic vision of Protestant horror writers.

Eagleton has also written about the underlying Protestant Anglo-Irish preoccupation with the Gothic genre. He agrees with Smyth's assessment, claiming that "if Irish Gothic is a specifically Protestant phenomenon, it is because nothing lent itself more to the genre than the decaying gentry in their crumbling houses, isolated and sinisterly eccentric, haunted by the sins of the past."³¹² Eagleton also ascribes the paranoia so frequently conveyed by the tales to the Huguenot ancestry, and memories of religious persecution, of such writers as Maturin and LeFanu. Commenting on the paradox of the role of the Anglo-Irish writer as a member of a persecuted, yet economically and socially privileged, class, Eagleton concludes that "the Protestant may vindicate his own righteousness by denouncing the sins of others, but he only has need of such reassurance because he is a wretch himself. There is a spurious kind of fellowship between oppressor and oppressed: if the exploiter is an outcast, then so are those on whom he batters."³¹³ This view motivates his Marxist interpretations of the works of LeFanu, with a base of economic and class-motivated paranoia; "it is always a matter of discovering within the living present a criminal history which refuses to be repressed, but

³¹⁰ Smyth 53.

³¹¹ Arthur Pollard, introduction, *The Penguin History of Literature: the Victorians*. ed. Arthur Pollard. (New York: Penguin, 1993) viii.

³¹² Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture*. (New York: Verso, 1996) 188.

³¹³ Eagleton 191.

which continues in the form of property, mortgage, and inheritance to determine the behaviour of those deluded enough to believe they are free.”³¹⁴

Deane has traced the decay of the Ascendancy novel through the nineteenth century in terms of the increased paranoia and hysteria accompanying the “Big House” novel. The Big House, representing the dwelling as well as the entity of the Ascendancy Establishment, was the “most enduring social constellation in Irish fiction...its only serious competition [was] the Roman Catholic Church.”³¹⁵ Unlike the Catholic Church, which has continued to be influential and pervasive in modern Ireland, the Big House stood for a once vital and productive civilisation in its twilight. In Big House literature, the Catholic Church is “treated in a powerfully negative manner.”³¹⁶ Deane’s analysis of the decay of the Big House illustrates the symbolic decay of the Protestant Ascendancy, from the “dream of Protestant leadership, initiated by Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan”³¹⁷ to O’Grady’s bitter elegy for the Ascendancy in his *fin-de-siècle* *The Crisis in Ireland*.

The horror novel did not escape the enormous significance of the Big House, with its ominous crumbling captured by LeFanu in *Uncle Silas*, written in 1864. LeFanu came from an Ascendancy Huguenot family and had personally experienced the growing sense of helplessness and hopelessness into which his heritage was hurled with “the triumphs of O’Connell, the Emancipation, the Tithe War of the early thirties, the Famine, (and) the

³¹⁴ Eagleton 199.

³¹⁵ Seamus Deane. *A Short History of Irish Literature*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. Notre Dame Press, 1986) 203.

³¹⁶ Deane 203.

³¹⁷ Deane 100-1.

rise of Fenianism.”³¹⁸ LeFanu’s earliest work included poems in favour of a brilliant Irish civilisation, yet a growing sense of exclusion from the burgeoning new Ireland led him to found and contribute extensively to conservative literary magazines. His *Uncle Silas* is indicative of the exaggerated extent of raving desperation felt toward the end of the nineteenth century by Unionist Protestants. The gloomy estate of Bartram-Haugh thus represents “the dilapidated Ascendancy House, in which the former masters are increasingly isolated from the surrounding tenantry, and reduced, politically and economically, to a state of psychic exhaustion.”³¹⁹

In essence, *Uncle Silas* is the Gothic story of teenaged Maud Ruthyn, the daughter of Austin, a Swedenborgian who wishes to vindicate his maligned brother Silas. As the ultimate demonstration of his faith in his brother, Austin arranges for Silas to gain custody of Maud following the Swedenborgian’s death. When Austin dies, Maud relocates to Bartram-Haugh, the imposing manse of Silas Ruthyn. The new living arrangement becomes a terrifying ordeal, as Maud finds herself a prisoner to the murderous desires of fortune-hunting Silas and the equally evil Frenchwoman Madame de la Rougierre.

Maud, undergoing a transformation from sensible, dutiful English daughter to desperate, histrionic prisoner, represents the endangered Ascendancy. The choice of gender for the protagonist conforms to the gender stereotyping of LeFanu’s era. Maud, as feminine, susceptible to the uncontrollable forces of nature, and delicate, is a metaphor

³¹⁸ Deane 100.

³¹⁹ Deane 100.

for the emasculated, fragile Ascendancy. An extract from Maud's hysterical letter to her only ally, cousin Lady Monica Knollys, could speak for the Ascendancy in its final decades:

God help me! I don't know where to look, or whom to trust. I fear my uncle more than all. I think I would bear this better if I knew what their plans are, even the worst. If you ever loved or pitied me, dear cousin, I conjure you, help me in this extremity. Take me away from this. Oh darling, for God's sake take me away!³²⁰

It is possible to read in the depiction of eccentric recluse Silas certain characteristics of the British Crown, which alternately commands loyalty and betrays its charge. Lady Knollys' command to Maud to respect and obey her uncle mirrors the historical allegiance expected of the Ascendancy. She implores her cousin "not to be alarmed about your Uncle Silas, because your being afraid would unfit you for an important service which you have undertaken for your family."³²¹ The puissant physical appearance of Silas also solidifies his Englishness, as the villain is "drawn as it seemed in black and white, venerable, bloodless, fiery-eyed, with its singular look of power."³²² Eagleton notes that "it is impossible not to see in this portrait a strikingly accurate cameo of the Anglo-Irish gentry, along with a prophetic glimpse of their historical destiny."³²³ Thus, LeFanu uses the same unemotional, powerful qualities the English attributed to themselves to create a singularly chilling, ultimately evil portrait of the two-faced English policy toward Anglo-Ireland.

³²⁰ Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, *Uncle Silas*. (New York: Dover, 1966) 419.

³²¹ LeFanu 152.

³²² LeFanu 229.

Madame de la Rougierre, the wicked accomplice of Silas, represents the supposed menace of Catholicism while embodying the latter-day Francophobia historically held by English and Anglo-Irish Protestants. Buzard writes that “to a great extent, Britons’ image of their nation as the preeminent defender of Protestantism-and its vaunted freedom of conscience and individual rights-had come to depend upon their conception of France as a priest-ridden, backward, and autocratic country all too eager to encroach upon British prosperity and territory.”³²⁴ Madame de la Rougierre, the drunken, crazed “evil phantom”³²⁵ is named Maud’s governess but inspires “a profound distrust and even terror”³²⁶ in her justifiably horrified charge as she schemes for Maud’s doom. One might infer that the double threat of Silas and the Frenchwoman may serve as an analogy for the simultaneous evils of English political unpredictability and the rising force of Catholic nationalism which threatened every facet of Ascendancy life.

The estate of Bartram-Haugh, placed in Derbyshire, “apparently a concession to an English readership,”³²⁷ may be interpreted as embodying some of the qualities of both the Ascendancy Big House and colonial Ireland itself. It is first described as a sumptuous, formidable dwelling, with “lordly proportions...massive style,”³²⁸ indicative of Anglo-Irish Georgian architectural developments. Maud’s recollections of the “palatial wide stairs...which we ascended”³²⁹ is an undisguised reference to LeFanu’s

³²³ Eagleton 198.

³²⁴ James Buzard, “Then on the Shore of the Wide World: The Victorian Nation and its Others.” *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*, ed. Herbert F. Tucker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999) 443.

³²⁵ LeFanu 403

³²⁶ LeFanu 410

³²⁷ Sheila Smith and Peter Denman, “Mid-Victorian Novelists,” *The Penguin History of Literature: the Victorians*. Ed. Arthur Pollard. (New York: Penguin, 1993) 278.

³²⁸ LeFanu 226.

³²⁹ LeFanu 226.

heritage. However, as Maud, like Ireland's Unionist Protestants, is ultimately trapped and helpless herself, her cry is summed up in the recollection, "you [who] have never experienced it can never have no idea how angry and frightened you become under the sinister insult of being locked into a room."³³⁰

Elizabeth Bowen attributes the embodiment of the particularly Protestant attitude toward fatalism, life, and death, to Maud. Bowen writes that Maud "shows, at every turn, the carelessness, or acquiescence of the predestined person: [she] is by nature a bride of Death."³³¹ Her flight from the forces of evil are marked by futility and frustration at nearly every juncture. Although the story ends happily, Maud's rescue and "colourless"³³² marriage seems to be nothing more than a deferment of her ultimate fate. Bowen links the sacrifice required by Smyth's and Nandy's colonising victims to Maud in the future death of her firstborn child. Maud has somehow eluded a tragic end, but her child subsequently pays the burden for the vague sins of the past.

It is also relevant to note that *Uncle Silas* is not a supernatural thriller *per se*. The novel's evil consists of human vice; however, Maud feels the entrapment at the hands of her uncle and governess. The psychological torment of the work testifies to the evolution of the horror story's subtlety during the Romantic Era while also attempting to convey the terrifying ordeal and fatalism of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. Ultimately, as Eagleton summarises, "in the cloistered, decaying world of the Anglo-Irish gentry, reality already contains its admixture of fantasy and alienation, sanity is shot through with madness, and

³³⁰ LeFanu 456.

³³¹ Elizabeth Bowen, introduction, *Uncle Silas* by Joseph Sheridan LeFanu. (New York: Dover, 1966) 9.

unremarkable adolescents like Maud Ruthyn find themselves offered major roles in Gothic melodrama."³³³

The Swedenborgian beliefs of Austin Ruthyn reflect the popularity of exotic occultism during the Victorian Era, with Swedenborg, Madame Blavatsky, and Alastair Crowley, though proclaiming very different ideas, offering greater knowledge of the transcendental mysteries of the supernatural. Gerhard Joseph and Herbert F. Tucker attribute the growing interest in the occult to a Victorian preoccupation with death and immortality in an age where theology and rationality conflicted. Joseph and Tucker write, "where the mere intimation of immortality meant so much, there arose a distinctive tendency to immortalise the intimation, to read death's text by the glimmering twilight of a faith in doubt. Not for nothing did the Victorian spiritualist medium drive a brisk trade, or the Metaphysical Society (1869) and the Society for Psychical Research (1882)."³³⁴ Joseph and Tucker explain the "obsession with death in the Victorian period"³³⁵ that accounted for the concern about immortality by claiming that "there was so much more early death-especially among the very young...stern necessities underlay the omnipresence of death to the Victorian mind as it tried to keep in bearable view a reality that could never be kept at bay, in any family, for long."³³⁶

³³² Bowen 9.

³³³ Eagleton 198.

³³⁴ Gerhard Joseph and Herbert F. Tucker, "Passing On: Death." *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*. Ed. Herbert F. Tucker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999) 113.

³³⁵ Joseph and Tucker 115.

³³⁶ Joseph and Tucker 115.

Interestingly, Terry Eagleton describes this interest, at least in Anglo-Ireland, as “an attempt to surmount the solitude of the Protestant self-to find in ritual and mystical brotherhood a consoling substitute for that sense of system and solidarity which the Catholic Church was able to bestow on its adherents.”³³⁷ The fascination with the occult permeated works of horror literature, not least with the inclusion of the above-mentioned Swedenborgian Austin Ruthyn in LeFanu’s *Uncle Silas*.

LeFanu’s portrayal of Madame de la Rougierre suggests that anti-Catholic prejudice was very much alive in nineteenth-century England. The Tolerance Act of 1643 had given Protestant dissenters religious freedom but denied it to Catholics. At the beginning of the nineteenth century and after a very real Catholic Napoleonic threat, “both in formal enactment and in popular prejudice, Papists were still, after Waterloo, regarded as too dangerously disloyal to be admitted to any post of power or responsibility.”³³⁸ Pressure, especially from Methodists and liberal Anglicans, was nonetheless placed upon the English Crown for Catholic emancipation. The celebrated Anglican clergyman Sydney Smith wrote that Catholic freedom, including in Ireland, was necessary for national unity and security. Despite these powerful dialogues, official discrimination persisted well into the nineteenth century, although the practice was quickly becoming “an anachronism on both political and ecclesiastical grounds.” Furthermore, Catholics in England, as opposed to the distorted image of Celtic Catholics in Ireland, “numbered only 40,000 and were quiet and loyal.”³³⁹

³³⁷ Eagleton 189.

³³⁸ David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*. (Viking Penguin: New York, 1951) 59.

As a result of this dichotomy in attitudes regarding English and Irish Catholics, while the former made clear strides toward equality, the latter, despite moderate gains, remained second class citizens. Indeed, in England, “to a large measure, public life was separated from private religion, and citizenship from churchmanship.”³⁴⁰ In contrast, in Ireland, where Protestantism and Catholicism represented not only two separate religions, but also distinct cultures, languages, and customs, the sharp distinction ensued, with a somewhat haphazard policy of segregation. While “religious equality was given with one hand, civil and political liberties were taken away with the other.”³⁴¹ Beckett adds that, at least at the turn of the nineteenth century, “if British protestants still feared to trust a tiny Roman Catholic minority with political power, it is hardly to be wondered at that Irish protestants should be at least equally suspicious of a huge Roman Catholic majority.”³⁴² However, one must not forget, at the same time, that “the tensions in Irish life were not, of course, solely racial and religious. Parallel with the clash between Irish and Anglo-Irish, between Catholic and Protestant, went also an economic rivalry which was itself deeply intertwined with the ethnic and denominational divisions in Irish society.”³⁴³

Perhaps not surprisingly, one might infer that LeFanu’s Unionism was expressed through anti-Catholic prejudice in his writings. While Madame de la Rougierre may be seen as representing the perceived papist French menace, LeFanu attacks the supposed superstition of Irish Catholics in “Wicked Captain Walshawe.” The English Captain Walshawe of Wauling is horrified to stumble upon a bizarre Catholic ritual surrounding

³³⁹ Thomson 61.

³⁴⁰ Thomson 61.

³⁴¹ Thomson 62.

³⁴² Beckett 229.

³⁴³ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since The Famine*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co.,Ltd., 1975) 25.

his recently deceased Irish wife. Walshawe discovers “some half-dozen crones, chiefly Irish, from the neighbouring town of Hackleton, sitting over tea and snuff, etc., with candles lighted around the corpse, which was arranged in a strangely cut robe of brown serge...the spectacle was grisly enough.”³⁴⁴ When the Captain, with a quick, unattractive temper, attempts to stop the strange proceedings, albeit violently, he becomes the object of a curse. The Irish Molly Doyle then viciously orders, “may your own [soul] be shut into the wick o’ that... candle, till it’s burned out.”³⁴⁵

Molly’s curse comes to pass in a horrifying apparition to the narrator’s devoutly Methodist uncle in Lancashire. Uncle Watson, safely in rational, Protestant England, is consequently saved through his prayers; “never did I pray with so much agony before or since; for then, as now, it was clear beyond a cavil that I had actually beheld the phantom evil spirit.”³⁴⁶ The phantom is, of course, the soul of the captain trapped by the Celtic curse. Thus, over the course of fourteen pages, LeFanu attempts to provide an illustration of the menace lurking within the suspect faith of the Irish Celts and the need for English or Anglo-Irish Protestantism to quash it. Furthermore, LeFanu offers his readers a parable for the potential dangers and tragedy that may arise from the miscegenation of Anglo Protestants and Irish Catholics.

Whilst anti-Catholicism remained a consistent theme in the works of such Unionist writers as LeFanu, Irish Catholics were beginning to adopt new, not always

³⁴⁴ Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, “Wicked Captain Walshawe of Wauling,” *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O’Griofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 12.

³⁴⁵ LeFanu, “Wicked Captain Walshawe of Wauling” 12.

³⁴⁶ LeFanu, “Wicked Captain Walshawe of Wauling” 21.

favourable, attitudes with regard to their faith. De Paor argues that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the faith of Irish Catholics still resembled the syncretic Catholicism of the Middle Ages, “embodying very large numbers of customs and beliefs that stemmed from a great (and often pre-Christian) antiquity.”³⁴⁷ Interestingly, this eclecticism was not unlike the concept of Hinduism to which millions of colonial inhabitants of British India adhered at the same time. On the subject of Hindu eclecticism, David S. Noss and John B. Noss write:

“The Indian faiths comprehended under the term Hinduism have an almost unlimited diversity. No possibility exists of bringing them under one summarising phrase or of suggesting that they are in agreement about what should be said and done in the world. They are really not one religion, but rather a family of religions. The term itself is of relatively recent coinage, and was first used by outside observers looking on at what seemed to them a distinctive religious and cultural complex.”³⁴⁸

With the implicit desire of ultimately adapting to an Anglicised society following the Act of Union, parish priests actively eliminated customs viewed as archaic, such as those associated with pilgrimages to ancient church sites and the wake ritual. One might wonder if the discarding of such traditions suggests that these parish priests were adopting the pejorative attitude regarding Catholic “superstition” held by more than a few Unionists, such as LeFanu and Maturin. Indeed, the priests now “attacked the remarkable melange of superstitious beliefs and customs that had come down in rural traditions.”³⁴⁹ However, the priests were somewhat ambivalent about these attacks, since the same rural traditions had established the charismatic cult of the priests themselves.

³⁴⁷ Liam De Paor, *The Peoples of Ireland*. (New York: Notre Dame U. Press, 1990) 257.

³⁴⁸ David S. Noss and John B. Noss, *A History of the World's Religions*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Macmillan, 1994) 85.

These priests also more energetically preached sexual morality, calling for church marriages for sexual partners. Indeed, the religious leaders were conforming to the increasingly rigid Victorian moral code following the laxity of the Regency Era. Indeed, these changes were encouraged with the hopes that deferment to the United Kingdom would allow for emancipation in the new, increasingly secular state.

Perhaps in a similar display of Anglicisation, some Irish Catholic horror writers of the nineteenth century appealing to a British audience also demonstrate a distrust of Catholic “superstition,” if not Catholicism itself, at least in their writings. One such writer is George Moore. As it has been stated, a large proportion of Irish Catholics lived in disenfranchised poverty, but the aristocratic Moore hailed from Ireland’s west country, beyond Cromwellian boundaries regarding Catholic ownership of property. The author identified more with the Big House mentality of the Protestant Ascendancy and whose experiences in Ireland were not dissimilar to those of LeFanu. Moore was “a Catholic landlord from County Mayo, who witnessed the slow death of the semi-feudal relationship between landowners and tenantry from the Land League disturbances of the 1880s to the burning of the Big Houses in the 1920s.”³⁵⁰ In fact, Moore Hall, his family home, was destroyed alongside Protestant Big Houses by anti-Treaty factionalists during the Irish Civil War in 1923.

³⁴⁹ De Paor 257.

³⁵⁰ Deane 169.

His distrust of the Irish peasantry mirrored that of the most ardent Unionist Protestant aristocrats. Rather than demonstrating sympathy and compassion for his fellow Celts, “Moore saw his tenants as foreigners...he hated Ireland and had no wish to live there.”³⁵¹ While living as an expatriate in Paris, Moore received word that his father had died, ostensibly a suicide, during a heated dispute with tenants over a rent reduction. While in France, Moore became interested in realist literature currently popularised by such writers as Emile Zola and Gustave Flaubert; as a result, he turned from his original artistic ambitions to become a writer of English prose. His identification with the English tradition also led him to espouse Protestantism; Coyne writes that Moore “attributed his hatred of Catholicism to ancestral memories as well as personal experiences at Oscott "Catholic" College.”³⁵²

Moore’s early abandonment of the Irish experience (a step that Joyce would also take thirty years later) is evident in his early influences, including not only Zola and Flaubert, but also Turgenev, Tolstoy, Wagner, the French Impressionists, and Walter Pater. Indeed, Moore’s “ability to absorb French and English cultural models into his own Irish experience is almost as inexhaustible as that of Yeats.”³⁵³ After his conversion to Protestantism and a profound education in contemporaneous European currents in literature, Moore would become re-interested in his homeland in a manner that Joyce would not imitate.

³⁵¹ Kevin Coyne, “George Moore: Landlord and Novelist.” <[http: www.doon.mayo-ireland.ie/gmoore.html](http://www.doon.mayo-ireland.ie/gmoore.html)>

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³⁵² Coyne 1.

³⁵³ Deane 169.

After the fall of Parnell and the rise of Protestant advocates of a cultural nationalism divorced both from Anglicisation and Catholicism, Moore turned his attention to this unique reclaiming of Ireland by new, energetic literary forces. In the decade preceding Parnell's fall, Moore's writings regarding Ireland consisted of realistic novels in the style of Zola describing the precarious position of Irish landlordism. His novel *A Drama in Muslin* presents "Dublin and Ireland in decay, presided over by Dublin Castle, which has lost its political function."³⁵⁴ Just ten years later, however, Moore touted the activities of the Gaelic League, calling the revived Irish language "a spring rising among the mountains and becoming a great river rolling through the fields."³⁵⁵

Despite Moore's stay in London and his use of English cultural models, the author believed the English novel to be "something attempted by only the inferior-or will we say? the subaltern mind."³⁵⁶ With regard to the subaltern mind, Gayatri Spivak asks, "on the other side of the international division of labour from socialized capital, inside *and* outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text, *can the subaltern speak?*"³⁵⁷ Moore's solution was to infuse the burgeoning Irish revival with a respectability equal to that of the French literary tradition he admired.. Believing that tradition depends on tone, Moore opined that "the French and some of the Russians had it...the English did not...he would scarcely have acknowledged that the Irish had even prose narrative."³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ Deane 171.

³⁵⁵ Coyne 1.

³⁵⁶ Deane 172.

³⁵⁷ Gaytri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 25.

Thus, Moore sought to contribute a distinct offshoot of French Realism, known as Naturalism, to Irish literature. Naturalists hoped to rebel even further than realists against the sweeping forces of Romanticism, attempting to portray nature from a scientific or quasi-scientific perspective. Ironically, Moore was a convert to the Irish Cultural Revival, in part inspired by the Romantic notions that Naturalists rejected. Sara Selby believes, however, that Naturalists, including Moore, failed in their attempt to mirror life more accurately, as they merely preferred glum, monotonous images to the thrilling works of the Romantics. Selby writes that Naturalism's "writers [are]...blinder to life than they have known, for the picture they give of it is almost uniformly gloomy and depressing."³⁵⁹

Moore relocated to Dublin in 1901, the final year of Queen Victoria's reign, "with the abruptness which marked all his temporary enthusiasms."³⁶⁰ Within two years of his residence in Ireland, he published the collection of stories *The Untilled Field*, which stressed the design of the entire collection rather than any one single story, a technique later to be adopted by Joyce, who admired Moore, in *Dubliners*. The horror story "A Play-house in the Waste," will be analysed in this chapter; despite its late date of publication (1903), inclusion in a discussion of nineteenth-century Irish horror is relevant, since Moore's writing style was influenced by nineteenth-century Realism and Naturalism. Furthermore, his cultural ideology belongs to the Celtic Revival, which originated during the twilight of the nineteenth century. In addition, as Deane writes, the Ireland portrayed in *The Untilled Field* "remains firmly lodged in the nineteenth

³⁵⁸ Deane 173.

³⁵⁹ Sara Selby, "Realism and Naturalism." < <http://www.way.peachnet.edu/faculty/selby/real.html> > 1.

century...it bears the marks of famine, emigration, and dispossession...the people have almost melted into the lonely landscape.”³⁶¹

Moore, as opposed to Irish horror writers of the Gothic and Romantic traditions, penned “A Play-house in the Waste,” using stark Naturalism as a form of social protest against the Catholic Church, which, in Moore’s opinion, ruined rural Ireland. Indeed, the story appears so much a criticism of contemporary conditions in the author’s native county that the supernatural element of horror is rendered almost superfluous. Remaining faithful to the Naturalist writing style, Moore pays particular attention to the colours and everyday scenes, even if mundane, of the impoverished Mayo parish.

The Ireland of Moore’s story is not so much Riddell’s fantasyland or Maturin’s enchanted land of ruins and supernatural thrills as a region besieged by the misguided power of the British government and the Catholic Church. The opening of the story demonstrates the hypocrisy and self-interest of the priests, describing Father MacTurman’s letter to the Vatican, “saying he was willing to take a wife to his bosom for patriotic reasons, if the Pope would relieve him of his vow of celibacy.”³⁶² Moore’s comparison of MacTurman to such tragic literary figures as Don Quixote does not enhance the priest’s respectability. Moreover, the physical landscape appears to be a grim setting for a decaying civilisation. The road through Foxford is in ruins, as “it straggles...through the bog alongside of bogholes deep enough to drown one, and into

³⁶⁰ Deane 174.

³⁶¹ Deane 170.

³⁶² George Moore, “A Play-house in the Waste,” *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O’Griofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 40.

which the jarvey and myself seemed in great likelihood of pitching.”³⁶³ A typical dwelling of the region is equally depressing, consisting of “a one-room hovel full of peatsmoke, the black iron pot with traces of the yellow stirabout of it on the hearth.”³⁶⁴ Moore’s images, placing the bleak style of Zola or Turgenev into a Celtic setting, give a tone of despair to Victorian Ireland which is absent from the *Big House* or escapist stories that comprised much of nineteenth-century horror fiction.

Clearly Moore’s story was designed for a different type of reader, who was perhaps more interested in social consciousness than the fad for sensation novels. While the stories of LeFanu or even Yeats may have reflected the authors’ political attitudes and aspirations, these authors disguise their opinions through well-crafted, thrilling tales of the supernatural. Moore, in contrast, reduces his ghost to a stylised “white thing gliding,”³⁶⁵ reserving his painstaking detail for the hyper-realism of his setting and characters. Furthermore, Moore’s monotonous tone subtly pokes fun at his characters, allowing his readers to view the ineffectiveness of the current Irish policy rather than indulge in the vicarious tension of a suspenseful ghost story.

The eponymous playhouse is Father James’ brainchild, “a new plan for Ireland’s salvation.”³⁶⁶ The priest epitomises the ridiculous nature of the schemes for ameliorating rural conditions, as he hopes the playhouse will become an Oberammergau of the British Isles, attracting visitors from all over Europe and raising money for the parish through the

³⁶³ Moore 41.

³⁶⁴ Moore 44.

³⁶⁵ Moore 42.

³⁶⁶ Moore 41.

sale of subscriptions in Dublin and elsewhere. The narrator comments on the strangeness of the priest's idea to transplant archaic European morality plays to the late nineteenth century. Moore describes the unrealistic dreamer as "an odd man, more willing to discuss the play that he had chosen than the talents of those who were going to perform it, and he told me that it had been written in the fourteenth century in Latin, and that he had translated it into Irish."³⁶⁷ Indeed, Moore's portrayal of the priest is reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's equally polemic "A Modest Proposal,"³⁶⁸ also satirising inane efforts to improve Irish social conditions.

Moore also speaks directly about government policies in Ireland, stating that "the policy of the Government...from the first was that relief works should benefit nobody except the workers, and it is sometimes very difficult to think out a project for work that will be perfectly useless."³⁶⁹ Among the narrator's examples are roads that lead nowhere and a harbour that would be of no benefit. The latter example is shown to be fruitless, as the narrator claims that a harbour would encourage emigration, thus leading to an improvement in social conditions through the exodus of the very inhabitants who are to benefit from the proposal. The priest's playhouse, demonstrated to be as useless as the other efforts, suggests that the Catholic Church cares as little for the well-being of its parishioners as the government cares about its Irish subjects. Such a comparison hence advocates Moore's dream of an Ireland freed from the shackles of the priesthood and British inefficiency.

³⁶⁷ Moore 48.

³⁶⁸ See Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal and Other Satirical Works* (New York: Dover, 1996) for Swift's satirical 1729 tract discussing the use of cannibalism as a solution to Ireland's social and economic problems.

³⁶⁹ Moore 46.

Only at the end of the story is the identity of the ghost revealed, after Moore has referred to it offhandedly twice during the tale, in the context of Catholic ineptitude. The priest's plan fails after a gust of wind blows down the playhouse, even before the first performance is presented. The priest fatalistically suggests that God has destroyed the playhouse, just as He has arranged for the Irish to emigrate to "convert the world."³⁷⁰ This last attitude suggests that the priest does not understand the mechanics or motives of emigration, since most immigrants left Ireland for economic and political rather than missionary reasons. The jarvey, speaking of the destruction of the playhouse, suggests that a curse has destroyed the playhouse, just as LeFanu's crone has imprisoned Captain Walshaw's soul through a curse. Once again, the act of cursing is used as anti-Catholic propaganda.

The curse, in this instance, has been placed by Mrs Sheridan and her daughter, who was to play Good Deeds in the morality play. Ironically, the girl does not conform to her role, since she becomes pregnant out of wedlock. Mrs Sheridan, a strict Catholic, is outraged and imprisons the girl in the stable until the birth of the baby; Mrs Sheridan subsequently murders the infant and secretly buries the corpse near the playhouse. Only the priest, to whom the murderess has confessed, knows the secret when she dies shortly afterward. The playhouse is thus destroyed by the ghost of the baby, who "pulled the thatch out of the roof."³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ Moore 49.

³⁷¹ Moore 51.

One may infer that the baby has been murdered not by Mrs Sheridan, but by the Catholic theology, which shuns babies born out of wedlock. This vehement criticism of this theology, as well as the policy that it may formulate, is continued in the reaction of the priest to the ghost. Instead of horror at seeing the apparition, the priest is merely concerned that he has seen an “unbaptised child on the roadside and that child the only bastard...ever born in the parish.”³⁷² The priest is thus just as unconnected to reality as Mrs Sheridan; she murders her grandchild through ignorance and excessive devotion, while the priesthood is slowly destroying Ireland. Both the priest and the murderess are clearly more concerned with the trappings of religion than actually improving conditions, whether in Ireland or in the family setting. Thus, one might perceive the ghost of the baby as embodying certain effects of the supposed Catholic suffocation of Ireland.

George Moore was one of the few Irish writers of Catholic heritage who turned to horror fiction during the nineteenth century. William Carleton, born a Catholic, had been a member of the Ribbonmen, a secret society dedicated to combating the oppression of landlordism. Later in life, however, he converted to Protestantism and became a harsh critic of the Catholic Church by the time he wrote the decidedly apolitical horror tale of a bargain with the devil in “The Three Wishes.” His upbringing in rural County Tyrone was helpful to his career as a recorder of Irish folklore. Despite John Wilson Foster’s praise that Carleton was “a ‘natural, inventive, and untutored genius,’”³⁷³ Carleton’s efforts were clearly written in the Anglo-Irish antiquarian vein rather than being a display of O’Connellite nationalism. Deane compares the linguistic instabilities of Carleton’s

³⁷² Moore 52.

writings to his political inconsistencies, in terms of Irish or British identity; “the wavering political and sectarian loyalties endemic to the Irish situation...vex the pattern of his rhetoric.”³⁷⁴

Gerald Griffin is also worthy of mention here, since this writer of horror fiction, among other genres, is described as “one of Ireland’s first Catholic writers in English.”³⁷⁵ Unlike Moore and Carleton, Griffin remained a Catholic throughout his life. Griffin considered himself to be Irish and believed that “Irish nationalism was not a natural growth...it had to be invented,”³⁷⁶ but the author, a contemporary of Carleton in the first half of the nineteenth century, clearly wrote for the English reader. His writings, which attempt to capture the wild Ireland of Lady Morgan and Maturin, thus treat readers across the Irish Sea to “an apologia for Irish Catholics and Catholic Emancipation and a thrilling Romantic-Irish tale”³⁷⁷ Thomas Flanagan notes that “the audience for Irish books was in part at least a British one, and writers were therefore concerned to ‘interpret’ Ireland, to exploit as local colour or as provincial genre-painting whatever seemed unique, particular, or ‘romantic’ in Irish life.”³⁷⁸

In addition to his “The Unburied Legs,” discussed in Chapter One as an example of the tendency to employ Ireland as England’s fantasyland and which portrayed the rural Irish as religious bumpkins, Griffin also wrote the horror story “The Brown Man.” This

³⁷³ John Wilson Foster, *Fictions of the Irish Literary Revival: A Changeling Art*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse U. Press, 1987) 46.

³⁷⁴ Deane 109.

³⁷⁵ Haining, *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, 312.

³⁷⁶ Deane 65.

³⁷⁷ Deane 101-2.

tale is similar to "The Unburied Legs" in terms of capitalising on stereotypes of the Irish peasantry, yet Griffin's Unionist sentiments are more evident in his opening, didactic paragraph. Writing of the ability to see devils through a mental prism, Griffin comments on the "blue devils to the dwellers in the good city of London, orange and green devils to the inhabitants of the sister (or rather step-daughter) island."³⁷⁹ Here Griffin blatantly summarises his political orientation, identifying with his English audience and showing his support of the Act of Union. Thus, Griffin's introduction to his tale is not unlike Protestant Maturin's opening paragraphs of "The Doomed Sisters," as both writers combine sympathy with the Crown and a supposedly native knowledge of romantic Irish folkways and lore. Consequently, these Irish writers would appear theologically and politically non-threatening in the context of Empire while still appearing exotic enough, even if they were also perceived as inferior to the British, to appeal to a public with an insatiable appetite for Gothic and Romantic literature.

After this discussion of Unionism and anti-Catholic sentiment in nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction, I shall now explore the fact that Yeats, a vehement Home Rule supporter of Protestant heritage, employs similar anti-Catholic tactics in horror. It is interesting to note that much of the cultural support for Home Rule stemmed from Anglo-Irish Protestants. In addition to Yeats, Douglas Hyde, the first president of the Gaelic League, and Lady Gregory were significant Protestant Celticists who "had no

³⁷⁸ Thomas Flanagan, "Literature in English, 1801-91," *A New History of Ireland, vol. 6, Ireland under the Union II, 1870-1921*. ed. W.E. Vaughan. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 484.

³⁷⁹ Gerald Griffin, "The Brown Man." *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993) 316.

problem with Home Rule.³⁸⁰ In fact, the Protestant role in the Irish Home Rule and Second Celtic Revival movements was so tremendous that the xenophobic, anti-Protestant Irish Ireland Party eventually formed at the turn of the century, but to little avail.

Yeats's contribution to nineteenth-century horror literature echoes his optimistic view of Anglo-Celtic relations in a new, free Ireland. Born into a privileged Ascendancy family, like LeFanu, Yeats spent much of his youth in England. Rather than conforming to the coloniser/colonist dialogue which traditionally segregated Anglo Protestants from Irish Catholics, Yeats envisioned an independent, integrated Ireland. In such a country, Protestants and Catholics would both benefit from a revival of pre-Christian Irish civilisation, with all members of the new state considering themselves fully Irish and partaking of the boons of Irish Home Rule. As opposed to the maudlin paranoia of LeFanu, Yeats's beliefs stated that an Irish national was an individual who felt a kinship with the land and Celtic spirit. Indeed, Yeats, somewhat idealistically, seemed to prefer New World, rather than Old World, definitions of nationality; "like Americans of the same period, the Irish were not so much born as *made*, gathered around a few simple symbols, a flag, an anthem, a handful of evocative phrases."³⁸¹

LeFanu and Yeats, both Irish Protestants, display opposing social and political attitudes regarding Irishness and the future of their class in free Ireland. As W.H. New writes, "to interpret colonial literatures by relying on a binary opposition... would be

³⁸⁰ Lawrence J. McCaffrey, "Components of Irish Nationalism." *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism*. eds. Thomas E. Hachey and Lawrence J. McCaffrey. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1989) 13.

simplistic. While all colonies suffer disparities of power, each colony separately experiences particularities of history.³⁸² In Ireland, the ruling Protestant class, descendants of the original invaders, espoused a gamut of identities found in other regions of the Empire. The decidedly conservative views of LeFanu, fearing a native take-over, is reminiscent of the British presence in the plantation/slave colonies of the West Indies. His portrayal of the Irish Catholic wife and her devilish associates in “Wicked Captain Walshaw” is not unlike Maturin’s gruesome images of the mad Irish Catholic bridegroom or the Scottish baronet in “The Doomed Sisters.” Moreover, both stories’ wild, exotic spouses bear a resemblance to Charlotte Bronte’s horrifying character Bertha, the mad Jamaican Creole wife in *Jane Eyre*³⁸³.

In contrast, Yeats’s Irishness by birth and association, rather than blood, resembles the pride a white Canadian or white Australian may hold for his or her “settler colony.” For instance, although Yeats’ use of native folklore is more extensive, his works, with their identification with the sacred Irish land, are analogous to those of Canadian writer Mazo de la Roche. De la Roche’s *Whiteoaks*³⁸⁴ series, published between 1929 and 1946, is infused with a tenderness for the North American frontier on which new, distinctly Canadian settlements were constructed, perhaps expressing the same “New World” enthusiasm for Canada that Yeats displayed for his conception of the new, free Ireland of the future.

³⁸¹ Kiberd 101.

³⁸² W.H. New, “Colonial Literatures,” *An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 102.

³⁸³ See Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*. (New York: Penguin, 1996).

³⁸⁴ See Mazo de la Roche, *Building of Jalna*. (New York: Ulverscroft, 1973).

New thus distinguishes between the Empire 'colonist,' "the person, usually European, who settles in the 'new' land and who participates in the reshaping of its social mores,"³⁸⁵ from the "colonial," "the European temporarily resident in the new society, generally contemptuous of the life and customs observed."³⁸⁶ Yeats conforms to the direct descendant of New's definition of colonist, while LeFanu is clearly a colonial, despite his family's presence in Ireland for centuries before his birth. During the Victorian Era, however, Ireland, the West Indies, Australia, and Canada were all perceived as exotic and somehow inferior to the Motherland of England.

Yeats, believing himself to be completely Irish and at home in Sligo, was originally an ardent supporter of Parnell and shared in Ireland's disillusionment with his defeat. Yeats interpreted this turning point in the struggle for Home Rule as "that the young generation in Ireland turned in disgust from politics and gave their energies to cultural revival."³⁸⁷ Although Yeats spoke no Irish, he fully supported the Gaelic League and believed in redefining Ireland through its folklore. He blamed both English Puritanism and Irish Catholicism for the demise of folklore, just as he charged the English and Irish middle classes for Parnell's fall. Furthermore, folklore, for Yeats, would not only figure prominently in the construction of a new, great Ireland, but also provide "local examples of the great world memory."³⁸⁸ Yeats's dream was for "the Big House and the peasant folk of the west of Ireland [to be]...conjoined, in art, to produce the new Ireland."³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ New 103.

³⁸⁶ New 103.

³⁸⁷ Deane 141.

³⁸⁸ Deane 143.

³⁸⁹ Deane 146-7.

Yeats's interest in folklore, which relied heavily on supernatural powers and which inspired a great number of Irish works of horror, probably led him to write "The Crucifixion of the Outcast" in 1898. Martin O'Gríofa claims that the story, written in the style of Edgar Allen Poe, "may be read as an allegory of his countrymen's philistine rejection of Irish poetry and drama."³⁹⁰ The story recounts how Cumhal the gleeman, a bardic wizard, is crucified by Catholic monks. The plot, perhaps inspired by the early Christian persecution of wizards during the early centuries of Ireland's conversion, is simple, yet the story unabashedly blames the supposedly boorish Irish middle classes and Irish Catholicism for having suppressed and even forgotten Ireland's true glory.

Yeats, basing the story in his beloved, native region of Sligo, painstakingly depicts Cumhal's origins, inspired by the descriptions found in traditional Irish legend. Yeats writes that "Cumhal, the son of Cormac...was of the blood of the Ernaans, and his birthplace was the Field of Gold, but his eating and sleeping places were in the five kingdoms of Eri, and his abiding place was not upon the ridge of the earth."³⁹¹ In Irish lore, Cumhal (Cool) Mac Baiscne is the last leader of the Fianna, warriors who protect Ireland's high king, who is killed "by the sons of Morna who were contending him for leadership."³⁹² The choice of name is propitious, as Yeats's Cumhal, a guardian of Irish mysticism, contends with the Catholic monks for influence and is killed by the monks.

³⁹⁰ O'Gríofa 8.

³⁹¹ William Butler Yeats, "The Crucifixion of the Outcast," *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O'Gríofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 60.

³⁹² "Encyclopedia of the Celts" 3.

While wandering through the Irish countryside, Cumhal encounters the crosses used for crucifixion and becomes incensed at the vision. With a sense of injustice at the Catholics' barbarity, he says, "If it were hanging or bow-stringing, or stoning or beheading, it would be bad enough. But to have the birds pecking your eyes and the wolves eating your feet!"³⁹³ Curiously, the torture of having eyes pecked out by birds also appears in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In this later novel, Stephen Dedalus's Catholic aunt terrifies her nephew by saying that if the boy does not apologise for wanting to marry a Protestant girl, "the eagles will come and pull out his eyes."³⁹⁴ In both instances, a Catholic, ostensibly believing in a religion of forgiveness and love, paradoxically uses the nightmarish act, in one instance literally and in the other as a threat, to ensure Catholic purity and hegemony. Furthermore, both Yeats and Joyce were harsh critics of Irish Catholicism.

When Cumhal arrives at the Abbey of the White Friars, he is housed in a shabby guesthouse, which may be perceived as representing some of the characteristics of the repression which centuries of Catholicism have wrought upon the Irish population. The fact that the guesthouse's "sods and straw would not light, for they were damp"³⁹⁵ may be seen to illustrate the extinguishing of the light and glory of ancient Ireland by Christianity. Furthermore, Cumhal's bread is mouldy, and the water is bitter and foul. The gleeman disparagingly compares the poor quality of water to his earlier drink of "a

³⁹³ Yeats 60.

³⁹⁴ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 20.

³⁹⁵ Yeats 61.

hop of heath beer or wine.”³⁹⁶ The comparison also refers to the wondrous mysticism or pre-Christian civilisation as opposed to the stale morality of strict Catholicism.

With the bravery befitting a hero of Irish legend, Cumhal confronts the monks about this shoddy treatment. He rails against them, “O cowardly and tyrannous race of monks, persecutors of the bard and gleeman, haters of life and joy! O race that does not draw the sword and tell the truth! O race that melts the bones of the people with cowardice and deceit!”³⁹⁷ When the lay brother whom Cumhal addresses refuses to rectify the situation, Cumhal, relying on his ancient arts, declares, “I shall sing a bard’s curse on the abbot.”³⁹⁸ Considerably afraid, the lay brother warns the abbot, who fears that “unless we do somewhat...he will teach his curses to the children in the street, and the girls spinning at the doors, and to the robbers upon Ben Bulben.”³⁹⁹

Interestingly, the fear of curses, which LeFanu employs in “Wicked Captain Walshaw” to malign the Catholics, is mocked by Yeats. However, while LeFanu accuses the Catholics of employing curses against Protestants, Yeats accuses the Catholics of fearing ancient Celtic curses. Thus the cycle of prejudice has shifted, with the Catholics who portrayed the Irish pagans as untrustworthy, curse-wielding heathens being convicted of the same crime by the Protestants. Yeats’s representation of the frightened monks also demonstrates the fear of the priests, who enjoyed immense power over their parishioners, of a mass cultural revival which would potentially benefit all Irish

³⁹⁶ Yeats 62.

³⁹⁷ Yeats 62.

³⁹⁸ Yeats 63.

³⁹⁹ Yeats 63.

people but would divest the clergy of their traditional strength. Ironically, the monks do not punish the robbers, whilst they cruelly crucify religious dissenters, which perhaps symbolises the supposed hypocrisy of the Catholics.

When the lay brother tells the abbot that the crosses are full, the abbot simply orders another cross to be built. His defence is that “we would stand shamed indeed before blessed Saint Benignus, and sour would be his face when he comes to judge us at the Last Day, were we to spare an enemy of his when we had him under our thumb.”⁴⁰⁰ Together, eight monks collect the gleeman, bind him, and prepare to crucify him, with the obvious irony that the Saviour of the Catholics was crucified in almost an identical manner, thereby reiterating the theme of Catholic hypocrisy. Just as Christ performed the miracles of the Gospels, Cumhal “did many wonders for [the monks], even to the drawing of live frogs out of his ears.”⁴⁰¹ Yeats thus draws a striking parallel between the mystical power of Christianity and that of the ancient Celts.

Furthermore, Cumhal accuses his persecutors of the cruelty and hypocrisy of the crucifixion. As the voice of pre-Christian Celtic wisdom, he claims that the monks are blasphemous and immoral. As opposed to the Catholic claim that they have been sent to Ireland to save the souls of heathens, Cumhal declares, “my soul is decent and orderly, but yours is like the wind among the salley gardens.”⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ Yeats 64.

⁴⁰¹ Yeats 66.

⁴⁰² Yeats 65.

Toward the end of the story, Cumhal prepares a final meal of cold bacon and offers a tithe to the poorest of beggars who have gathered around the victim. After listening to their pathetic tales, Cumhal deems himself the poorest because he has travelled the barren road alone with the memory of Irish myth in his heart. Yet Cumhal shows his generous sense of charity by offering the bacon to the beggars. The pagan charity here is contrasted effectively with Christian cruelty, as “meanwhile the monks nailed the gleeman to his cross.”⁴⁰³

The story ends when Cumhal, nailed to his cross, calls to the beggars, imploring them to “stay, outcasts, yet a little while...and keep the beasts and the birds from me,”⁴⁰⁴ a small favour from an individual who has given the beggars his last meal. The beggars ridiculously object to the term “outcasts,” completely ignoring the message or deeds of Cumhal. Instead of saving Cumhal from the animals, they attack him with stones and mud before abandoning him. The grisly final line of the story depicts Cumhal, unable to save himself with his magic, crying out “Outcasts...have you all turned against the outcast?”⁴⁰⁵ as the animals begin to devour him.

Yeats’s story, while employing supernatural themes, focuses more on human than otherworldly horror. He attacks not only the Catholic clergy, but also the Irish public, both Catholic and Protestant, for having boorishly relinquished the dream of a cultural revival. His term “outcasts” can be read as an index to the inferior status given to the Irish, both Protestant and Catholic, in the context of the Empire. Thus, Yeats addresses

⁴⁰³ Yeats 67.

⁴⁰⁴ Yeats 68.

the Irish masses, not yet endowed with the right of statehood, appealing to their sense of oppression and ordering them not to crush their heritage the same way that the British Empire has attempted to crush them. Yeats's role in the founding of the Irish Free State is unquestionable, whether as a Nobel laureate, member of the first Irish Senate, or as the promulgator of an ideal for Irishness that transcended traditional boundaries of race or religion. Yeats's view was merely an ideal, as "for the inhabitants of the Dublin tenement slums, the worst in Europe and among the worst in the world at that time, history is not part of an heroic destiny or a phase in an unfolding mythic drama."⁴⁰⁶ While an excellent nationalist and propagandist, Yeats's works simply could not rally the entire Irish nation to collaborate in the rebuilding of ancient Ireland because a large percentage of the "outcasts" were too concerned with survival.

Smyth's theory that the Gothic novel in Ireland served to express the unique Protestant concepts of life and death, as well as guilt and alienation, may explain the anti-Catholic monopoly of horror fiction. The origin of the genre in Protestant Germany, brought to Anglo-Ireland through England, also suggests an inherent Protestant presence in horror fiction. In addition, the fact that most writers' audiences would have been educated Anglo-Irish members of the Ascendancy and English readers also would have provided a purely mercenary reason to adopt a Unionist party position at the beginning of the century. Toward the end of the century, when Cultural Nationalists campaigned for a free Ireland, they naturally used Irish mythic archetypes, modernised as horror stories, which were still in vogue thanks to the continued interest in Romantic myth and in

⁴⁰⁵ Yeats 68.

⁴⁰⁶ Deane 162.

sensation novels, in their stories. These Cultural Nationalists, such as Yeats, came from either Protestant or Catholic backgrounds and blamed the power of the Irish priests as well as the English Protestants for the suppression of ancient Irish culture. Thus, Catholicism again became a target of these writers' attacks, whether disguised or obvious.

In his essay "Heresy Hunting: *The Monk* and the French Revolution," James Whitlark discusses the evolution of the anti-Catholic tradition in the Gothic tales of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The legacy of the supposedly de-Christianising French Revolution, blamed on Catholics by Protestants, as well as the Roman Catholic terrorist Guy Fawkes in England, only exacerbated tensions left over from the Reformation. Whitlark writes that "to the extent that those romances credit beliefs presumed by the Protestant mainstream to be Catholic superstition, Gothicism contains buried within it a pro Catholic nostalgia counter to its anti-Catholic surface."⁴⁰⁷ Interestingly, Catholicism in its continental setting is treated as irrational and wild, the same qualities attributed by European powers, Protestant and Catholic, to the indigenous inhabitants of their colonies.

With the Catholics thus blamed for the French Revolution, the deeply intertwined religious and political polemics were easily expressed by Protestants and Protestant sympathisers in terms of horror fiction. Furthermore, the mysteries of the Catholic mass and the infallible authority of the papacy further rendered the Catholic Church easier to stereotype in works exaggerating Catholic superstition. Gothic works, such as

⁴⁰⁷ James Whitlark, "Heresy Hunting: *The Monk* and the French Revolution."
<<http://www.users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/heresy.html>> 1.

Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolfo* and Lewis' *The Monk*, readily associate Catholic superstition, as opposed to Protestant rationality, and supernatural terror. Whitlark writes that "in a Radcliffe novel, where the supernatural can always be explained as mere Catholic superstition, the Protestant interpretation would be the only one."⁴⁰⁸ Given the anti-Catholic prejudice of the Gothic tradition itself, when it was transferred to Ireland, where many of the exponents of this tradition were members of a vulnerable Protestant class surrounded by a disenfranchised Catholic majority, the use of horror fiction as a tool of anti-Catholic sentiment was irresistible.

The effectiveness of horror as an anti-Catholic propaganda weapon is still exploited today in such publications as the U.S.-based, fundamentalist Christian *Chick Tracts*. In a popular, viciously anti-Catholic series of comic strips, priests are portrayed to be in league with Satan. In one edition, "The Death Cookie," referring to the communion wafers ingested at Catholic masses, a horrifying illustration of a horned devil speaks to a priest, telling him how to control vulnerable congregations. The devil tells the priest, "you must also be very mysterious and different. Speak things that no one understands and burn a lot of candles."⁴⁰⁹ The message of the comic strip is that if Christians follow Catholicism, they will become partners with Satan and suffer for eternity in Hell. The association of Catholic rites with superstition and evil indeed bears some similarity to the depiction of Catholics found in the works of LeFanu and Maturin.

⁴⁰⁸ Whitlark 1.

⁴⁰⁹ Chick Publications, "The Death Cookie."

<<http://www.chick.com/reading/tracts/ReadTract.asp?Title=The+Death+Cookie&StockNumber=74&Page=4&LastPage=enCatholic%2Egif>>.

The complex interplay of religious and political identities of Ireland during its final colonial century was evident in the development of an Irish national literature. While Catholic writers, espousing political nationalism, wrote essays glorifying a new Irish nation, whether religious or secular, the Anglo-Irish declared themselves to be purveyors of either conservatism or cultural nationalism. Considering this basic distinction of purpose and the higher proportion of literate Protestants than Catholics, the novel often adopted the role of Anglo-Irish self-expression. It should not be forgotten, however, that “several very significant novelists—Carleton, Griffin, the Banim brothers, Kickham—were Catholics.”⁴¹⁰ Even Anglo-Irish backgrounds were hardly monolithic, as many contributors to Anglo-Irish literature did not have aristocratic pedigrees. Vivien Mercier writes that “George Darley, Davis, Ferguson, Lover, Lever, LeFanu, and Mitchel were all from professional or commercial middle-class Protestant stock; Maturin was a Church of Ireland clergyman, and Lady Morgan the daughter of an actor who was a native speaker of Irish.”⁴¹¹

As horror has been an effective tool in religious propaganda, it has also served equally well in political literature and discourses. One only needs to look at the horrifying Western and Soviet Cold War propaganda, where the enemy is represented as an evil menace hoping to occupy new territory and terrorise entire populations. During the Iranian-American tensions of 1979 and into the next decade, Iran referred to the United States as the horrific “Great Satan.”⁴¹² The tool has also been used extensively in

⁴¹⁰ Vivien Mercier, “Literature in English, 1891-1921.” *A New History of Ireland, vol. 6, Ireland under the Union II, 1870-1921*. ed. W.E. Vaughan. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 369.

⁴¹¹ Mercier 369.

⁴¹² “The Iranian-American Confrontation.” *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition* 23 May 1997 <http://usaengage.org/news/970523wsj.html>.

European literature, from the origin of class divisions during the development of the feudal society during the Middle Ages. In *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson discusses class and the conflict between good and evil in literature in terms of the French *chanson de geste*. Jameson claims that the hostile knight, “his identity unknown, exudes that insolence which marks a fundamental refusal of recognition and stamps him as the bearer of the category of evil.”⁴¹³

Hence, refusal to submit to authority, such as the British Crown, is viewed as inherently evil and symbolised by literary horrors. In a century where the privilege of the Protestant Ascendancy as well as British rule over Ireland were increasingly jeopardised, the perceived intractability of the Irish Catholics was represented as a supernatural threat in works written by Unionist and Union-sympathetic horror writers. Furthermore, as Cultural Nationalists were threatened by the power of the Catholic Church, the unyielding priests were also conveniently identified with supernatural horror. The commercial viability of horror fiction throughout the British Isles during the nineteenth century only made the genre more effective at assisting writers’ careers while allowing them to express their religious and political views.

⁴¹³ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981) 118-9.

CHAPTER FOUR: A HETEROGLOSSIA OF BRITISH AND IRISH LINGUISTIC AND LITERARY FORMS

Chapter Three explored how Protestant and Catholic, as well as Unionist and Home Rule, loyalties were expressed in nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction. This chapter will discuss the relationship between Ireland's linguistic heritage and this body of literature. The previous chapter argued that links between the religious and political ideologies of the writers could not easily be generalised, while this chapter will demonstrate that attitudes toward Irish Gaelic [also known as Irish], British English, and Hiberno-English often bore greater, but not complete, relation to the writers' religious or political affiliations. This trend, to be discussed in the context of Bakhtin's theories of heteroglossia, is also evident in the writers' adherence to Irish oral narratives in Hiberno-English or the English novelistic tradition, which will also be studied in this chapter.

Irish Gaelic, the 'indigenous' language of Ireland, is believed to have been brought to the island around 300 BCE by invading Gaels. The language subsequently spread to Scotland and the Isle of Man, where Scots Gaelic and Manx developed into independent languages. After Ireland was converted to Christianity, a writing system was introduced, creating a basis for a rich literary tradition. Through its stages of development, including Old Irish (600-900 CE), Middle Irish (900-1200 CE), Early Modern Irish (1200-1650 CE), and Modern Irish (1650-present), "Irish borrowed words from other languages it came into contact with (pre-eminently from Latin, from Norse, from Anglo-Norman...and from English)."⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁴ Micheal O'Siadhail, *Learning Irish*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996) v.

Irish was used as the main language of daily life in Ireland, with Classical Irish serving as a literary *lingua franca* throughout the Gaelic-speaking world, until the seventeenth century. At this time, as discussed in Chapter Two, forceful Anglicisation efforts in Ireland placed a stigma on the language. At this time, “that [Gaelic and Norman-Gaelic] aristocracy was annihilated or dispersed and the Bardic schools suppressed.”⁴¹⁵ As a result, Classical Irish became extinct, while spoken Irish Gaelic was destandardised, with regional dialects competing for supremacy in an increasingly shrinking geographical area.

During the Plantation and Ascendancy eras, English became the language of privilege and socio-economic influence. Irish, greatly weakened in terms of status, did not die out. As with Celtic languages in Scotland and Wales, Irish was maintained in isolated areas away from the major centres of English settlement; the Irish *Gaeltachtaí* [Gaelic-speaking areas] were clustered around the southern and western coastal districts. Consequently, as O’Siadhail writes, the language became “the almost exclusive property of some of the rural poor.”⁴¹⁶ The number of speakers of Irish continued to dwindle gradually as a percentage of Irish residents until the 1840s, when the combined effects of the disastrous Potato Famine and heavy emigration nearly annihilated Irish.

Chantal Zabus contrasts the conflict between Irish Gaelic and the encroaching influence of English to the linguistic hierarchies of other British colonies. Zabus writes

⁴¹⁵ O’Siadhail vi.

⁴¹⁶ O’Siadhail vi.

that “the Anglo-Irish struggle...belies easy comparison to the colonisation of Africa which, unlike the colonisation of the European peoples, is compounded by race and slavery.”⁴¹⁷ Although the Irish Celts were not subjected to *de jure* slavery by their English colonisers, they were viewed as an inferior race, as demonstrated by Kiberd’s assertions. Thus, Irish was perhaps regarded by many English imperialists with the same disdain with which they regarded Hindi, Cherokee, or Igbo.

The decline of the Irish language is not the fault of the English alone, as following attempts by the English at the turn of the eighteenth century to stifle spoken Irish became increasingly less intense. Comerford writes that “in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the English state may have been second to none in the ferocity of its campaigns against the indigenous language and culture of Ireland and elsewhere, but its efforts in this respect in nineteenth-century Ireland were pusillanimous.”⁴¹⁸ In fact, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Irish language began to be studied and analysed by linguists who sought to unravel the complex relations of Indo-European languages and by antiquarians. The latter students of Celtic culture seemed to believe that the *Gaeltachtaí* were living remnants of a treasured, romantic age, thus treating the Irish language with the same interested condescension with which they pursued studies of Irish folklore.

At the same time, the Irish themselves, Protestant and Catholic alike, were shedding the seemingly backward burden of Irish Gaelic. While census data suggests that

⁴¹⁷ Chantal Zabus, “Language, Orality, and Literature,” *An Introduction to An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King. (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 29.

⁴¹⁸ R.V. Comerford, “Nation, Nationalism, and the Irish Language,” *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism*. eds. Thomas E. Hachey & Lawrence J. McCaffrey (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1989) 23.

45 percent of Irish children born between 1801 and 1811 were raised speaking Irish Gaelic, “for those born 1831-41, the estimated percentage dropped to 28, and for those born 1861-71, to 13.”⁴¹⁹ The decline of Irish Gaelic in Ireland cannot be blamed completely on English imperialism, as pessimistic data for the language even after Irish independence in 1922 shows. Despite the official status given to Irish as the primary language of the Irish Free State and later the Republic of Ireland, the use of Irish Gaelic in schools, given responsibility for the re-Gaelicisation of the country, has fallen considerably. O’Siadhail reports that “in 1937-8 some 28% of secondary pupils were in schools using Irish Gaelic as their teaching medium; in 1972 only about 2.8% were.”⁴²⁰ In the past quarter century, although the fight for Irish has gained some momentum, the results have been minimal. Comerford opines that “the average adult’s contact with Irish was mainly as a ceremonial language used in the secular rituals of the politicians, the equivalent of the church’s Latin.”⁴²¹ Thus, while few Irish would dispute the importance of the language as an integral cultural and historical element, a similar percentage of the population would invest the required efforts to resurrect the ancient prominence of Irish Gaelic in the daily life of the country.

Despite the lack of interest in support for Irish as the only or even primary language of the country today, in much of the nineteenth century the attitude towards Irish in all but the rural areas was even gloomier. Indeed, economic, political, and social forces combined to influence Irish parents to encourage their children to speak English. Comerford writes that “the mainspring of cultural and linguistic change was popular

⁴¹⁹ Comerford 23.

⁴²⁰ O’Siadhail vi.

response to economic realities.”⁴²² The need for Irish Celts to interact economically with the English-speaking Ascendancy aristocracy as well as powerful England itself created an enormous incentive to speak English.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a thriving industry of pay schools throughout Ireland where English tuition was offered to children of enthusiastic Irish parents. Sometimes the discouragement of Irish in these schools was brutal; “teachers eager to secure the results expected by parents in return for their precious fees resorted to the crudest of methods, including the use of the notorious tally stick.”⁴²³ As the census data indicate, many Irish parents simply refused to speak Irish to their children, thus ensuring that they would speak the profitable English language as a mother tongue. Consequently, the national Irish school system, established in 1831, elected to use English, at the expense of Irish Gaelic, as the teaching medium.

The prejudice against the Irish Gaelic language was also aided by its lack of respectability in influential social circles. Indeed, “the heightened preoccupation with respectability and conformity in manners [that] had marked the period from about 1830 to the First World War everywhere in Western Europe was embraced unreservedly in Ireland.”⁴²⁴ Educated Irish Catholics, already struggling against ethnic and religious biases, were anxious to prove that they could compete with the English-speaking elite for respectability; hence, they gave their linguistic allegiance unhesitatingly to English. The

⁴²¹ Comerford 39.

⁴²² Comerford 23.

⁴²³ Comerford 23.

⁴²⁴ Comerford 23.

emphasis on modernisation which characterised the Victorian Age also gave Irish Catholics an added impetus to embrace English, as opposed to Irish, with its reputation for being somehow lost in time and the property of backward peasants.

Ironically, the abandonment of Irish was also seen as a social defence mechanism for the survival of Catholicism. During the nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries felt that “Irish-speaking Catholics, like the speakers of ‘backward’ indigenous languages elsewhere, were in a pristine, volatile state and ripe for evangelisation.”⁴²⁵ In contrast, English-speaking Catholics were less likely to be approached by missionaries, since they were viewed as being more set in a political and religious framework. The destructive influence of missionary activity on the already fragile condition of the Irish language, ironically when the Protestantisation of Ireland in previous centuries had been stymied by the Irish language itself, was unique to Ireland in the British Isles. As Comerford writes, “in the cases of Welsh and Scots Gaelic, the initiatives of the evangelicals had beneficial linguistic effects, while with the Irish it was ultimately otherwise.”⁴²⁶

Until the Second Celtic Revival at the end of the century, the use of Irish declined even as the Irish, Catholics and Protestants alike, were espousing new nationalist causes; “the Irish national collectivity...chose English rather than Irish as its unifying tongue.”⁴²⁷ This reality is somewhat puzzling given the profound link between language and nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe. A review of such cases as the Slovak, Bohemian [Czech], and Romanian language movements in the nineteenth-century render

⁴²⁵ Comerford 24.

⁴²⁶ Comerford 24.

the lack of enthusiasm for Irish somewhat anomalous. Indeed, speakers of these languages, even coining neologisms to conform to the Slavic or Romance structures of these languages, invested as heavily in linguistic revivals as in the struggle for nationhood itself. Comerford theorises that the Irish language was not given the same pre-eminence because many Irish Catholics did not equate linguistic autonomy with political independence. He writes that “land and religion were obvious obsessions of the Irish Catholics, the Irish language was not.”⁴²⁸ This comparative lack of interest in the Irish Gaelic language as a generator of nationalist spirit justifiably created unease in such nationalists as Thomas Davis, who were influenced by Continental theories of nationalism.

At the same time, the Irish language was kept alive in certain antiquarian circles and eventually became politicised, however not as an exclusively Catholic issue. Just as Irish Catholics were voluntarily relinquishing their linguistic patrimony, the Irish language was studied as a hobby by members of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. In such cities as Belfast and Dublin, “Irish language, literature, and antiquities constituted an acceptable area of cultural interest for aristocratic and upper-class coteries.”⁴²⁹ Influential Protestants thus joined such societies as the Gaelic Society of Dublin, formed in 1806, and the Hiberno-Celtic Society, founded in 1818. However, in these circles, the Irish language was mostly treated with whimsical, faddish interest rather than as the generator of any sort of national independence movement.

⁴²⁷ Comerford 21.

⁴²⁸ Comerford 21.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the Second Celtic Revival included the Irish language as one of the resources from Irish antiquity to be revived for the Home Rule movement. At the same time, even the British government was taking an interest in the preservation of Celtic languages. In the 1870s, Prime Minister Gladstone “praised the people of Wales for cultivating their national language and remarked how badly, by comparison, the Irish had neglected theirs.”⁴³⁰ This remarkably softened attitude on the part of the government that had, centuries earlier, attempted to eradicate Celtic languages from the British Isles, was accompanied by a late-Victorian vogue for Celtic civilisation.

Such a comparatively permissive atmosphere was most propitious for the eventual creation of the Gaelic League in 1893. The respectable Dr Douglas Hyde headed the organisation, which included Protestants and Catholics as members; by this time, the Irish language was associated with Irishness and not considered to be a sign of Protestant or Catholic loyalty. Just as the Home Rule movement was essentially non-sectarian, the Irish linguistic revival “made a point of declaring itself to be above and beyond political and confessional divisions.”⁴³¹ Despite these supposedly good intentions of the Gaelic League and similar organisations, membership remained relatively low. Furthermore, while many Irish nationalists supported the Irish language in theory, few individuals were prepared to use the language in every sector of their lives; this passive attitude has survived in modern attitudes toward the language. The Gaelic League was, however, not

⁴²⁹ Comerford 24.

⁴³⁰ Comerford 26-7.

⁴³¹ Comerford 29.

a failure, as it successfully “did much to eliminate the sense of shame formerly felt by many native Irish speakers.”⁴³²

While Irish language enthusiasts struggled in vain to resurrect Irish as a unifying force for all of Ireland, the vast majority of the island’s population spoke, and continue to speak, Hiberno-English [Irish English], in its northern and southern dialects, as well as in the distinct Ulster English dialect. In the first decades of the twentieth century, this variant of English, characterised by the presence of words that have been lost in British English and a considerable number of Irish loanwords, was hoped to be a symbol of Irish Home Rule, especially in light of the limited appeal of Irish Gaelic. The distinctive, Celtic-inflected lilt of Hiberno-English and its uniquely rhotic quality distinguish the variant easily from its standard British counterpart. In postcolonial Ireland, Hiberno-English remains a living testimony to English colonisation and joins American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and South African Englishes as world varieties of an increasingly global tongue.

Speakers of Hiberno-English, however much the mere act of speaking English was a conscious or subconscious act of deference to the British Crown, were frequently mocked by the British. On the stage and in literature, Hiberno-English was frequently misrepresented and parodied in the form of Stage Irish. Stage Irish was the speech of the stereotypical Paddy, as recorded by amused English writers and Irish writers hoping to achieve respectability and marketability by misrepresenting their compatriots. Thus,

⁴³² R.F. Foster, ed. *The Oxford History of Ireland*. (New York, Oxford Press, 1992) 185.

nationalist writers such as Yeats and John Synge attempted to represent Hiberno-Irish correctly in their works, vociferously clamouring for an end to the use of Stage Irish.

As in much of the British Empire, standard British English was given the status of the superior language in colonial Ireland. However, speakers of standard British English were a very small minority of the educated aristocracy, as Hiberno-English was preferred by the majority. Apparently, while Irish Gaelic was regarded as an anachronism by much of the Irish population, British English was seen as an affectation, synonymous with colonisation. In his short story "Araby," James Joyce identifies the destroyers of the narrator's dream with England through their speech. The author writes that "I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation."⁴³³ In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce's character Stephen Dedalus considers that English is the language of the school dean and not his own tongue. Stephen thinks, "his language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language."⁴³⁴ Nonetheless, much literature written by Irish writers, especially those hoping to gain popularity in Britain, was composed in standard British English, with Hiberno-English, Stage Irish or even Irish Gaelic added to give local colour to characters' dialogues.

The theories of Bakhtin are helpful in understanding the evolution of a literary tradition in colonial and postcolonial Ireland with respect to the country's linguistic

⁴³³ James Joyce, "Araby," *Discoveries*. eds. Harold Schechter and Jonna Gormely Semeiks (New York: Oxford Press, 1992) 411.

Balkanisation. Bakhtin devised this theory of *heteroglossia*, which means “different languages” or “many voices,” in which “a national language exists, by definition, in the fatal awareness of other languages, for beyond the borders of the imagined community there are many other languages against which the nation measures its identity.”⁴³⁵ The phenomenon of heteroglossia, according to Bakhtin, is historically based, and the established national language may be further subdivided into sociolects and idiolects⁴³⁶. In nineteenth-century Ireland, the use of English as the language of opportunity, commerce, and the colonial rulers rendered it the obvious choice for the national language. As stated before, however, the majority of the nation consisted of Celts, rather than Anglo-Saxons, and the ethnic Irish were consequently culturally disenfranchised in terms of the linguistic favourite in Ireland’s heteroglossia.

Bakhtin’s subdivisions of the national language are especially appropriate for a synchronistic discussion of Victorian Ireland, since the British English of the colonial administrators was indeed, and still is, dialectically distinct from the Celtic-inflected Hiberno-Irish. Despite the pleas of the Gaelic League, Irish Gaelic was not a realistic contender for *de facto* national language. Hence, the struggle for socially-sanctioned linguistic hegemony was between British and Hiberno-English, with the latter gaining ground throughout the nineteenth century with the decline of British rule; this fight is far more significant in understanding the linguistic aspect of the British-Irish cultural struggle.

⁴³⁴ James Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 166.

⁴³⁵ Smyth 28.

⁴³⁶ A sociolect is a “dialect” particular to a particular stratum of society; an idiolect is a “dialect” particular to one speaker of a given language. For further discussion, see Robert De Beaugrande, “Language and

Bakhtin extends his theory of heteroglossia to the development of a national novelistic form. Far from being the expression of one language of the heteroglossia, the “novel ‘quotes’ from the multitude of languages available within the social, political, and historical formations within which it is produced, and the author ‘orchestrates’ these languages into an artistic whole.”⁴³⁷ Hence nineteenth-century Irish writers, whilst writing in Hiberno-English, for example, are supposedly juxtaposing British English, Hiberno-English, Irish Gaelic, and perhaps, at some level, even Norman French and Old Norse within the writing. Bakhtin refers to this synthesis of linguistic and cultural elements of carnivalesque discourse, which may even, in its heterogeneity, be “a threat to the solemnity of cultural nationalism.”⁴³⁸

Cultural nationalists, such as Yeats, did employ the novelistic form,⁴³⁹ of which the short story is a variant. Bakhtin responds that cultural nationalism and the novel repel each other, as *monoglossia* (one language, one linguistic voice) is not compatible with *heteroglossia*. Hence, Bakhtin’s theory may be applied to Irish nationalistic fiction, which is just as inherently not suited for the genre, as it represents monoglossia. He indeed believes that this form of cultural nationalism “can never be entirely successful.”⁴⁴⁰

Culturally nationalistic fiction, such as that of Yeats, however, was commercially successful. Thus, although Bakhtin scorns the ideological extreme, the works of cultural

Society: the Real and the Ideal in Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Corpus Linguistics.” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (3/1, 1998) 128-139.

⁴³⁷ Smyth 29.

⁴³⁸ Smyth 29.

⁴³⁹ In addition to his short stories, Yeats wrote a little-known novel, *John Sherman*, in the 1890s.

nationalists were and continue to be well-received on a popular level. Furthermore, these works also represent an extreme of socio-political attitudes of nineteenth-century Ireland, has been suggested in previous chapters. These successes justify a critical study of these authors as contributors to the development of Irish horror fiction in the nineteenth century as well as the linguistic and literary forms that these authors chose for expression.

Furthermore, culturally nationalistic fiction, as penned by Yeats, employs a variety of linguistic and cultural norms, thus placing it in its own heteroglossia, as will be shown.

In terms of literary styles, it would be temptingly easy to reduce a comparison of British and Irish narratives to an overly simplistic equation:

British = sophisticated written narrative v. Irish = primitive oral storytelling.

Such an analysis would, to a great degree, be fallacious. Both British and Irish novelistic narratives, like their continental counterparts, have their roots in oral storytelling traditions, stemming from poetry derived in turn from archetypal myth. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, in their *The Nature of Narrative*, further reduce the status of the novel, viewing “the nature of narrative and the Western narrative tradition whole, seeing the novel as only one of a number of narrative possibilities”⁴⁴¹ rather than as the highest development resulting from centuries of evolution. This attitude thus debunks the snobbery that may be expressed by proponents of the novelistic tradition at the expense of other forms, such as oral narrative. Scholes and Kellogg claim that

⁴⁴⁰ Smyth 29.

⁴⁴¹ Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*. (New York: Oxford Press, 1968) 3.

“now...our view of narrative literature is almost hopelessly novel-centered...an unfortunate one.”⁴⁴² However, even when championing objectivity, the critics still claim that “written narrative literature tends to make its appearance throughout the Western world under similar conditions. It emerges from an oral tradition, maintaining many of the characteristics of oral narrative for some time.”⁴⁴³ Fiction thus replaces myth or perhaps enhances it. For centuries, myth was a principal narrative and meaning-making form; its function has now been assumed by novels.

While the British novel’s derivation from such originally orally composed epics as *Beowulf* compares readily to the Irish novel’s roots in such oral epics as that of Cuchulainn, the pro-British stereotype nevertheless exists. There are perhaps several reasons for this opinion. First, the antiquarian trend popular during the late eighteenth century, as I stated in the first chapter, considered Ireland to be a living museum of romantic myths and bygone European culture. In contrast to ‘backward’ Ireland, Britain was considered to be at the vanguard of progress, a view that justified and was justified by the subjugation of Ireland. Second, the printing press was invented and began to be used on a wide scale during the epoch of British occupation of Ireland and the suppression of the Irish Gaelic language. Next, in the nineteenth century, in the impoverished, dwindling *Gaeltachtaí*, storytellers relied on oral transmission for their tales’ survival. Hence, the vast number of books available in English and the popularity of English-language novels and circulating libraries, as opposed to the few available

⁴⁴² Scholes and Kellogg 8.

⁴⁴³ Scholes and Kellogg 11-12.

books in Irish Gaelic before the Gaelic Revival, would have further solidified the belief, at least from an economic standpoint, that the written novel was the “property” of the British.

Franco Moretti, who painstakingly constructed maps and charts showing nineteenth-century trends in the European novel, also adds xenophobia to British attitudes toward foreign novels. He charted the decline in translated European literature in British circulating libraries from 1750 until 1850, with a drop from twenty to five percent of the total collections in Britain.⁴⁴⁴ Moretti hence laments “the pride of the censor. There is a hostility to foreign forms here.”⁴⁴⁵ The same marketing attitudes that resulted in Balzac’s *Eugenie Grandet* being “translated 26 years after...original publication”⁴⁴⁶ would hardly have admitted that the narrative tradition of the Irish, already seen as inferior, was equal to that of the British.

At this point, an overview of the British narrative style as it applies to horror fiction of the nineteenth century is germane, especially since it deeply influenced the development of nineteenth-century horror fiction in Ireland. A general checklist of qualitative and quantitative data to describe every work of Gothic and Romantic horror fiction would be extremely difficult, as the works themselves are quite diverse. Some observations may help provide a clear picture of the period and genre.

⁴⁴⁴ Franco Moretti, *An Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900*. (New York: Verso, 1998) 153.

⁴⁴⁵ Moretti 157.

⁴⁴⁶ Moretti 146.

Although I have discussed the development of the theme of the supernatural in British Gothic and Romantic fiction in previous chapters, a brief recapitulation of these ideas with respect to the purpose of this chapter would be appropriate. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick expound upon the rise and popularity of the theme. They claim that the authors “were engaged, along with many other writers of their generation, in the degraded category of ‘vulgar superstitions,’ and finding in them depths of moral and psychological significance that lay beyond the grasp of conventional rationality.”⁴⁴⁷

These tales frequently appeared in novel form but also in literary magazines, which were extremely popular during the nineteenth century in the British Isles. These magazines, including *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *New Monthly Magazine*, demonstrated a “variety and vitality of...terror-tales and similarly macabre fiction.”⁴⁴⁸ Many of the horror tales during the first few decades were written by readers themselves, with competition increasing dramatically as the medium reached its zenith of popularity around mid-century.

Interestingly, Morrison and Baldick suggest that moral instruction was a primary purpose of the tales. Indeed, the stories were often directed “at the fashionable and dissolute young rake or libertine.”⁴⁴⁹ Hence, a wealthy, irresponsible rake was often employed as the lead character to serve as a cautionary example. This individual encapsulates “the admonitory ambitions and...the imaginative instabilities of the moral

⁴⁴⁷ Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, introduction, *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre* (New York: Oxford Press, 1997) xi.

⁴⁴⁸ Morrison and Baldick xiii.

⁴⁴⁹ Morrison and Baldick xviii.

tale of terror, which typically brings into harsh juxtaposition the dimly evoked realm of Vice...and the more starkly drawn images of mortality.”⁴⁵⁰

The nineteenth-century horror story underwent a gradual evolution between 1800 and 1850. Around the turn of the century, at the height of the Gothic craze, the form offered a formulaic contrast to realist novels. Emma McEvoy describes this formula:

In contrast to the realist novel, set in modern society, amongst ordinary folk in small towns or cities, the Gothic novel is most often set in a foreign country (usually Italy or Spain), in a barbarous mediaeval past (though it has a pragmatic blitheness as far as anachronism is concerned), populated by virtuous heroes and heroines and unspeakably evil villains. The typical Gothic is ultimately conventional-in the sense that a thousand versions have been spawned from a limited set of elements. Its plots are proscribed and prescribed beforehand.⁴⁵¹

By 1850, the horror story had become much more internalised, if not more ‘realistic,’ as compared to the Gothic horror story, even suggesting that the terrors could be psychological manifestations of the protagonists’ fears and anxieties. Instead of the exotic settings of the Gothic tales, the High Victorian horror story often takes place in Britain, responding to the new subtleties and internalised fears of the evolving genre and also to the influence of the burgeoning detective novel, rapidly becoming the latest literary sensation in the last half of the century, thanks to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Wilkie Collins.

⁴⁵⁰ Morrison and Baldick xix.

⁴⁵¹ Emma McEvoy, introduction, *The Monk*, by Matthew Lewis (New York: Oxford Press, 1995) xvii.

The syntax and sentence structure of more than a few works of nineteenth-century British horror fiction display considerable verbosity, with generous use of words of Latin origin and networks of subordinate clauses. Perhaps the authors' loquacity and intricate, often serpentine sentence and paragraph structures may be seen as echoing some of the qualities of the protagonists' outward or inward journeys through labyrinthine terrors, real or imagined, as well as the complexity of the characters' relationships.

In an era preceding motion pictures, lengthy, florid descriptions detailing the setting and ambience of the tales were perhaps *de rigueur*, to envelop the reader in the world of the story. Letitia Landon's "The Bride of Lindorf," published in 1836, provides a relevant example:

Midnight is a wonderful thing in a vast city-and midnight was upon Vienna. The shops were closed, the windows darkened, and the streets deserted-strange that where so much of life was gathered together there could be such deep repose; yet nothing equals the stillness of a great town at night. Perhaps it is the contrast afforded by memory that makes this appear yet more profound. In the lone valley and in the green forest, there is quiet even at noon-quiet, at least broken by sounds belonging alike to day and night. The singing of the bee and the bird, or the voice of the herdsman carolling some old song of the hills-these may be hushed, but there is still the rustle of the leaves, the wind murmuring in the long grass, and the low perpetual whisper of the pine. But in the town-the brick and mortar have no voices of their own. Nature is silent-her soft, sweet harmonies are hushed in the great human tumult-man, and man only, is heard. Through many hours of the twenty-four, the ocean of existence rolls on with a sound like thunder-a thousand voices speak at once.⁴⁵²

Landon's lengthy narrative hence contrasts the serenity of nature, the halcyon haven of the Romantics, with the cruel noise of urban life. The macrocosm-microcosm

⁴⁵² Letitia Landon, "The Bride of Lindorf." *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, eds. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (New York: Oxford Press, 1997) 175.

effect, progressing from the general stillness of the hills to the hushed singing of the bee, demonstrates completeness on all fronts, creating a general mood of relaxation for the story and the reader. The contrast between countryside and city also foreshadows the story's main dichotomy between mundane Viennese society and the most unusual presence of a vampire in its midst. However, these wordy descriptions, perhaps even excessive by modern standards, permeated other genres in literature, especially notable in works by such writers as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell.

Many of these stories, such as Shelley's *Frankenstein*, employ a first-person narrator to add a stamp of authenticity. An additional technique used to establish intimacy between the author and reader is epistles, whether between characters or as the journal of one character. These writings, embedded in the text, invite the reader to share in the character's most personal feelings of fright or nervousness. In addition, they also qualitatively chart the protagonist's emotional state throughout the story. Indeed, the use of these "writings within writings" further adds to the overwhelming complexity of setting and character description of nineteenth-century British horror fiction.

Across the Irish Sea, in Ireland, the literary scene was almost solely the property of Anglo-Irish Protestant English speakers. The rich Irish Gaelic tradition of literature, including the unique *aisling* poem, had been reduced to oral tradition as a result of the destruction of the Gaelic Order over the past few centuries. With the exception of a few Irish Gaelic poems composed around 1800, including Brian Merriman's *Cuirt an Mhean Oiche* [*The Midnight Court*] and Eibhlin Dhubh Ni Chonaill's *Caoneadh Airt Ui*

Laoghair [*Lament for Art O Laoghair*], Irish Gaelic writings “as literature...[were] vestigial...as part of the oral tradition, it remained strong.”⁴⁵³

Seamus Deane further states that either English translation or an Irish Gaelic Revival would be necessary for the survival of Irish Gaelic literature beyond the nineteenth century. The critic claims that “the conditions in which these offers were developed almost killed the language more effectively than any planned campaign of extermination.”⁴⁵⁴ Yet the status of the oral poet in the *Gaeltachtaí* still remained strong, even if “the various forms of artificial respiration on Gaelic culture had no hope of ever reviving it as such.”⁴⁵⁵ While the Catholics largely abandoned the Irish Gaelic language, since “English was needed to survive either within or outside the country,”⁴⁵⁶ Irish Gaelic culture, as has been stated, became a tool of identification, however artificial, for “predominantly Protestant intellectuals and antiquarians.”⁴⁵⁷ As a result, such writers created a creolisation of linguistic and literary forms, with Irish Gaelic themes expressed using a simplified form of the complex Victorian writing style. This phenomenon will be discussed later in this chapter.

Other writers continued to adhere to the Anglo-Irish literary tradition of Jonathan Swift and Edward Burke, writing using a very British style and, at least in terms of fiction, capitalising on British trends, including Gothic and Romantic horror. Despite this superficial monoglossia, Anglo-Irish literature, including nineteenth-century horror

⁴⁵³ Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 24.

⁴⁵⁴ Deane 24.

⁴⁵⁵ Deane 28.

⁴⁵⁶ Deane 28.

⁴⁵⁷ Deane 28.

fiction, was not British literature. Rather, it “displays affinities with the Gaelic, English, Scottish, and European cultures which make it distinct and at the same time reveal its precariousness as a specific and independent tradition.”⁴⁵⁸ While the style of Maturin and Stoker may be painstaking imitations, at least in form, structure, and syntax, of that of their British counterparts, distinct elements, such as Maturin’s Irish ruins or Stoker’s vampire theme evoke insular Celtic and continental influences respectively. Such writers illustrate Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia. Yet this merging of cultural and linguistic elements also demonstrates the nervous Anglo-Irish search for self-justification, as “the failure of political and economic circumstance, is at the heart of the great Anglo-Irish enterprise in literature.”⁴⁵⁹

At this point, an analysis of Anglo-Irish LeFanu’s writing as compared to a similar British selection is appropriate to exemplify the similarity and distinctness of elements assembled in his contributions to horror fiction. LeFanu’s “Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess” was originally published in the November 1838 edition of the *Dublin University Magazine*, an Anglo-Irish publication and rival to the popular contemporary British literary magazines. A cursory reading of the opening to the tale will reveal a strong British influence in terms of style, first-person narrative, sumptuous estate setting, and the Victorian parent’s duty of stern instruction.

My dear friend-you have asked me to furnish you with a detail of the strange events which marked my early history, and I have, without hesitation, applied myself to the task, knowing that while I live, a kind consideration for my feelings will prevent your giving publicity to the

⁴⁵⁸ Deane 30.

⁴⁵⁹ Deane 36.

statement; and conscious that, when I am no more, there will not survive one to whom the narrative can prove injurious, or even painful.

My mother died when I was quite an infant, and of her I have no recollection, even the faintest. By her death, my education and habits were left solely to the guidance of my surviving parent; and, as far as a stern attention to my religious instruction, and an active anxiety evinced by his procuring for me the best masters to perfect me in those accomplishments which my station and wealth might seem to require, could avail, he amply discharged the task. My father was what is called an oddity and his treatment of me, though uniformly kind, flowed less from affection and tenderness, than from a sense of obligation and duty. Indeed, I seldom even spoke to him at least at meal times, and then his manner was silent and abrupt; his leisure hours, which were many, were passed either in his study or in solitary walks; in short, he seemed to take no further interest in my happiness or improvement than a conscientious regard to the discharge of his own duty would seem to claim. Shortly before my birth a circumstance had occurred which had contributed much to form and confirm my father's secluded habits-it was the fact that a suspicion of *murder* had fallen upon his younger brother, though not sufficiently definite to lead to an indictment, yet strong enough to ruin him in public opinion. This disgraceful and dreadful doubt cast upon the family name, my father felt deeply and bitterly, and not the less so that he himself was thoroughly convinced of his brother's innocence; the sincerity and strength of this impression he shortly afterwards proved in a manner which produced the dark events which follow. Before, however, I enter upon the statement of them, I ought to relate the circumstances which had awakened the suspicion; inasmuch as they are themselves somewhat curious, and, in their effects, most intimately connected with my after-history.⁴⁶⁰

This passage may be readily compared to the opening of "The Curse," a short story of anonymous authorship, which appeared in the November 1832 edition of the *British Fraser's Magazine*.

I am again free-free, save from the torture of my own thoughts, which, like the furies of old, are ever present to me. I am once more in the deserted home of my fathers-I am no longer a fettered maniac, crouching spaniel-like before the glare of my savage keeper. There is no one to whom I dare open my mind. It may be a childish morbid feeling, but still I

⁴⁶⁰ J. Sheridan LeFanu, "Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess." *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, eds. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (New York: Oxford, 1997) 201-202.

dare not, cannot do it. The presence of man is hateful to me—all seem to look on me with loathing and hatred. I must unload my breast—I must give some vent to the fire which burns within me, and record my tale of desolation, any thing is preferable to an unbroken silence; and it is matter of consolation that when I am gone, some perchance may pity me, when they peruse the strange record of my blasted fate.

The second son of a family more distinguished for unblemished antiquity than possessions or wealth, I was early thrown, to a great measure, on my own resources, and sought in foreign climes that fortune which there was no chance of finding at home. I was successful beyond hope or expectation; and, ere my health had been lost and strength wasted by the withering influence of a tropical clime, I was on my way homeward, rich almost beyond my wildest desires.⁴⁶¹

Both tales are written in high literary register and tone, using the standard British dialect of English, composed of words of predominantly Latin and Germanic origins; in neither text is one word of Celtic origin found. The average number of sentences per paragraph in the LeFanu selection is three, exactly the same for the British passage; the average number of words per sentence, 65, in the LeFanu selection is considerably higher, while the average sentence in the British selection contains 38 words, also rather high. Both passages include complex networks of subordinate and independent clauses, which might demand considerable attention from the reader and may perhaps be a characteristic of Victorian fiction in general.

Both narrators address the reader in the first person, making references to posterity and the necessity of a written record of their experiences. In addition, both narrators claim that they belong to families that are distinguished in terms of lineage and expect to inherit or acquire great wealth. Furthermore, an air of desolation surrounds

⁴⁶¹ "The Curse." *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*, eds. Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (New York: Oxford, 1997) 113.

both passages, as both narrators have been called to exhibit great fortitude in the face of a trauma, whether a family trauma, as in the LeFanu passage, or encountered on a voyage, as in the second excerpt.

Despite the superficial similarities, which are considerable, even in these opening paragraphs a striking distinction may be established; as opposed to previous paragraphs, in which I discuss . The narrator of the LeFanu passage emphasises her entrapment within a scandalised family and the need to devise some vindication. This stigma and the need for correction hence represents the precarious position of LeFanu's precarious position as a member of the Anglo-Irish community, trapped between imperialist origins and abandonment by both the British and the Irish, resulting in a feeling of psychological limbo. In contrast, the narrator of the second passage has journeyed outward to seek a fortune; confident in his Britishness, he or she feels confident enough to expand personal and economic horizons in jingoist imperialist pursuits abroad. Here, the narrator has succeeded, representing British wealth derived from empire.

LeFanu's tale encompasses a wide spectrum of elements, consistent with the Anglo-Irish heteroglossia. Although the characters are English and French, the settings, including a mansion of Carrickleigh and the town of Galway, are Irish. Interestingly, "LeFanu borrows part of the plot of 'Passage in the Secret History' from the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*,"⁴⁶² itself encompassing the English language, Italian settings, Spanish names, and German Gothic literary inspiration. The damsel-in-distress theme of LeFanu's work, combined with a distrust of continental Catholic

elements, so prevalent in British Gothic tales, would later be repeated in LeFanu's expanded version of "Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess," the High Victorian *Uncle Silas*. Despite the revised version's British settings, the essential story retains the same Anglo-Irish sense of isolated paranoia. Marjorie Howes explains LeFanu's melange of British literary tastes and Anglo-Irish nervousness, already evident in the 1838 tale, in terms of what may be seen as the tale's political message:

. Joseph Sheridan LeFanu relocated his 1864 Gothic novel *Uncle Silas* from an Irish to an English setting, and in doing so rewrote these cultural anxieties into the romance, a genre that the English market found more to its taste than direct representations of Irish political and cultural issues. Yet *Uncle Silas* reveals itself as unmistakably Anglo-Irish. LeFanu uses the language of contemporary colonial discourse about minority rule, absenteeism, and the brutality of occupation and delegated power to suggest the isolation of a waning culture threatened by dispersal.⁴⁶³

Another group of Anglo-Irish writers appealed to the British literary marketplace, using the English language and conventional forms, but also exploiting their Irish birthplace through the inclusion of Stage Irish. In the first chapter I discuss the phenomenon of Stage Irish and the appropriation of this invented patois by the Irish themselves, especially in the United Kingdom. As Declan Kiberd writes, "the struggle for self-definition is conducted within language; and the English, coming from the stronger society, knew they would be the lords of language."⁴⁶⁴ Hence, a certain segment of Anglo-Irish writers, hoping to curry favour with the British public, represented their compatriots as using this inaccurate speech. Stage Irish, or the supposed weak imitation

⁴⁶² Morrison and Baldick 273.

⁴⁶³ Marjorie Howes, abstract. "Misalliance and Anglo-Irish Tradition in LeFanu's *Uncle Silas*." Univ. California Berkeley. <http://www-ucpress.berkeley.edu/scan/ncl-e/472/abstracts/howes.abs472.html>. 1

⁴⁶⁴ Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1996) 11-12.

of Hiberno-English, accompanied by stereotypical behaviour and gestures, has a lengthy history in Britain, as well as other regions of the world in which the Irish diaspora has settled.

As far back as the seventeenth century, “in Shakespeare’s rudimentary portrait [of the Irish] are to be found those traits of garrulity, pugnacity and a rather unfocused ethnic pride which would later signalize the stage Irishman-along with a fairly patronising amusement on the part of the portraitist that the Irish should be so touchy on questions of identity.”⁴⁶⁵ Over the next few centuries, the use of Stage Irish was exploited by other writers, usually for comic relief. Kiberd writes that “the two major Irish stereotypes on the English national stage embody...polarities of feeling: on the one hand, the threatening, vainglorious soldier, and on the other, the feckless, but cheerily reassuring servant.”⁴⁶⁶

In an era of revisionism and political correctness in many Western countries that espouse multiculturalism, the use of Stage Irish still continues to reinforce the notion of the stereotypical Irish immigrant. However, it must be noted that the Irish are still considered to be “white” and that political correctness usually extends far beyond the use of dialect in popular culture. In the United States, where Irish priests, policemen, and boxers were widely portrayed with sometimes derisive comedy in films and on television, a popular television commercial still employs a cheerful leprechaun hawking Lucky Charms cereal in mock brogue. Similarly, advertisements for Irish Spring deodorant soap

⁴⁶⁵ Kiberd 13.

⁴⁶⁶ Kiberd 12.

portray a well-scrubbed colleen and a handsome, freckle-faced Irishman among lush Emerald Isle settings whistling and extolling the virtues of the product in pseudo-Hiberno-English.

A recent study of Irish bar proprietors in the USA and United Kingdom has shown that these immigrants often employ Stage Irish to their own advantage to increase profits. The study of 42 Irish bar proprietors and their partners in Chicago, USA and Birmingham, UK in 1993-94 demonstrates that “for Irish migrant bar keepers, who deploy the symbolised identity as a form of cultural capital to increase pub trade, the strategy is empowering.”⁴⁶⁷ However, the study also shows that the use of Stage Irish, trapping the Irish in a dual stereotype as the Irish as heavy consumers of alcohol and naturally gravitating towards a pub habitat, the implications are fraught with inconsistencies. Judy Scully writes that the use of Stage Irish “necessitates Irish people to be simultaneously the target and producers of an image of Irish culture, which is positioned within a structure characterised by unequal power relations.”⁴⁶⁸ Scully’s study hence uses the example of the Irish bar proprietors to formulate a framework for ethnic minorities in general to position and use cultural capital in a host culture-immigrant culture relationship.

David Cairns and Shaun Richards discuss the development and rationale for Stage Irish in their essay “What Ish My Nation,” claiming that the bastardised form of Hiberno-English was a means of showing unity within the Empire and yet also showing the

⁴⁶⁷ Judy Scully, abstract. “Stage-Irish Identity-an Example of Symbolic Power.” *Journal of Migration and Ethnic Studies*. (Vol. 23: No.3: July 1997) 385.

differences between the colonial power and daughter colonies. Using Shakespeare's *Henry V* as an example, the authors suggest that "culture, then, requires the drive toward-if not the achievement of-unity. But the contradictions that are necessarily excluded as a means of its achievement are quite literally those elements which contradict, speak against and speak otherwise than the dominant group."⁴⁶⁹ Cairns and Richards suggest that the inhabitants of the Celtic fringe were portrayed as speaking English, rather than Irish Gaelic, to prove Ireland's incorporation into Great Britain's family of colonies, defending the ideal of a unified Empire. At the same time, however, the Irish "must speak [English] with enough deviations from the standard form to make their subordinate status in the union manifestly obvious."⁴⁷⁰ Interestingly, these deviations would later be used by such postcolonial writers as Raja Rao as a form of resistance to cultural imperialism; Zabus writes that "a whole panoply of devices, generally designated as 'indigenisation' or 'nativisation' ...are themselves part of larger, conscious strategies of decolonisation."⁴⁷¹

Certain nineteenth-century Irish horror writers perceived the same lucrative and political benefits of using Stage Irish rather than Irish Gaelic or authentic Hiberno-English. These writers, mostly Anglo-Irish and frequently residing in Britain, appealed to the British public's expectations of Irish behaviour. They wrote their narrative in British English, hence isolating themselves from the stereotype to achieve literary respectability

⁴⁶⁸ Scully 385.

⁴⁶⁹ David Cairns and Shaun Richards, "What Ish My Nation." *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 180.

⁴⁷⁰ Cairns and Richards 180.

⁴⁷¹ Zabus 34.

but exploiting their own Irish origins to lend an air of supposed authenticity to the portrayal of the Celtic characters through the use of Stage Irish dialogue.

Charlotte Riddell exemplifies the Anglo-Irish use of Stage Irish to further their own literary ambitions. Her tale “Hertford O’Donnell’s Warning” is written in standard British English, but the character of Hertford O’Donnell, a stereotype of Irish immigrants in Britain, uses exclusively Stage Irish. Riddell writes

There was more than mere hand skill, more than even thorough knowledge of his profession, then needful for the man, who, dealing with conscious subjects, essayed to rid them of some of the diseases to which flesh is heir. There was greater courage required in the manipulator of old than is altogether essential at present. Then, as now, a thorough mastery of his instruments, a steady hand, a keen eye, a quick dexterity were indispensable to a good operator; but, added to all these things, there formerly required a pulse which knew no quickening, a mental strength which never faltered, a ready power of adaptation in unexpected circumstances, a fertility of resource in difficult cases, and a brave front under all emergencies.

If I refrain from adding that a hard as well as a courageous heart was an important item in the programme, it is only out of deference to general opinion, which, amongst other strange delusions, clings to the belief that courage and hardness are antagonistic qualities.⁴⁷²

In contrast, Riddell comically depicts O’Donnell in a much lower register.

It would be a fitting ending...and why I did not settle the matter tonight passes my comprehension. I am not a fool, to be frightened with old women’s tales; and yet I must have turned white. I felt I did, and she asked me whether I were ill. And then to think of my being such an idiot as to ask her if she had heard anything like a cry, as though she would be likely to hear that, she with her poor parvenu blood, which I often imagine must have been mixed with some of her father’s strong pickling vinegar. What a deuce could I have been dreaming about? I wonder what it really was...

⁴⁷² Charlotte Riddell, “Hertford O’Donnell’s Warning.” *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. Ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 36.

After expressly making up my mind to propose, too!...Could it have been conscience-that myth, which somebody, who knew nothing about the matter said, 'Makes cowards of us all'? I don't believe in conscience; and even if there be such a thing capable of being developed by sentiment and cultivation, why should it trouble me? I have no intention of wronging Miss Janice Price Ingot, not the least. Honestly and fairly I shall marry her; honestly and fairly I shall act by her.⁴⁷³

The use of Stage Irish is further exemplified in O'Donnell's response to hearing the banshee. He says "Who is there? What do you want?...Who is there? Why the devil can't you speak? If this goes on much longer I shall soon think I must be either mad or drunk."⁴⁷⁴

Riddell's narrative, with detailed descriptions of the surgeon's profession in lengthy sentences and an average of two sentences per paragraph and forty-two words per sentence, is not unlike those of her British and Anglo-Irish contemporaries. Her high register, complete with florid language and complex clause structures, is designed to achieve respectability as a competent writer in English. In contrast, O'Donnell's dialogue, alternately in short, nervous sentences and long, redundant ramblings, shows the comic uncertainty and self-effacing, animated temperament of the character. The inclusion of phrases such as the repeated "honestly and fairly" as well as "Why the devil can't you speak?" as well as "I shall soon think I must be either mad or drunk" further reinforce stereotypes of the speech of Irish immigrants.

⁴⁷³ Riddell 44-45.

⁴⁷⁴ Riddell 47.

Riddell, identifying herself with her adopted homeland of Britain and her British public through her narrative, is using the same strategies employed by the Irish bar proprietors to make her writing more marketable, appealing to the notion of invented Irish speech. However, Riddell, as an Anglo-Irish woman is writing about the Catholic Irish element, a distinct culture from her own. Riddell appears to be wavering in terms of her own Anglo-Irish identity, trapped between the British and Irish, making use of her Irish origin when it is convenient, implying that the Irish represented by O'Donnell are both 'them' and 'us.'

The Anglo-Irish did not hold a monopoly on the use of Stage Irish, as Catholic writers, such as Gerald Griffin, also used the stereotypical linguistic forms to entertain a British audience. Terry Eagleton claims that "with Griffin, the Victorian tone-bland, moralistic, rhapsodically elevated-sounds for the first time in Irish fiction."⁴⁷⁵ Like Riddell, his narrative includes formal British English, as shown by the first paragraph of "The Brown Man":

The common Irish expression of 'the seven devils,' does not, it would appear, owe its origin to the supernatural influences ascribed to that numeral, from its frequent association with the greatest and most solemn occasions of theological history. If one were disposed to be fancifully metaphysical upon the subject, it might not be amiss to compare credulity to a sort of mental prism, by which the great volume of the light of speculative superstition is refracted in a manner precisely similar to that of the material, every day sun...⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁵ Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*. (New York: Verso, 1996) 204.

⁴⁷⁶ Gerald Griffin, "The Brown Man." *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 316.

This somewhat long-winded, discursive style may be contrasted easily, if not obviously, with Griffin's dialogue, including such lines as "Ax my mother fusht, if you please, sir."⁴⁷⁷ The contrast has been described by Donald Davie as "a yawning gulf between the vitality of the peasant's brogue and the frigidity of the more genteel dialogue."⁴⁷⁸ Interestingly, the exaggerated quality of the speech exceeds even that of Riddell's passage, as Griffin's characters resemble two-dimensional caricatures. Yet, as the third chapter of this thesis mentioned, Griffin hoped to appeal to his British audiences as an apologist for his fellow Irish, here perhaps trying to adhere to the long-standing stereotype of the Irish as being cute and quaint.

In contrast are the authors who employ authentic Hiberno-English speech. Zabus writes that "when the Empire writes back to the centre, it does not so with a vengeance as with an accent, by using a language that topples discourse conventions of the so-called 'centre' and inscribing postcolonial language variants from the 'margin' or the 'periphery' in the text."⁴⁷⁹ Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand, in the 1938 work *Kanthapura*, attempts to insert authentic Indian speech into an English language novel with elements of Urdu and Punjabi, as well as a galloping tempo that is "the tempo of Indian life...[which] must be infused into one English expression...we, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and... we move quickly; there must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on."⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ Griffin 317.

⁴⁷⁸ John Cronin, *Gerald Griffin (1803-1840: A Critical Biography*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge, 1978) 39.

⁴⁷⁹ Zabus 34.

⁴⁸⁰ Raja Rao, preface, *Kanthapura*. by Mulk Raj Anand (New York: New Directions, 1984) iii.

The last half of the nineteenth century witnessed a rise in the use of Hiberno-English, as opposed to standard British English, as a literary language. This shift in dialectical forms served as an affirmation of cultural nationalism that gained great support in the decades preceding Irish independence. Kiberd succinctly summarises the previous use of British English discussed in this chapter, saying that most “nineteenth-century Irish novelists in English simply repeated the prevailing English methods, in a tradition which stretched from Edgeworth to Griffin, from Carleton to Moore.”⁴⁸¹ The end of the nineteenth century saw a diversification of norms, with greater use of European realism, the beginning of the resurrection, albeit limited, of the use of Irish Gaelic as a literary language, and new pride in Hiberno-English.

Kiberd describes this unique new Irish breed of fiction as “a *project*, and its characteristic text was a process, unfinished, fragmenting. It invited the reader to become a co-creator with the author and it refused to exact a merely passive admiration for the completed work of art.”⁴⁸² Here again, Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia, or writing with many voices, in this instance those of the author and his/her readers, is revealed. Igbo writer Chinua Achebe praises the comparatively freer, more open form of writing, claiming, in the context of his people’s own literary tradition and development of postcolonial Nigerian writing, “when the product is presented or venerated, the impulse to repeat the process is compromised.”⁴⁸³ The de-Anglicisation of Irish literature similarly

⁴⁸¹ Kiberd 342.

⁴⁸² Kiberd 120.

⁴⁸³ Chinua Achebe, *Hopes and Impediments*. (New York: Anchor, 1990) 43.

required a close examination of emerging national styles. Hence, there was a “tremendous emphasis on style in Irish writing from the time of Yeats onward.”⁴⁸⁴

Hiberno-English, at least to Yeats and his fellow cultural nationalists, became the perfect tool for this search for styles. The dialect, encompassing elements of both British English and Irish Gaelic, was described as “at its best more vigorous, fresh, and simple than either of the two languages between which it stands.”⁴⁸⁵ Interestingly, critics such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite object to the term *dialect* because he argues that this concept “is what I call, as I say, *nation language*. I use the term in contrast to *dialect*. The word ‘dialect’ has been bandied about for a long time, and it carries very pejorative overtones. Dialect is thought of as ‘bad English.’”⁴⁸⁶

Yeats discovered in Hiberno-English that “elusive style, that pressure of individual personality and that shared joy in free expression which was not available in official sources,”⁴⁸⁷ referring to academic, or standard British English. Nonetheless, Hiberno-English is, on one hand, a variant of English, the language of the colonisers. Yeats justifies his use of English, despite perhaps unfavourable connotations of the language among the Irish, explaining that “English is the language in which the Irish cause has been debated and we have to struggle against traditional points of view.”⁴⁸⁸ The same linguistic ambiguity has faced other postcolonial writers who choose to employ the colonial, rather than indigenous, language. More recently, Indian writer Salman Rushdie

⁴⁸⁴ Kiberd 120.

⁴⁸⁵ Thomas MacDonagh, *Literature in Ireland*. (Nenagh Co., Tipperary: Relagh Books, 1916).

⁴⁸⁶ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, “Nation Language.” *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 311.

⁴⁸⁷ Kiberd 163.

writes that “those of us who use English do so in spite of our ambiguity toward it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world.”⁴⁸⁹ Yeats and Rushdie empower their own literary and political agendas by taking the language of the coloniser and appropriating it for themselves as a means for self-expression.

In contrast, Hiberno-English is not standard British English inasmuch as Jamaican or Indian Englishes are not standard British English. Instead, Hiberno-English may be described as a unique creole. J. Michael Dash, in his essay, “Psychology, Creolisation, and Hybridisation” defines the term *creole* and discusses its implications:

Creole has traditionally been used to distinguish that which is created in the colonies which is neither native nor derives directly from the culture of origin. It is used to describe both someone born in the colonies and some new cultural or linguistic forms created from the juxtaposition of diverse populations. The term already suggests the later hypothesis of creolisation that the oppressed and the exploited were not merely the passive victims of an oppressive system but rather, through a pattern of apparent consent, opposition, and overt resistance, managed to create unprecedented cultural transformations from a series of dialectical relations that united oppressor and oppressed.⁴⁹⁰

The creolised language and literary form becomes a Bakhtinian carnival, the hybrid of interwoven languages and traditions. The result is an interplay of pre-colonial, colonial, and future postcolonial histories and cultures which create the unique experience of the emerging traditions, whether in the Caribbean, Africa, or Ireland. Dash asserts that

⁴⁸⁸ William Butler Yeats, *Samhain* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker, October 1903) 8.

⁴⁸⁹ Salman Rushdie, *Imagining Hopes* (New York: Penguin, 1992) 163.

⁴⁹⁰ J. Michael Dash, “Psychology, Creolisation, and Hybridisation.” *An Introduction to New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1998) 46.

“the Creolist project works toward a plurilingual ideal where the free play of oral and written, standard and vernacular, renders notions of mimetism or mimicry irrelevant.”⁴⁹¹

Dash’s words echo those of Yeats and Achebe in their affirmation of an open, free process of literary creation.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the horror genre in Irish literature had become a creolised form in itself. The Celtic tradition in Ireland had, for lack of widespread Gaelic printing presses and the resultant lingering oral tradition, preserved a rich story-telling heritage encapsulating the fantastic mythic cycles. Kiberd writes that as late as the eighteenth century, “in Ireland, speakers of the native language still told the old romantic tales, which were filled with supernatural wonders and recited in public to a credulous audience.”⁴⁹² This oral tradition merged with that of the British and Anglo-Irish Gothic and Romantic horror novel to create a unique Hiberno-English horror genre. The Hiberno-English dialect or creole hence became an appropriate, if not ideal, vehicle for its written transmission. Moreover, Braj Kachru discusses the social implications of the new form of English. Kachru writes that

English has provided a linguistic tool and a sociopolitical dimension very different from those available through native linguistic tools and traditions. A non-native writer in English functions in two traditions. In psychological terms, such a multilingual role calls for adjustment. In attitudinal terms, it is controversial; in linguistic terms, it is challenging, for it means moulding the language for new contexts. Such a writer is suspect as fostering new beliefs, new value systems, and even new linguistic loyalties and innovations.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹¹ Dash 53.

⁴⁹² Kiberd 341.

⁴⁹³ Braj B. Kachru, “The Alchemy of English.” *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 293-294.

By his own admission, Yeats was guilty of all of Kachru's charges. Although Yeats himself was an Anglo-Irish native speaker of English, his society, Ireland, was, as has been emphasised, not of English-speaking origin. Hence, as a cultural nationalist, Yeats may be seen as belonging to the greater, non-British English speaking element of the Empire. His 1893 work "The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows" demonstrates the creolisation of language and styles. The author has been described as "the first of the Irish writers to popularise the old faerie stories in the form of modern fables."⁴⁹⁴ In a decidedly non-standard Victorian British style, Yeats writes

Meanwhile, the moaning grew louder and louder, and the dance of the white moon-fires more and more rapid. Gradually they began to be aware of a sound of distant music. It was the sound of a bagpipe, and they rode towards it with great joy. In the midst of the hollow was an old man with a red cap and withered face. He sat beside a fire of sticks, and had a burning torch thrust into the earth at his feet, and played an old bagpipe furiously. His red hair dripped over his face like the iron rust upon a rock.⁴⁹⁵

The lively tone and terse sentences, full of poetic lyricism, are written in a particularly Irish style, reminiscent of the oral narrative style of the Gaelic poets rather than the imported British novelistic form. In addition to the theme of the Celtic *sidhe*, Yeats's style may be compared to that of the Gaelic poet Brian Merriman:

We knew from the start, and this maggot as well,
not warmth and affection nor love in the least
could catch him this noble pearl of woman,
but her desperate need, crying out for comfort.
It was gloomy doings, the nightly joy
-oppression and burden, trouble and fright:
legs of lead and skinny shoulders,

⁴⁹⁴ Peter Haining, *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998). 173.

⁴⁹⁵ William Butler Yeats, "The Curse of the Fires and of the Shadows." *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 192.

iron knees as cold as ice,
 shrunken feet by embers scorched,
 an old man's ailing, wasted body.⁴⁹⁶

Both passages, with use of alliteration and metaphor, employ short sentence structures to convey detailed, fantastic images, as well as a sense of expectation. A notion of persistence, whether in the bagpipe player's music or the unrequited love of the lover, is also highlighted in both writings. Yet Yeats's tale is related in a short story form; as noted earlier, this is a variant of the novelistic form imported from Britain. In terms of language, Yeats employs a form that is simpler than the standard British English, with Celtic rhythms and lilts when read aloud.

The use of Hiberno-Irish is further exemplified in the tale "Teig O'Kane and the Corpse," written by Douglas Hyde, re-teller of Irish folklore and future president of Eire. Hyde, a proponent of de-Anglicisation and the development of distinctly Irish styles, especially in his 1890 collection, *Beside the Fire: A Collection of Irish Gaelic Folk Stories*, faithfully records the linguistic hybrid in the tale of leprechauns:

There was once a grown-up lad in the County Leitrim, and he was strong and lively, and the son of a rich farmer. His father had plenty of money, and he did not spare it on the son. Accordingly, when the boy grew up he liked sport better than work, and, as his father had no other children, he loved this one so much that he allowed him to do in everything just as it pleased himself. He was very extravagant, and he used to scatter the gold money as another person would scatter the white. He was seldom to be found at home, but if there was a fair, or a race, or a gathering within ten miles of him, you were dead certain to find him there. And he seldom spent a night in his father's house, but he used to be always out rambling, and like Shawn Bwee long ago there was

⁴⁹⁶ Brian Merriman, "Curt an Mhean Oiche (The Midnight Court)." *A Short History of Irish Literature* by Seamus Deane. (Notre Dame, IN: U. of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 25.

'gradh gach cailin I mbrollach a leine'

'the love of every girl in the breast of his shirt,' and it's many the kiss he got and he gave, for he was very handsome, and there wasn't a girl in the country but would fall in love with him, only for him to fasten his two eyes on her, and it was for that someone made this *rann* on him.⁴⁹⁷

Hyde's writing, in the same lively poetic style as is used by Yeats and Merriman, further typifies a creole with its use of simplified English language and literary style with Celtic narrative rhythms, as with "it's many the kiss he got and he gave." The creole structure is further exemplified by Irish Gaelic expressions such as "*gradh gach cailin I mbrollach a leine*" and "*rann*." The reference to Shawn Bwee probably provides an intertextual reference to an older Celtic tale. Yet Hyde's story, rather than being an oral narrative using poetic structure, also employs the short story form, as does Yeats's tale. Hence the heteroglossia demonstrated by Yeats and Hyde indicates a new direction in Irish literature as new authors sought to create a distinctly Irish literary experience.

This chapter has demonstrated the changing linguistic and literary trends in nineteenth-century Irish horror fiction. For the most part, the written literature was produced and consumed by the Anglo-Irish Protestants or else written for and marketed to the expanding middle class in Britain. Hence, the language and literary conventions for most of the century were inspired by British literature. One only need compare the High Victorian styles of LeFanu's now somewhat obscure *Wylder's Hand* and Stoker's still internationally celebrated *Dracula* to see obvious British influence in terms of style and subject matter, with almost no Irish influence whatsoever in the novels. It is thus

little surprise that such authors, who made such generous use of British literary techniques, were also either supporters of the Crown or of the Protestant Anglo-Irish Establishment.

By the end of the century, the emerging Irish Independence movement's supporters' sought a new outlet of literary expression, finding British English and forms inadequately suited for the task of telling the uniquely Irish experience. The legitimisation of Hiberno-English as a literary language hence served the ambition of cultural nationalists, such as Yeats and Hyde, who, not coincidentally, also supported the creation of the Irish Free State. Furthermore, their efforts have inspired other cultural nationalists around the globe, as they have also sought to possess and defend their own Englishes. In 1963, for example, Raja Rao demanded that for Indians, "our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish."⁴⁹⁸

The neat categorisation of Anglo-Irish writers as merely British imitators who shunned all associations with their homeland or else exploited them via Stage Irish for comic relief is not entirely accurate. For instance, LeFanu, such a prolific contributor to the British literary scene as to have been termed "the foremost British High Victorian author of supernatural fiction,"⁴⁹⁹ frequently incorporated Irish legend and a reasonable facsimile of Hiberno-Irish in such stories as "The Witch Hare" and "The White Cat of

⁴⁹⁷ Douglas Hyde, "Teig O'Kane and the Corpse." *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. ed. Peter Haining. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 233.

⁴⁹⁸ Raja Rao, "Language and Spirit." *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 296.

⁴⁹⁹ Haining, *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural* 15.

Drumgunniol.” Similarly, at times the author also employed non-British Isles settings and characters, such as those contributing to the Dutch flavour of “Schalken the Painter.” Even Stoker was sufficiently inspired by tales from his island of origin to pen the distinctly Irish ghost story “The Judge’s House,” interestingly published in the Christmas 1891 edition of the British magazine *Holly Leaves*.

Whilst generalisations about authors’ self-identities and political-cultural affiliations through choice of language and literary forms may help establish trends in nineteenth-century Irish horror literature, the generalisations are by no means absolutes. Rather, as trends, they identify a merging of Celtic and British forms into a literary patois that would guide Irish literary pursuits into the twentieth century and form the crux of post-Independence, postcolonial Irish literature. This heteroglossia of native, imposed, and selectively borrowed linguistic and literary elements set the stage for modern Irish horror writing.

CONCLUSION

The Ireland of the nineteenth century has long ceased to exist, yielding to the more modern, independent Ireland of the twentieth century. No longer do Anglo-Irish and Irish Celtic tradition vie for cultural hegemony in a colonial context, at least in Eire. Today, Ireland, in the midst of a thriving economy, is a stable republic and full member of the European Union. However, the legacy of colonial Ireland, as well as colonial Irish literature, continues to influence the course of Irish society and politics.

The Ireland of the past continues to haunt the often tragic affairs of Ulster, which remains part of the United Kingdom. De Paor writes that “in many ways Northern Ireland functioned like a normal part of the United Kingdom. But in many ways it did not.”⁵⁰⁰ After sporadic violence, mostly on the border, which took place during the first fifty years of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, which tried home rule devolution in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republican Army [IRA] has frequently resorted to ghastly terror campaigns, especially after the Bloody Sunday incident of 1972.

Ironically, the violence has been due in part to greater “opportunities, most importantly in education, to the deprived section of the population which was predominantly, although not wholly Catholic.”⁵⁰¹ The post-war British welfare state gains led the better educated Catholics to rebel against “conditions they found intolerably

⁵⁰⁰ Liam de Paor, *The Peoples of Ireland*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. Notre Dame Press, 1986) 313.

⁵⁰¹ de Paor 313.

irksome.”⁵⁰² Hence the struggle for Home Rule or in Northern Ireland resembles the Irish Home Rule efforts a century earlier. However, “the duration and character of the violence in the North pointed up both the difference in experience between the people of the Republic and the people of Northern Ireland and the difference in outlook.”⁵⁰³ Yet one cannot ignore the Catholic majorities of both Eire and Ulster as opposed to an absentee or minority government or not see the similarity, namely the use of acts of violence, between the nineteenth-century Tithe War and IRA bombings.

South of the border, Irish affairs have become much more stable. Indeed, “Ireland had come to independence with a moderately good infrastructure...near universal literacy, fairly good internal and external communications, good information, administrative and cultural resources.”⁵⁰⁴ In 1937, after fifteen years of independence as the Irish Free State, Prime Minister Eamon De Valera took advantage of Edward VIII’s abdication to change Ireland’s dominion status to that of a more autonomous nation, as will be discussed later. Yet the unique Constitution “attempted to express the ethic of a Catholic people by embodying in the clauses much of the Catholic social teaching fashionable at the time.”⁵⁰⁵

Although Protestants had been granted full civil rights, a large percentage of the Protestant population left the country, perhaps very wary of the privileges granted to the Catholic Church. By 1971, all Protestants in Eire “formed less than 5 percent of the

⁵⁰² de Paor 313.

⁵⁰³ de Paor 313.

⁵⁰⁴ de Paor 312.

⁵⁰⁵ de Paor 307.

population of the state.”⁵⁰⁶ Indeed, the Anglo-Irish Big House had almost completely been substituted by the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglo-Irish tradition, once so vibrant, had become the homeless entity of a Beckett creation. History has proven the correct assumption of the most paranoid of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish writers, as expressed by the LeFanu creation Maud Ruthyn in *Uncle Silas*: “God help me! I don’t know where to look, or whom to trust.”⁵⁰⁷

Modern Ireland is not the reborn land of Celtic legend which many nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century cultural nationalists had envisioned. As stated in the last chapter, despite the efforts to promote Irish Gaelic and the awarding of national language status to the language, the number of native Irish Gaelic speakers has continued to decline. As Kiberd remarks, after independence in 1922, “most people congratulated themselves on their eloquence in English, while remaining dumb in Irish.”⁵⁰⁸ The Irish acquisition of English, even when the use of Irish Gaelic was tolerated and even encouraged, is unique; “learning a second language is never easy, of course, yet with far fewer institutional supports, the Irish mastered English so comprehensively in the nineteenth century that they produced one of the greatest literary outpourings in the language.”⁵⁰⁹ Meanwhile, they did not merely become bilingual; they completely jettisoned their native language. Despite an increase in books being published in Irish Gaelic and modest gains in speakers of Irish Gaelic who learn the language as a second language in school or as part of counterculture trend among young people, speakers,

⁵⁰⁶ de Paor 308.

⁵⁰⁷ Joseph Sheridan LeFanu, *Uncle Silas*. (New York: Dover, 1966) 419.

⁵⁰⁸ Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1995) 649-650.

⁵⁰⁹ Kiberd 650.

writers, and readers of the language are overwhelmingly outnumbered by those who use English on a daily basis. The predominant use of English in postcolonial Ireland mirrors a similar phenomenon in India, which Braj B. Kachru discusses in the essay, "The Alchemy of English." Kachru writes that "whatever the limitations of English, it has been perceived as the language of power and opportunity, free of the limitations that the ambitious attribute to the native languages."⁵¹⁰

Interestingly, the failure of the Irish Gaelic revival may be contrasted dramatically with the success of the Modern Hebrew Revival among Zionists.⁵¹¹ The Irish revival would have seemed easier, as there has always been an Irish Gaelic speaking population from which to draw reference and inspiration. In the case of Hebrew, the language had been extinct for thousands of years except as a liturgical language; a new grammar and new semantics needed to be invented. In this example, "raising the dead" was in fact easier than "healing the sick." Indeed, the failure of the Irish revival is more akin to the general failure of the world's populations to adopt Esperanto as an international second language, despite the wholehearted efforts of enthusiasts to popularise the movement.

Although the driving force of opportunity available to English speakers may explain in part the lack of success of the revival, it cannot be the only reason. Even with nearly forty years of Fascist repression and the presence of tens of millions of Spanish speakers world-wide, speakers of Catalan and Basque proudly defend their languages in

⁵¹⁰ Braj B. Kachru, "The Alchemy of English." *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 292.

⁵¹¹ For a discussion of Yiddish and the resurrection of Modern Hebrew, see Ruth R. Wisse, *The Modern Jewish Canon: A Journey Through Language and Culture*. (New York: Free Press, 2000).

the Catalunya and Basque Country regions of Spain; the languages are tantamount to the ethnic identities themselves. The Irish have chosen other tools, such as stern Catholicism, with which to identify themselves. Religious distinctions in Spain, in contrast, would have proven to be fruitless, since Catalans, Basques, and ethnic Spaniards are all predominantly Roman Catholic.⁵¹² It should be noted, however, that “evidence would now suggest that the Irish may be about to jettison Catholicism as unsentimentally as once they disposed of their own language.”⁵¹³

Perhaps the Irish feel inclined to shed their religious affiliation, as they have largely abandoned Irish Gaelic, because of an unconscious inferiority complex. In his essay “The Fact of Blackness,” concerning the relationship between whites and blacks as regards the self-image of blacks, Frantz Fanon writes that “and then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man’s eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. The real world challenged my claims. In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-world consciousness.”⁵¹⁴ In the case of modern Ireland, the powerful influences of largely American and British culture, as well as the political and psychological pulls of a unified Europe may have nourished the type of inferiority felt by Gerald Griffin, who, as we have seen, used his Unionist texts to serve as a type of apology for Irishness. Instead of pandering to British readers with stories such as “The Brown Man,” many individuals in modern Ireland prefer McDonalds to soda bread and

⁵¹² For a discussion of European minority languages, see the International Conference on Minority Languages, *Minority Languages Today*. (Glasgow: Univ. Glasgow Press, 1991).

⁵¹³ Kiberd 649.

⁵¹⁴ Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness.” *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 323.

have joined the greater European context of the European Union even while Ireland itself is still divided.

The nationalist Irish ideals of the nineteenth century have also failed in terms of the partition. The fact that six counties of Ireland are still under imperialist British rule is, to say the least, a major psychological and political grievance to Irish nationalists in Eire and Ulster. Yet attempts to resolve the conflict have been less than successful. It may appear that many citizens of Eire have simply chosen to accept the partition without attempting to change the status quo.

One also might ask how independent Ireland truly is. Today supermarkets are lined with British products, television features British commercials, and American popular culture is ubiquitous. In the early 1960s Ireland adopted “western-style consumerism: henceforth, foreign policy would be less independent, less sympathetic to decolonizing people, and more securely locked within the American sphere of influence.”⁵¹⁵ In contrast, at the same time, Canada embarked on a programme of systematic Canadianisation. During the last few decades, Canada has been pulling itself out of its British colonial past and staunchly maintaining its distinct identity, as opposed to that of the United States, even if Canada is, to some degree, economically and culturally dependent on its neighbour to the south. Whilst Canada, which fought a far less violent battle for independence, has enacted legislation to support distinctly Canadian ventures, as in the arts, Ireland has appeared to follow the opposite course. Ireland’s integration into the European Union may symbolically further erode a sense of

independent Irishness in favour of a pragmatic European identity, with some policies affecting the country enacted in Brussels.

This turning toward Europe is reminiscent of George Moore, discussed in the third chapter, who preferred a greater European identity in favour of a narrow Irish outlook and hoped to infuse Irish literature with French Realism. His horror story, "A Play-House in the Waste" precisely identifies Ireland's heavily Catholic self-image and missionary purpose. In the story, Father James explains the phenomenon of emigration to the New World not as a result of limited opportunities in Ireland, but because "God has specially chosen the Irish race to convert the world...once we realise that we have to die, and very soon, and that the Catholic Church is the only true Church, our ideas about race and nationality fade from us. We are here, not to make life successful and triumphant, but to gain heaven."⁵¹⁶ Moore suggests, perhaps, that isolation for Ireland means death and that Ireland must seek cultural transfusions from abroad to survive as a nation.

Ireland has also maintained a special relationship with its colonial "master," perhaps closer than that between Britain and Canada or France and Algeria, for example. Total de-Anglicisation has not occurred, even in Eire, which may help explain the considerable failure of the Gaelic push. Following the country's independence, the Irish and British governments hotly debated the degree of autonomy that Eire had achieved. To the Irish advantage, several British ministers decided that "Ireland's geographical

⁵¹⁵ Kiberd 565.

⁵¹⁶ George Moore, "A Play-house in the Waste," *Celtic Tales of Terror*, ed. Martin O'Gríofa (New York: Sterling, 1994) 49.

proximity and distinctly different traditions made that country uniquely different from other dominions and that realisation prompted London into making concessions."⁵¹⁷ For example, the Canadian Constitution of 1867 vested executive authority in the British monarch; Ireland [Eire], in contrast, did not have to adhere to this idea. This fact is significant because the Canadian model was to serve as a blueprint for other dominions.⁵¹⁸ Such concessions made by London, and the idea of an Ireland free from the British monarchy, would have very likely pleased late nineteenth-century Home Rule supporters, such as Yeats.

The Commonwealth status of Ireland was an initial point of contention. De Valera hoped that Ireland would be associated with, but not be a full member of the body. "The Irish, for example, went ahead in 1923 and registered [the Anglo-Irish Treaty] as an international treaty over the strenuous objections of the British who regarded dominion relations as an internal matter for the Commonwealth."⁵¹⁹ Ireland was clearly not following the example of other dominions, including Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

A new constitution in 1937 rendered Ireland "a republic in everything but name."⁵²⁰ Britain's response was to ignore the new constitution, treating Ireland as a full member of the Commonwealth, no matter how inaccurate or obsolete this view was. The following year, a six-year trade war between Britain and Ireland was ended by the Anglo-

⁵¹⁷ Thomas E. Hachey, "Irish Nationalism and the British Connection." *Perspectives on Irish Nationalism*. (Lexington, KY: U. Kentucky Press, 1989) 123.

⁵¹⁸ For a further discussion of Canadian identity, see Kieran Keohane, *Symptoms of Canada: An Essay on the Canadian Identity*. (Toronto: Univ. Toronto Press, 1997).

⁵¹⁹ Hachey 125.

Irish Agreements of 1938, which maintained that the British would finally vacate Eire's ports.

Relations between the two countries worsened after the outbreak of World War II, when Ireland adopted a position of neutrality. The logic for this decision was that, while Hitler's actions were generally not condoned, Britain, still occupying Ulster, could not be considered to be a true ally. Hence, while Ireland south of the border remained officially neutral, Ulster was forced to join the Allied forces, causing a controversy regarding conscription in the province.

This is not to say that all Irish citizens ignored the war effort. "60,000 Irishmen from Eire volunteered for the British armed forces, 40,000 of whom crossed the border to enlist in Belfast, while the remainder joined up in Britain."⁵²¹ In fact, Ireland's contribution to the war effort outweighed that of Ulster, of considerable embarrassment to Winston Churchill. Despite due appreciation and commendation by the British government for the Irish service, these men and women were also suspected of IRA subversive action.

Following World War II, the question of Ireland's independence was finally settled. The 1948 Republic of Ireland Act was passed by the Irish government following efforts by Britain to draw Eire closer into the Commonwealth for trade and labour advantages. The next year, Britain's Ireland Act of 1949, not without some hostility,

⁵²⁰ Hachey 126.

⁵²¹ Hachey 130.

repealed certain imperial preferences but retained Commonwealth trade advantages and devised an innovative citizenship policy. Irish citizenship, established by the Irish Nationality Act of 1935, had caused confusion for the British and Irish governments. By the late 1940s, it was decreed that “citizens of Eire, although no longer British subjects, would, when in Britain, be treated as if they were British subjects—a concession of enormous importance for the many Irish men and women living and working in Britain. Reciprocity was accorded to British subjects...in Ireland.”⁵²²

Ireland’s unique relationship with Britain has continued even after Ireland formally departed the Commonwealth. As Hachey observes, “the change was more symbolic than substantive...both [Britain and Ireland] recognised how their respective economies were interdependent and likely to remain so, irrespective of the political relationship of the moment.”⁵²³ A free trade agreement was negotiated between the two countries, and both Britain and Ireland entered the European Economic Community in 1973.

Since the 1950s, Britain and Ireland have been interdependent socially, economically, and culturally. Irish migrants continue to work in Britain, just as British subjects, to a lesser degree, make Eire their home. In music, movies and literature, Irish and British artists and writers have gained admirers in both countries. For example, in 1970, after pop singer Dana became the first Irish entry to win the Eurovision Song Contest, her song, “All Kinds of Everything,” spent several weeks at the top of the British bestseller lists. In more recent years, Irish rock group U2 has been enormously popular in Britain, while British acts, from the Beatles to the Spice Girls, have sold very well in

⁵²² Hachey 137.

⁵²³ Hachey 138.

Ireland. Despite the tragic violence concerning the Ulster question, British-Irish relations have remained surprisingly stable. In fact, at the risk of betraying the North, the southern Irish have distanced themselves from the conflict. Kiberd writes that “to many southerners, the north seemed like a Neanderthal place, caught in a historical time-warp, inhabited by paranoiacs who couldn’t trust one other, much less the outside world. The south liked to think of itself as superior, affluent, urbane, and forward-thinking.”⁵²⁴

The much-hyped global society heralded by faster transportation, greater trade opportunities, and high-tech tools, such as the Internet, have brought Britain and Ireland even closer together while integrating both nations more tightly with the rest of the world. De Paor adds that in Ireland, “the young, urban population are in many ways inhabitants of what McLuhan called the ‘global village’ of the late twentieth century. They are shaping a new history.”⁵²⁵

In the twentieth century, since the decades immediately preceding and following Irish independence, writers have tackled the exciting, if not at times perplexing and frustrating task of fully expressing themselves and the new Ireland. Redefinition of a society and its culture is rarely, if ever, easy, and seven hundred years of subjugation complicated the responsibility of Ireland’s first free authors. Indeed, the difficulty of translating Ireland into words is expressed by the “uneasy proliferation of names for the new state: the Irish Free State; Eire; Ireland; the Irish Republic—each one less satisfactory

⁵²⁴ Kiberd 574.

⁵²⁵ de Paor 315.

than the next, and each increasing that yearning for a true republic of the mind."⁵²⁶

Should writers simply continue with the styles and themes that had dominated colonial Irish literature? Was there a multicultural Ireland or a single Irish ideal to be defended?

What ensued was a plurality of forms and of visions. During the first years of independence, the disillusionment created by this confusion was bitterly expressed by

Yeats:

For the past hundred years Irish nationalism has had to fight against England, and that fight has helped fanaticism, for we had to welcome everything that gave Ireland emotional energy, and had little use for intelligence so far as the mass of people were concerned, for we had to hurl them against an alien power. The basis of Irish nationalism has now shifted, and much that once helped is now injurious.⁵²⁷

While forward-thinking writers sought to answer questions of Irish identity, other authors addressed the damage suffered by the Irish people. The Irish family, exalted by the Catholic Church, had been broken up by emigration and political upheaval. Hence, the family became a target for parody by James Joyce in *Ulysses* and Synge in *The Playboy of the Western World*. It should be remembered that inverted family life, from domestic to dysfunctional, was a major theme of nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish horror fiction, as exemplified by LeFanu's *Uncle Silas*.

Joyce, who spent much of his life away from Ireland, was one of the greatest critics of the search for the true Ireland. He believed the Irish to have origins in many civilisations, such as Scandinavian, Spanish, and French; "since 'Ireland' in such a

⁵²⁶ Kiberd 296.

⁵²⁷ William Butler Yeats, *Uncollected Prose 2*, ed. John P. Frayne. (London: MacMillan, 1975) 452.

construction was largely an English invention, those who took upon them the burden of having an idea of Ireland were the most Anglicised of the natives.”⁵²⁸ Joyce’s caustic comment hence attacks both the antiquarian pursuits and cultural nationalism of both Celtic Revivals of the previous century. The author hence employed mythic realism, combining Irish Gaelic myth and pan-European realism in a form of hyperrealism. In a modernist style, Joyce blends both oral narrative and the psychoanalytic depth of the novel. Rather than grafting one tradition onto another, such as the retelling and revamping of an Irish myth using British English forms, Joyce’s innovative syntax, punctuation, and themes reinvent both the oral narrative and the novel simultaneously. This syntax is exemplified in the first sentence of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: “Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...”⁵²⁹ The sentence, which flouts traditional rules of British English syntax and grammar, may be contrasted with Thomas Crofton Croker’s opening sentence of his retelling of the leprechaun myth, “The Haunted Cellar.” Croker writes “there are few people who have not heard of the Mac Carthies-one of the real old Irish families, with the true Milesian blood running in their veins as thick as buttermilk.”⁵³⁰ Croker’s style adheres to British English syntax and grammatical conventions, which support the author’s supposed purpose of defining the Mac Carthies as a bona fide Irish family, most likely to an English, or at least Anglo-Irish, audience.

⁵²⁸ Kiberd 337.

⁵²⁹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. (Boston: St. Martin’s Press, 1993) 19.

⁵³⁰ Thomas Crofton Croker, “The Haunted Cellar,” *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*, ed. Peter Haining (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1998) 248.

The difference in the styles of Joyce and Croker show that Irish literature was in the process of redefining itself. Following independence from Britain, several factors vexed Irish writers. First state censors diligently attacked anything deemed objectionable after passage of the Catholic-inspired Censorship of Publications Bill of 1929. As Deane states, “writers, in particular, fought against the prevailing ideology, partly because they were among its most prominent victims and partly because the written word had much power in Ireland.”⁵³¹ Second, even after 1922, the Gaelic element in Ireland seemed to be perishing at a very fast rate, hence leaving writers forced to use their own resources to discover or create an authentic Ireland. In the last few decades, more publications in Irish Gaelic have been released by Irish publishing houses, hence offering the language hope as a second literary, if not widely spoken tongue. Next, Irish writers needed to learn how Protestants and Catholic authors would function together within the context of the postcolonial society, especially one so vehemently Catholic in outlook.

Elizabeth Bowen was an Anglo-Irish writer who also represented the paradox of being a career-minded Irish woman. Indeed, the mainly Catholic government encouraged traditional domestic roles for women even though they served valiantly in the struggle for independence and energetically contributed to the development of the new society. As early as 1919, even before *de jure* independence, Constance Markievicz served as Minister for Labour of Dail Eirann. Bowen, also a feminist, used her power as a writer to express the guilt felt by many Anglo-Irish liberals. Kiberd writes that “no wonder that Elizabeth Bowen became an expert analyst of the death of the heart. She saw hers as a

⁵³¹ Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*. (Notre Dame, IN: U. Notre Dame Press, 1994) 188.

class, which, unlike its English counterpart, achieved its position through injustice."⁵³²

The sense of landlessness and desperation, the heir to the nineteenth-century paranoid Big House novels, is perhaps best expressed in Bowen's novel *The Last September*.

Bowen, who wrote the introduction to the 1966 Dover publication of LeFanu's *Uncle Silas*, may perhaps be perceived as a literary heir to LeFanu, who expressed the anguish at the twilight of the Anglo-Irish establishment in *Uncle Silas*, his metaphor of the doomed Big House. While LeFanu wrote his works within the context of colonial Ireland, Bowen, in contrast has been a product of independent Ireland. Kiberd's theories about Kiberd might be compared to those of Diana Brydon regarding texts written by modern white Canadian authors. Brydon asserts that "the current flood of books by white Canadian writers embracing Native spirituality clearly serves a white need to feel at home in this country and to assuage the guilt felt over a material appropriation by making it a cultural one as well."⁵³³ Although Bowen may not be embracing Irish Gaelic culture in her writings, the fact that she embodies this awkward, postcolonial "settler guilt" and uses the literature of the postcolonial society in which to express this guilt justifies the comparison.

Despite Bowen's contrition regarding her Protestant roots and a dwindling Anglo-Irish population, Protestant writers have contributed to the new national culture. Beckett, Shaw, Synge, and Yeats have been among the major Protestant writers of the emerging

⁵³² Kiberd 365.

⁵³³ Diana Brydon, "The White Inuit Speaks." *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) 141.

society. Yet a recurring theme in their works is the perplexing identity of Protestants in a mainly Catholic nation while living with the legacy of the injustices of their ancestors. Hence, the anxiety of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish Gothic writers has not wholly been dissipated. Furthermore, a distinctly Protestant theology inspires these works, revealing, for example, Synge's preoccupations with the Bible and Shaw's exaltation of the Protestant doctrine of self-reliance. Interestingly, as Smythe has theorised, the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish Gothic tradition, as exemplified by Maturin and LeFanu, was also motivated by another Protestant doctrine, that of predestination.

Catholic writers have proliferated in the new state, with a greater degree of freedom and self-expression than during colonial times, despite the Censorship Bill. A new generation of writers have built upon the ideals established by the Cultural Revivalists of the nineteenth century. Such writers as Flann O'Brien faced the fact that "the Revival had created a habit of mind which found the conjunction between the myths of the past and the actualities of the present an appealing structural device both in poetry and in fiction."⁵³⁴ As I have shown that nineteenth-century horror writers often revealed their political or social attitudes through use of myth, twentieth-century writers have employed myth to define a new, home-grown Irish literature which represents both Ireland and responds to the needs of authors to address the concerns of modern audiences. Lord Dunsany's leprechaun tale "The Crock of Gold" (1948), Catherine Brophy's fantasy novel *Dark Paradise* (1991) and William Trevor's ghost story "Autumn Sunshine" (1981) are just a few examples of such modern works of fiction that rely on myth.

Irish writers are no longer writing for the coloniser. Instead, they attempt to express the Irish experience in Irish terms, whether in English or Irish Gaelic. Yet a preoccupation with the past permeated Irish writing even today. Frank McCourt's best-selling 1996 novel *Angela's Ashes* mentions on the first page "the English and the terrible things they did to us for eight hundred years."⁵³⁵ Meanwhile, poet Denis Devlin and writer Thomas Kinsella attempt to explore modern themes of sexuality and violence juxtaposed with centuries-old Catholic doctrine. The Celtic hero of myth continues to exist, but this hero has adopted a new role, as "the heroism of the individual life tended to be expressed in an increasingly secular idiom, with sexuality celebrated as the deepest form of liberation."⁵³⁶ The view that equates sex with freedom thus contrasts sharply with that of LeFanu's "Carmilla" and Stoker's *Dracula*, which both employ the myth of the vampire to embody the threat of sexuality, either masculine or feminine.

The Gothic and Romantic styles of the nineteenth century have also proven to be effective tools for writers, whether celebrating their own archaism, such as the 1960s and 1970s Big House novel revival or the modern Irish horror story. Sean O'Faolain's "The End of the Record" serves as a modern ghost story, while Elizabeth Bowen's "Hand in Glove" has been compared favourably to the psychological thrillers of LeFanu. Similarly, Peter Tremayne's "Aisling" may be seen as a descendant of the Cultural revivalist works of Hyde, complete with sprinklings of Irish Gaelic. Meanwhile, Irish fantasy writer Catherine Brophy's "The Science of Mirrors" is an ingenious tale that

⁵³⁴ Deane 200.

⁵³⁵ Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*. (New York: Touchstone, 1996) 9.

captures “something of the faerie magic of old Ireland.”⁵³⁷ Even the Ulster conflict has been portrayed in modern ghost stories, including Jack Higgins’s “The Morgan Score.” Higgins’s use of horror fiction to draw attention to a sensitive political issue stems back to the nineteenth-century tradition of Yeats’s “The Curse of the Fire and the Shadows,” which graphically depicted a showdown between armed Puritan troopers in Ireland and the Catholic monks whom they are ordered to shoot.

Irish literature of the twentieth century, including these horror tales, is indebted to the nineteenth-century works for inspiration and socio-political roots. A study of nineteenth-century Irish horror literature also provides a blueprint for the study of other colonial/postcolonial literatures. Nineteenth-century horror fiction benefited from the simultaneous influence of multiple traditions, including those of Griffin, LeFanu, Maturin, Moore, Riddell, and may be interpreted as both the stereotype of the coloniser/imperialist and the retelling of ancient lore by cultural nationalists. Just as India may be reduced in the minds of romantic, if not somewhat ignorant, dreamers to a land of arcane religious practices, intrigue and exotic architecture, Ireland still holds appeal as a fantasyland of ghosts, goblins, and ruins. Still, “the actual landscape is slowly transformed by the touristic industries until it conforms to the outlines of the original fantasy.”⁵³⁸

⁵³⁶ Deane 217.

⁵³⁷ Peter Haining, *Great Irish Stories of the Supernatural*. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992) 174.

⁵³⁸ Kiberd 294.

Kiberd claims that “useful lessons from the Irish experience might be learned and applied to other places and settings.”⁵³⁹ He adds that “the major moral...is this: that, if the native culture of a people is devalued and destroyed for the sake of material progress, what follows may not be material progress of the kind hoped for, but cultural confusion and a diminished sense of enterprise.”⁵⁴⁰ Modern misrepresentations of banshees and leprechauns, as much by the Irish as by foreigners, are similar to the dilution of the *Arabian Nights* to the children’s story of Aladdin or of Native American totem poles to mere ornamental curiosities.

This thesis has demonstrated that Ireland’s nineteenth-century horror stories are important for encapsulating all sides of the imperialist/nationalist debate. Furthermore, the stories, whether Anglo-Irish or Celtic, Unionist or Cultural nationalist, have contributed vastly to the history of Irish writing and the popularisation of Irish literature abroad. Furthermore, the authors, whether Griffin, Riddell, LeFanu, and Maturin, or Yeats, Kennedy, and Hyde, have added a unique dimension to Ireland’s singular status as a European colony within Europe. This status has both preceded and inspired the development of other postcolonial literatures around the globe. As New writes, “because colonial experience was wide-ranging, any account of the emergence of a ‘national’-or a ‘postcolonial’-literature has to acknowledge at once the impact of convention, the impulse to reform, and the consequences of formal choice.”⁵⁴¹ Smyth adds that the supernatural, in particular, has been widely used in postcolonial literature around the

⁵³⁹ Kiberd 652.

⁵⁴⁰ Kiberd 657.

⁵⁴¹ W.H. New, “Colonial Literatures,” *New National and Postcolonial Literatures*. ed. Bruce King. (Auckland: Oxford Press, 1996) 119.

globe; “magic was another important aspect of the ancient tradition, leading some critics to argue that its reappearance in the work of certain novelists of the twentieth century constitutes an Irish precedent for magic realism, the fictional form so popular and successful amongst novelists from other decolonising formations such as Latin America and the Indian subcontinent.”⁵⁴² As we consider this precedent, exemplified by the nineteenth-century works of Irish horror writers, we gain a better understanding of contemporary Irish authors, like those of Ghana, Colombia, and Vietnam, as they continue to make formal choices in the quest for authentic self- and national literary expression and true cultural independence.

⁵⁴² Gerry Smyth, *The Novel and the Nation*. (Chicago: Pluto, 1997) 51-52.

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