A Comparative Imagological Study of the Irish and Ukrainian Great Famines in Novels by Samchuk, Macken, Motyl and Mullen

by

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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To My Parents & Ukraine

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

A Comparative Imagological Study of the Irish and Ukrainian Great Famines in Novels by Samchuk, Macken, Motyl and Mullen compares and contrasts the formation of stereotypical perceptions between nations in Irish and Ukrainian fictions. Focusing on the novels *The Silent People* (1962) by Walter Macken, *The Hungry Land* (1986) by Michael Mullen, *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* (1934) by Ulas Samchuk and *Sweet Snow* (2013) by Alexander J. Motyl, it examines the mechanisms in the development of negative stereotypes within the Self/Other dichotomy, intensified in the context of colonial oppression during *An Gorta Mór* in Ireland and the *Holodomor* in Ukraine. In these works of fiction, Comparative Imagology is applied to analyze the differences and similarities of ways in which the Irish and the Ukrainians identify, view and characterize their respective Other. To that effect, historical, cultural and socio-political developments of the 1840s in Ireland and the 1930s in Ukraine are studied, and the imagological analyses of the construction of auto- and hetero-images are carried out.

This examination of the Irish-British and Ukrainian-Russian relationships prior to and during An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor reveals that cruel treatment and injustice reinforce negative stereotyping. The investigation of the ways the negative characterization of a national character is maintained and perpetuated within the colonial contexts shows that negative perceptions of a group of people, leading to the rise of stereotypical and prejudicial attitude towards an entire nation, are largely power-based.

Demonstrating that the mechanisms of the formation of negative perceptions between people and nations have a similar pattern, this thesis explains that regardless of people's national belonging, stereotypical perceptions of a national character are determined by power relations and that cultural distinctions are used to define the Self against the Other.

'A land that could survive the Famine can survive almost anything.'

Tim Pat Coogan, *The Famine Plot. England's Role in Ireland's Greatest Tragedy*, p. 235.

Rowan Gillespie, *The Victim*,

Ireland's Great Hunger Museum, Quinnipiac, Connecticut, USA

(sculptor unknown) *Скорботна Матір* [The Grieving Mother]

Velyka Bagachka, Poltava region, Ukraine

Introduction

'The impulse to do comparative work remains, as it has always been, a generalizing one: to look beyond a single context or tradition.'[1]

For centuries, imagery has influenced human imagination, occupied thoughts, inspired creativity, set fashions and tendencies, and provoked deeds of love, hate, revenge and resistance. In recent years, an interest in the potential of images, their use and the diversity of their interpretation has increased, not least due to a wider engagement between cultures and disciplines and intermixture of identities, generated by the processes of globalization. One of the key areas that creates possibilities for the development, dissemination and discussion of images is literature. Bernard Augustine De Voto considers literature 'a record of social experience, an embodiment of social myths and ideals and aims, and an organization of social beliefs and sanctions',[2] and Milton C. Albrecht affirms that literature 'is interpreted as reflecting norms and values, as revealing the ethos of culture, the processes of class struggle, and certain types of social "fact"'[3] and that its use 'as an index of significant beliefs and values in a society has been widespread.'[4] This research is situated in the field of Comparative Literature — 'the study of the interrelationship of the literatures of two or more national cultures usually of differing languages'.[5] Imagology, first introduced about 1950-51[6], and 'elaborated and refined' during the 1960s and 1970s,[7] is one of the key methodologies of Comparative Literature, and will be the main methodology used for this study. It will be based on the works of Joep Leerssen, one of the few scholars working in this area of Comparative Literature, who has established 'a historical study of the interaction between the discourse and the political invocation of national characters and their rhetorical representation in literary texts.'[8] Leerssen notes that the term

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[1] David Damrosch, 'Comparative Literature?', *PMLA*, Vol. 118, No. 2 (Mar., 2003), pp. 326-330, p. 329.

[2] De Voto quoted by Milton C. Albrecht in 'The Relationship of Literature and Society', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (Mar., 1954), pp. 425-436, p. 426.

[3] Milton C. Albrecht, 'The Relationship of Literature and Society', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (Mar., 1954), pp. 425-436, p. 425.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 426.

[5] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comparative%20 literature>.

[6] Hugo Dyserinck, 'Imagology and the Problem of Ethnic Identity', *Intercultural Studies*, No. 1, 2003, <https://is.muni.cz/el/1421/podzim2009/NIDCC03_01/um/2_Dyserinck.pdf>, p. 2.

[7] Leerssen, 'Introduction' to Joep Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-ghael: Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, Its Development and Literary Expression Prior to the Nineteenth Century* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 7.

[8] Beller, 'Perception, image, imagology' in Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, editors, *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007), p. 9.

Imagology is 'a technical neologism and applies to research in the field of our mental images of the Other and of ourselves'; he defines it as 'the critical analysis of national stereotypes in literature',[9] and clarifies that it

> studies the origin and function of characteristics of other countries and peoples, as expressed textually, particularly in the way in which they are presented in works of literature, plays, poems, travel books and essays.[10]

This research concerns itself with texts that deal with the past, a past that shapes our present. More specifically, it examines images created in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions. The two Great Famines, *An Gorta Mór* and the *Holodomor*, are themes that remain significant from historical and cultural perspectives for these two countries, and beyond. Reverberations of these famines, their causes and effects, echo far afield. In the last decade, parallels between An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor have already received notable scholarly attention. One of its most noteworthy outcomes is the publication of Holodomor and Gorta Mór: *Histories, Memories and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland* (2012), edited by Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen and Vincent Comerford. The volume comprises a number of articles analyzing political, commemorative, and historiographic aspects, and discussing the traumatic experiences of the two famines. They were used as secondary sources during the work on this thesis. To date, however, no other study has examined in depth literary representations of native communities and their oppressors in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions. This research is the first to present a comparative imagological study of such representations.

Traumas born of violent political situations influence the relations between the nations involved, and participate in the formation of peoples' perceptions of one another. In the analysis of the selected novels, perceptions and attitudes will be examined through the prism of the binary opposition that is used in the construction of images, and which is at the basis of the Self/Other polarity: a fundamental distinction between *auto-image* and *hetero-image*. They are explained by Leerssen as 'images of the foreign' and 'of the familiar',[11] or 'those images which characterize the Other (*hetero-images*) and those which characterize one's own, domestic identity (*self-images* or *auto-images*)'.[12] Relations between the *spected*, 'the nationality represented', and the *spectant*, the group 'representing text or discourse',[13] will be compared. Leerssen's definition of an image as 'the mental or discursive representation or reputation of a

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[9] Beller and Leerssen, 'Foreword' in Beller and Leerssen, p. xiii.
[10] Manfred Beller, 'Perception, image, imagology' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 7.
[11] Leerssen, 'Introduction' to *Mere Irish*, p. 11.
[12] Leerssen, 'History and Method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 27.
[13] *Ibid*.

person, group, ethnicity or "nation"' [14] will be applied to theorize about the mechanisms activating the process of extending a negative perception of a person or a group of people to a stereotypical perception of an entire nation. Conforming to the indication that national images 'are to be studied as part of textual tradition',[15] and making use of the concept of a stereotype as 'a generalization about a group of people in which incidental characteristics are assigned to virtually all members of the group, regardless of actual variation among the members',[16] the imagological distinction between the Self and the Other will be examined with respect to the Anglo-Irish and Russian-Ukrainian relations as depicted in literary texts.

The first thing that captures the reader's attention in the discussion of Ireland's and Ukraine's famines is the similar sound of An Gorta Mór, meaning 'the Great Famine' in Irish, and the Holodomor — a compound of two words: 'holod' and 'mor' that stand for 'hunger' and 'death in large numbers' respectively,[17] providing the literal meaning of 'death by starvation' in the Ukrainian language. In a remarkable way, the tragic experiences of these geographically remote countries with fundamentally divergent languages seem to echo in close parallel down through the ages. The death toll from the famine both in Ireland and in Ukraine mounted to one-quarter of their respective populations. Looking at the images of the victims of Ukraine's famine that took place 80 years ago, an analogy can be drawn with those Irish people, who died in agony from starvation and disease 170 years ago. The words of the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, can also be applied to the attitude that prevailed in Westminster towards Ireland during An Gorta Mór: 'When one man dies it's a tragedy,' […]. When thousands die it's statistics.'[18] In literature, every death is a tragedy, and literature makes it possible to mourn and commemorate all of the victims of terrible events in history, each and every one of them. The examination of the forms and functions of the rhetoric of national characters, presented in this research, shows that they serve as a means to express traumatic experiences, demonstrating ways in which Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions deal with their respective national traumas.

Leerssen's remark 'the past is unfinished business, neither forgiven nor forgotten'[19] is particularly true in the case of Ukraine, which continues to be haunted by past experiences due to Russia's recent annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and waging an undeclared war

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[14] Leerssen, 'Image', in Beller and Leerssen, p. 342.
[15] Lerssen, 'Introduction' to *Mere Irish*, p. 8.
[16] Beller, 'Stereotype' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 429.
[17] Oksana Weretiuk notes that Ukrainian writer Vasyl Barka is likely to have been the first to use this term in his preface to the novel *The Yellow Prince* in 1963. See Oksana Weretiuk, 'Irish and Ukrainian Famines: Literary Images, Historical Memory and Aesthetic Emotions', *The Wenshan Review of Literature and Culture*, Vol. 10.2, June 2017, pp. 51-68, footnote 1, p. 52.
[18] Joseph Stalin quoted by Anton Antonov-Ovseyenko in *The Systematic Killing of People* by Linda Jacobs Altman (USA: Enslow Publishers Inc., 2009), p. 44.
[19] Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 180.

in Ukraine's eastern territories. Ireland's relations with Britain, marked by the two countries' continuing closeness and productive collaboration, may suggest a model for the development of the relations between states free from negative bias. Yet, even here, the past traumas can be compared to a sleeping dragon, and a tiny spark is enough to awaken old antagonisms. This view is prompted, for instance, by insignificant, yet detectable opposition from some quarters of Irish society to Queen Elizabeth's and Prince Charles and Camilla's visits to Ireland in May 2011 and May 2015 respectively. Ukraine's re-interpretation of her past traumas through contemporary viewpoints confirms that 'shared suffering unites more firmly than shared joy. When it comes to national memories, mourning matters more than triumphs, for mourning instills a sense of duty and exacts a joints effort'.[20]

Given that famine literature is 'the product of negotiation between a class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society',[21] comparisons with Ukraine's famine are especially interesting to draw upon, as, for many decades, it was absent from literary, historic and other domains of Ukraine's life, and rather recondite in the West. It is possible that Ukraine is currently undergoing processes that Ireland has already experienced, establishing links between creators and societal institutions and practices. Also, the definition of Irish fiction as 'books of fiction by Irish authors and foreign authors writing about Ireland or the Irish'[22] suggests a similar consideration of Ukrainian fiction as books of fiction by Ukrainian and foreign authors writing about Ukraine and the Ukrainians.

Imagology is pertinent to the examination of An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor, for it has become a '"key" in the research on the psychological background of the inner-European nationality conflicts'.[23] A comparative method is fitting to this research topic also because these historical events have over time generated considerable nationalist resistance. David Damrosch's explanation of the sources of Comparative Literature strengthens this thought: 'As a discipline, comparative literature arose in a kind of competitive symbiosis with the nationalisms dominant in nineteenth-century Europe'.[24] Damrosch believes that 'a natural way to understand the distinctiveness of a given culture […] is to compare it with and contrast it to others.'[25] Accordingly, this approach stimulates a better comprehension of them all. Ireland's

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[20] Renan quoted by Leerssen in 'Monument and Trauma', *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. by Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 218, footnote 20.
[21] Greenblatt quoted by Christopher Morash in *Writing the Irish Famine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 6.
[22] Rolf Loeber and Magda Stouthamer-Loeber quoted by Raphaël Ingelbien, in 'Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Poor Clare" and the Irish Famine', *Irish University Review,* Vol. 40, No. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2010), pp. 1-19, p. 16.
[23] Dyserinck, p. 3.
[24] Damrosch, p. 327.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

experience of dealing with the traumatic past can be usefully applied in present attempts to understand Ukraine's troubled history.

Focusing on the literary expression of Ireland's and Ukraine's national traumas, this research explores the interdependence between oppression and cruelty and emergence and dissemination of negative stereotypes within the Irish-British and Ukrainian-Russian contexts. The originality of this research lies in its application of the imagological method, endorsed by a multidisciplinary approach, to the analysis of images in Irish and Ukrainian literary texts in order to examine the social meaning that images produce, and the results they achieve. In the novels *The Silent People* (1962) by Walter Macken, *The Hungry Land* (1986) by Michael Mullen, *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* (1934) by Ulas Samchuk, and *Sweet Snow* (2013) by Alexander J. Motyl, the mechanisms of the development and intensification of negative stereotypes between nations during An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor are compared and contrasted.

The theme of the Great Famine has been used 'as a setting' for many Irish literary works, prose fiction and poems dating back from the 1840s until present day. In this thesis, the choice of the two Irish novels, *The Silent People* and *The Hungry Land*, was decided by an abundance of images, clichés, and stereotypical representations of national character in their depiction of An Gorta Mór. The distinctive scenes and images in these artefacts create vivid pictures of the famine incorporating historic detail within their plot lines. Their comparison and contrast with the first and most recent Ukrainian novels on the Holodomor demonstrate the durability of stereotypes regardless of the time of the texts' production. The examination of the novels' cultural and national dissimilarities reinforces understanding of the universality of the processes by which stereotypes are formed. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen's study of the cultural construction of national images provides the main theoretical basis for the analysis of the novels' texts and the discourse, in which they are embedded. In addition, Birgit Neumann's theoretical framework developed for the discussion of cultural and historical Imagology in narrative texts is applied to give structure to the thesis.[26]

The choice of methodology and the methods for this study proceed from the researcher's experience of living in Ukraine, Poland and Ireland, the knowledge of these countries' cultural contexts and languages, encounters with diverse groups of people and acquaintance with individual instaces of national characterizations and sets of attributes,[27] as well as the experience of teaching students from differen ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds and age groups. All

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[26] Birgit Neumann, 'Towards a Cultural and Historical Imagology. The rhetoric of national character in 18th-century British Literature', *European Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, December 2009, pp. 275–291.

[27] Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and method' in Beller and Leerssen, pp. 26-27.

these factors enhanced the understanding of the dynamics between the images of the Self and the Other and allowed the development of a diversified approach to the study of images. This made it possible, first, to analyse various facets of images closely and discuss them in great detail, and, second, establish the universality of the processes involved in image formation and dissemination. The interest in studying images in famine fiction was prompted by the awareness of similarities and differences between An Gorta Mor and the Holodomor both in their literary representations and historical contexts.

The methodological perspective of critical inquiry is used to investigate the development of stereotypes as a phenomenon mediated by power relations in society. The data collection methods include the examination of evidence from articles, interviews, books, memoirs, and visual materials, such as films, photographs, paintings, maps and diagrams. The research strategies are supplemented by the investigation and study of historical documentation relating to the Stalinist era, conducted in the SBU (Security Service of Ukraine) archives in Poltava, Ukraine, during two successive summers in Ukraine, participation in The Irish Famine Summer School (Strokestown Park), attendance at workshops and international congresses, and presentation of my findings at conferences, both nationally and internationally. The information obtained from the studied materials is collated and interpreted in light of psychological, cultural, and socio-historical peculiarities of the contexts, in which the images emerged and developed, and applied to widen the scope of research.

Consistent with Leerssen's point that the imagologist studies 'the textual expression of an image, and the historical context of its expression',[28] this thesis is divided into three chapters. The first, titled 'Famines in Ireland and Ukraine', provides an overview of historical, cultural and socio-political developments of the 1840s in Ireland and the 1930s in Ukraine, outlining the contexts of the famines. The Irish-British and Ukrainian-Russian relationships prior to and during An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor respectively are discussed. Their analysis helps identify whether and in what ways the negative characterization of national character is maintained and perpetuated within the context of oppressive rule. In line with Leerssen's view that images 'often take the form of linking social facts and imputed collective psychologisms',[29] it demonstrates how negative perceptions of a group of people lead to the rise of stereotypical and prejudicial attitudes towards the entire nation that they represent, and explain that this process depends on power relations by and large. This chapter does not seek to provide an examination of historical reality, elucidate why certain events occurred, or present new interpretations of Ireland's and Ukraine's often very competitive discourses. An overview of

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[28] Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 8.
[29] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 342.

the socio-historical contexts before and during the famines informs the imagological analyses and helps understand the causality of the processes of the emergence and upsurge in negative stereotyping as depicted in the literary texts. Focusing on the literary representations of the Other and bearing in mind that stereotyping is a bilateral process that involves both sides in the oppressor-oppressed divide, it is necessary to indicate that this study examines stereotyping from the perspective of the oppressed.

The second and third chapters examine the mechanisms of the formation of stereotypical perceptions between the nations in question as expressed in literary texts. The second chapter presents the comparative analyses of Samchuk's *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* and Macken's *The Silent People*, and the third chapter, the comparative analyses of Motyl's *Sweet Snow* and Mullen's *The Hungry Land*. The analysis of each novel starts with a synopsis outlining the characters and events and is followed by an explanation of the relevance of an application of Birgit Neumann's framework. Each analysis is divided into sections that convey the text's main themes, reflecting the protagonists' concerns and attitudes. While some sections are common to all four novels, such as those on auto- and hetero-images, there are also some that are specific to each work of fiction. In this way, certain distinctive features pertaining to individual texts are studied. Comparing and contrasting the process of image formation in the Irish and Ukrainian contexts, the novels' analyses will show that in famine fiction, the deployment of the rhetoric of national character is used to enhance the distinction between the Self and the Other as a response to oppressive rule.

According to the thesis' findings, it will be demonstrated that there is historical and artistic evidence that An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor are comparable in what they reveal of such colonial practices as those of the British and Russian regimes at the times of the famines in question. Showing the detrimental effects of colonialism, the ways in which injustice and violence shape relations between groups of people and nations, generating stereotypes, will be examined. The comparative analyses of similarities and differences in the literary expression of Ireland's and Ukraine's national traumas will show that the mechanisms of the formation of negative perceptions have a similar pattern. The main aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that stereotypical perceptions of national character are largely determined by power relations, while cultural differences are used as devices with which the Self is defined against the Other.

This innovatory research aims to provide a framework for a discussion of famine fiction in order to compare and contrast phenomena connected with famines that result from power relations. It is hoped that this study will provide a new and valuable contribution to the study of stereotypes and prejudice.

Chapter I. Famines in Ireland and Ukraine

'We can only understand our present through our consciousness of the past.'[1]

Many scholars have explored the connections between past and present. Some suggest that in order to understand the present, the past should be examined, while others believe that the opposite approach should be taken. English historian Alan John Percivale Taylor reflects: 'The present enables us to understand the past, not the other way round',[2] whereas American astronomer Carl Sagan believes that 'You have to know the past to understand the present.'[3] Canadian suffragette and author Nellie L. McClung points to a connection between all three temporal concepts: 'People must know the past to understand the present, and to face the future'.[4] Palestinian-American writer and academic Edward W. Said notes that 'past and present inform each other, each implies the other and, […], each co-exists with the other',[5] and explains the importance of the past events: 'More important than the past itself, […], is its bearing upon cultural attitudes in the present.'[6] French historian Pierre Nora argues that 'by defining the relation to the past', memory shapes the future.[7] As can be seen, views on the past, present and future, and their relation to one another, generate different approaches and explanations. For our imagological examination of literary texts, all these statements are important, for in literature, probably more than in any other discipline, notions of past and present are often entangled, and their interpretation can enable us to envision, and perhaps to a certain extent, shape the future.

The Irish and Ukrainian novels on famine synthesize history and memory, facts and fiction, and the engagement of these opposing concepts allows us to explore images in the contexts from which they have evolved, and establish the reasons for their current relevance. When Nora mentions the contrasting nature of memory and history noting that 'memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is the

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[1] *The University of Chicago Book Press*, <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo3633981.html>.

[2] *Goodreads*, *Quotes*, <https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/16607473.Alan_John_Percivale_Taylor>.

[3] *Goodreads, Quotes*, https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/194992-you-have-to-know-the-past-to-understand-the-present>.

[4] *Government of Canada*, *Status of Women Canada*, 'Why is Women's History Month Important?', <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/commemoration/whm-mhf/why-pourquoi-en.html>.

[5] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 2.

[6] Said, p. 18.

[7] Pierre Nora, 'General Introduction: Between Memory and History' in Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman, eds., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), translated by Arthur Goldhammer, p. 11.

representation of the past',[8] there emerges a sense that he perceives memory as subjective and history as somewhat objective, yet, in their opposition, supplementing each other. This is perceptible in his linking of the two phenomena: 'the need for memory is the need for history'.[9] Nora's view that 'history, which had become a tradition of memory, was transformed into social self-understanding'[10] brings to the fore the notion that human agency is a necessary tool in the relationship between history and memory. Even though Nora's approach and findings are based on his research of the French context, his points have universal applicability. Lawrence D. Kritzman argues that Nora's study suggests 'a new critical model through which the history of memory may be written', and that it shows the ways, in which '*a* nation can rediscover its identity by rearranging the logic constituting its "realms of memory"'.[11] Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen and Vincent Comerford's observation of the significance of Nora's study of the *lieux de mémoire*[12] in the Introduction to their volume offering a comparative analysis of the Holodomor and An Gorta Mór, attests to its suitability also for Ireland's and Ukraine's experiences.

People are indelible elements of memory and history, and they become transformed into images when portrayed in literary texts. In as much as memory and history can be thought of in opposition to each other, yet, at the same time, connected, polarity is pivotal for the existence and functioning of the binary tandem of the Self and the Other, too, for they can only be distinguished, defined and expressed in contrast to each other. The Self/ Other binary, moulded throughout different historical periods, continues to influence contemporary relations between nations. It looms large, generating common perceptions that lead to ideological divides and political conflicts. Attitudes rely on images, which are products of socio-political developments in a society. Therefore, a general examination of the Irish and Ukrainian contexts under British and Russian control respectively will provide us with an understanding of the conditions and motivations underlying imagological constructs created in the famine fiction to be discussed in this study.

From a contemporary vantage point, it can be seen that the processes of image formation, which took place in Anglo-Irish and Russian-Ukrainian relations, have had dramatic consequences for Ireland and Ukraine. In the case of the latter, old stereotypes resurface in areas, such as literature, media, and politics, due to the resumption of Russia's political claims and

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[8] *Ibid*., p. 3.
[9] *Ibid*., p. 8.
[10] *Ibid*., p. 5.
[11] Lawrence D. Kritzman, 'Foreword' to *Realms of Memory*, p. xiv, [my italics].
[12] See Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen and Vincent Comerford, eds., 'Introduction' to *Holodomor and Gorta Mór: Histories, Memories and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland* (London · New York · Delhi: Anthem Press, 2014), p. 3.

recent armed aggression against Ukraine. Said's reflection that 'for reasons that are partly embedded in the imperial experience, the old divisions between colonizer and colonized have re-emerged'[13] is certainly of relevance for the first significant aspect of an imagological study of the literary works depicting the Irish and Ukrainian famines — the two countries' mutual 'historical misfortune,'[14] as for centuries, they were parts of colonial empires. Even though the colonial relations between the French and Algerians are the context for Albert Memmi's seminal work *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, his descriptions could equally be applied to the British and Russian colonial models, given that 'all colonized people have much in common' and 'all the oppressed are alike in some ways.'[15] It appears that despite differences in the nature of the British-Irish and Russian-Ukrainian interdependent connections they reveal a similar 'pattern of the colonial relationship'.[16] In fact, the following definition of an empire fits both models:

> Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence.[17]

British and Russian absolute control of the territories of their respective colonies for extended periods of time has had a deep imprint on the political, ideological and cultural landscapes of the nations they subdued. Both British dominance in Ireland and Russian rule in Ukraine were imposed through the expropriation of land and resources, physical force and the imposition of the two powers' cultural supremacy on their weaker neighbours. This thesis demonstrates that all these elements have found reflection in the Irish and Ukrainian novels discussed here.

History has witnessed many atrocious regimes that treated their enemies in the most brutal fashion. However, the British Empire and the USSR, often referred to as simply Russia,[18]

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[13] Said, p. 18.

[14] Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd., 2003), p. 163.

[15] *Ibid*., p. 5.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 189.

[17] Michael Doyle quoted by Said in *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 8.

[18] In a simplified manner, for many, the name 'Russia', or 'Soviet Russia' stood for the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. American diplomat and historian George Kennan uses the words "Soviet Union," "Russia," "Moscow," and "the Kremlin" 'fairly interchangeably' in his famous 'long telegram' in which he details his views on the Soviet Union. See Lieutenant Colonel Michael A. Adelberg's 'What's Old is New — Kennan, Putin, and the Russian Competitive Viewpoint', *SSI Institute, The U.S. Army College*, 30 November 2015, <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/index.cfm/articles/Whats-old-is-new/2015/11/30>. Also, Christopher Lawrence Zugger observes that 'It is common still in Western writing to find "Soviet Union" interchanged with "Russia", and "Soviet" with "Russian" in *The Forgotten: Catholics of the Soviet Empire from Lenin Through Stalin* (Syracuse · New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. xxvii. In addition, see the explanation: 'Russia, officially the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR), was only one of the constituent republics, but the terms "Russia", the "USSR", and the "Soviet Union" were often used interchangeably.' in *Encyclopedia.com*, *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed., Copyright, The Columbia University Press: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/commonwealth-independent-states-and-baltic-nations/cis-and-baltic-political-geography/union-soviet-socialist-republics>. Moreover, this simplistic collation is made by the US President: "Russia used to be the Soviet Union." See Donald Trump in Zachary Cohen's 'Trump Defends Soviet Union's 1979 Invasion of Afghanistan', *CNN Politics*, January 4, 2019,

could probably be regarded as having been particularly ruthless towards their subjects. Both An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor are testaments to this. The reasons for Ireland's and Ukraine's famines are closely linked to their colonization and therefore, before embarking on our imagological analyses, the context of these famines should be briefly outlined.

Ireland's domination by the British, which began in the late 12th century with 'the confiscation of Irish lands […] under Normans and pursued by subsequent invaders, notably Elizabeth I and Oliver Cromwell',[19] lasted eight centuries. Periods of food shortages throughout these centuries of occupation were not a rare occurrence. For example, Mary E. Daly mentions 'a series of crises' and highlights the persistence of 'regional food shortages' at different times in Irish history,[20] whose effects varied in severity. Bearing in mind Cormac Ó Gráda's definition of 'famine' as 'a widespread lack of food leading directly to excess mortality from starvation or hunger induced illnesses',[21] it should be observed that large famines did occur prior to An Gorta Mór. Séamas Mac Annaidh reminds us of 'a harsh famine' that 'devastated south of the country' in 1727-30,[22] Coogan refers to 1741 as 'the date of the last big famine' before An Gorta Mór,[23] and Daly agrees that all preceding food scarcities 'were trivial in impact in comparison with the famine of 1740-41'.[24] Furthermore, in discussing famines and subsistence crises in eighteenth-century Ireland, James Kelly provides the dates of the major famines of 1740-41 and 1845-49,

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/03/politics/trump-cabinet-meeting-afghanistan-soviet-union/index.html> and in Aaron Blake's 'Trump's Bizarre History Lesson on the Soviet Union, Russia and Afghanistan', *The Washington Post*, January 2, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/01/02/trumps-bizarre-history-lesson-soviet-union-russia-afghanistan/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.fa7bd31dce61>.

Interestingly, the website of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Mongolia confirms the existence of the interchangeable use of the terms: 'The building of the USSR Embassy in the People's Republic of Mongolia before 1971. This part of nowadays Ulan-Bator is known as 15th micro-district. People often call it "Soviet" or "Russian" because of the number of Soviet facilities having been situated there for years, such as the Embassy, Trade Mission, Embassy's school, Soviet hospital etc., with thousands of specialists and technicians from the USSR living there.' See <https://mongolia.mid.ru/en_GB/o-posol-stve>.

Furthermore, the words 'Soviet' and 'Russian' have been used interchangeably after the 1917 Bolshevik Coup, as Russian Bolsheviks began to impose Communist ideology forcibly onto the neighbouring countries. See Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 190, and the above-mentioned Lieutenant Colonel Michael A. Adelberg's article 'What's Old is New — Kennan, Putin, and the Russian Competitive Viewpoint'. In addition, Zbigniew Wojnowski emphasizez a link between the concepts 'Soviet' and 'Russian': 'the "Soviet people" was often tantamount to ethnic Russians and an idealized vision of a conservative Russian culture.' See p. 3 in his article 'The Soviet people: national and supranational identities in the USSR after 1945', *Nationalities Papers*, 43:1, pp. 1-7.

Also, see 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in *Encyclopedia.com*, *The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed.*, The Columbia University Press, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/commonwealth-independent-states-and-baltic-nations/cis-and-baltic-political-geography/union-soviet-socialist-republics>.

[19] Tim Pat Coogan, *The Famine Plot. England's Role in Ireland's Greatest Tragedy*, p. xix.

[20] Mary E. Daly, Review of *Famine: The Irish Experience, 900-1900: Subsistence Crises and Famines in Ireland* by E. Margaret Crawford, *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 109 (May, 1992), pp. 100-101, p. 100.

[21] Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Making Famine History', *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Mar., 2007), pp. 5- 8, p. 5.

[22] Séamas Mac Annaidh, *Irish History* (UK: Parragon, 2007), p. 126.

[23] Coogan, p. 20.

[24] Mary E. Daly, Review of *Famine*, p. 100.

and smaller ones, of 1727-29, 1800-01, 1816-18 and 1782-24.[25] It can be surmised that the frequent occurrence of famines contributed to the population's impoverishment, and also that there were no state mechanisms to alleviate it.

While such food shortages occurred mainly due to natural causes, the fact that Ireland was ruled from London reinforces the perspective that they were exacerbated due to British policymaking, and that 'the politicisation of Irish famines has a long history.'[26] Analyzing causes of famines in different countries at various times in history, Ó Gráda leaves room for distinctive aspects in each separate circumstance:

> Most famines in poor economies are associated with the impact of extreme weather — droughts, excessive rain, or a combination of the two — on the harvest, although, […], dramatic crop failures are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for famine.[27]

Ireland's biggest famine, An Gorta Mór, was also triggered by a naturally-occurring element: it started with an outbreak of potato blight in August 1845. Ó Gráda believes that 'had *phytophthera infestons* not struck the potato crop twice in a row in 1845 and 1846, there might have been no Great Irish Famine'.[28] Yet, its highly damaging effects were aggravated by British political mishandling. Christine Kinealy maintains that political factors were 'a key cause' for 'excess mortality' during the Irish famine,[29] and stresses that the imperial government 'chose not to use its resources to come to the aid of the Irish poor.'[30] Coogan reminds us of John Mitchell's famous statement that reflects the Irish attitude towards the causes and effects of An Gorta Mór: 'God sent the blight but the English created the Famine.'[31]

Most researchers agree that even though the British government made attempts to tackle the crisis, the measures undertaken were insufficient in light of the extent of the damage. At the onset of An Gorta Mór, in November 1845, the British government with Prime Minister Robert Peel at its head, set up the Relief Commission, and purchased cheap Indian corn in order to provide aid for the hungry. In 1846, a public works act aiming to provide employment was passed; the corn price was curbed, and the Corn Laws were repealed.[32] Discussing Peel's commitment to famine relief measures that has been largely questioned by critics, Coogan

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[25] James Kelly, 'Scarcity and Poor Relief in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Subsistence Crisis of 1782-4', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 109 (May, 1992), pp. 38-62, p. 38.
[26] Daly, p. 100.
[27] Ó Gráda, 'Making Famine History', p. 7.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] Christine Kinealy, 'Saving the Irish Poor: Charity and the Great Famine', *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain* [En ligne], 12 | 2015: *The 1846-1851 Famine in Ireland: Echoes and Repercussions*, p. 3.
[30] *Ibid*., p. 1.
[31] John Mitchell quoted in Coogan, p. 4.
[32] For more details, see 'Chronology of The Famine' in *The Famine Plot* by Coogan, pp. xix-xi.

observes that 'the record shows that he did attempt to alleviate the situation'.[33] However, with the replacement of Peel's Conservative administration by John Russell and his Whig cabinet in the summer of 1846, the approach to the Irish crisis changed, which highlights the extent to which individual decision makers can play a critical role in policymaking. The policy of laissez-faire — 'a free-trade economy',[34] was placed at the heart of British economic policy. Although the relief measures did not entirely cease, and in 1847, the British Relief Association was formed, the Poor Law Commission was set up, soup kitchens were opened, and the Fever Act and outdoor relief were introduced, these proved incommensurate with the magnitude of the famine. It is worth mentioning in this instance a letter sent by the Quakers to Prime Minister Russell, expressing their concern over the worsening of the situation. In the letter, the Quakers, who were actively involved in fund-raising for the starving Irish,[35] warned that 'only government aid and a reform of the Irish land system can cope with the Irish problem'.[36] Helen E. Hatton notes that the Quakers began 'to pressure the government to change its policies', and also mentions the letter to the London Committee, recorded on 22 January 1847, in which Russell 'was advised in detail of the conditions in the midlands and west Ireland', and 'firmly pressed to implement adequate relief measures'.[37] With famine at its peak, however, draconian British laws continued to cause mass evictions, resulting in thousands of deaths in 'a holocaust of starvation and famine-related fever'[38] or mass emigration. Kinealy summarizes British governmental aid:

> While it was evident that the government had to do something to help alleviate the suffering, the particular nature of the actual response, especially following 1846, suggests a more covert (secret) agenda and motivation. As the Famine progressed, it became apparent that the government was using its information not merely to help it formulate its relief policies, but also as an opportunity to facilitate various long-desired changes within Ireland. These included population control and the consolidation of property through various means, including emigration…
>
> Despite the overwhelming evidence of prolonged distress caused by successive years of potato blight, the underlying philosophy of the relief efforts was that they should be kept to a minimalist level; in fact, they actually decreased as the Famine progressed.[39]

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[33] Coogan, p. 50.

[34] Eric Evans, 'Laissez-faire and the Victorians', *BBC Home*: *History Trails, Victorian Britain*, 18 September 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/trail/victorian_britain/education_health/laissez_faire_08.shtml>.

[35] The Quakers formed the Society of Friends Relief Committee on 13th November 1846 (see 'Chronology of The Famine' in *The Famine Plot* by Coogan, p. x).

[36] *Ibid*., p. xi.

[37] Helen E. Hatton, *Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland, 1654-1921*(Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1993), p. 128.

[38] Coogan, p. 2.

[39] Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845-1852* (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995), pp. 352-3.

While British political unwillingness to resolve Ireland's plight has been an important component of the scholarly debate on An Gorta Mór, there are some lesser-known aspects of 'one of the most devastating humanitarian disasters of the nineteenth century'[40] that should be highlighted. Pointing out that charity played a significant role in Britain throughout the nineteenth century, adding immensely to the state-run poor relief system, Kinealy examines the private relief given to Ireland during the 1845-52 famine years. The scholar notes 'an unprecedented scale' of fund-raising, which, with donations from Australia, China, India, South America, 'cut across religious, ethnic, social and gender distinctions'.[41] These became possible due to copious reports on the suffering of the Irish, which were published in newspapers all over the world. Such widespread knowledge about Ireland's distress and the amount of non-governmental assistance to the Irish poor constitute remarkable points of dissimilitude between An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor, and, in a wider sense, allow a comparison of the British capitalist system and the Soviet Union's Communist regime.

Ukraine first came under Russian rule in the late 17th century. After the downfall of the Russian Empire due to 'the Bolshevik coup', known as 'the October Revolution', a short period of 'the newly created Ukrainian autonomy'[42] that lasted three years followed. It was then absorbed into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the state which Paul Cipywnyk characterizes as 'the perversion of Marxism and Communism into a new, even harsher dictatorship that placed no value on human life and blindly espoused totalitarian ends that justified the foulest means.'[43] Notwithstanding the fact that the political foundation of the Soviet state differed from that of the Russian monarchy, in practice, Ukraine continued to be a Russian colony. It is important to note that the issue of Ukraine's colonization by Russia has been a matter of argument for decades, and it constitutes a significant dissimilarity between Ireland's and Ukraine's positions. The dictatorial nature of the Communist ideology, adopted by the USSR, was successfully disguised behind its advocacy of internationalism, equality and friendship among nations. Pointing to differences in territorial expansion between the Western empires and Russia, Said opportunely characterizes Russian methods of appropriation of new territories: 'Russia moved to swallow whatever land or peoples stood next to its borders, which in the process kept moving further and further east and south.'[44] Highlighting the complexity of the issue of Ukraine's colonization, Ukrainian-Canadian historian and researcher Stephen

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[40] Kinealy, 'Saving the Irish Poor', p. 1.

[41] *Ibid*.

[42] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine* (UK/ USA/ Canada: Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books, 2015), p. 207.

[43] Paul Cipywnyk, 'Introduction' to *Conflict and Chaos, 1998-2016 Language Lantern Publications*, <http://www.languagelanterns.com/conflict.htm>.

[44] Said, p. 9.

Velychenko observes that after Ukraine gained her independence in 1991, 'most Ukrainian historians considered Ukrainians to be victims of colonialism, whereas literary scholars drew attention to the nation's "postcolonial" condition'; at the same time, 'most Russian historians stressed that Ukrainians had also been the agents of empire, and they characterized Ukraine's historical status as "semicolonial"'.[45] According to Velychenko,

> most Russians and a sizable minority of the population in Ukraine, […], regard the country's historical association with Russia favourably and deny that Ukraine was a colonial victim of Russian imperial power.[46]

The views on Ukraine's colonization by her northern neighbour continue to generate much dissent. Therefore, Velychenko's point that Ukraine's interaction with Russia 'has yet to be studied comparatively and in detail'[47] suggests an under-researched area, which could gain immensely from the volume of research conducted already on the Irish colonial context.

The Soviet Union, like Ireland under British rule, experienced 'constant food shortages'.[48] In times other than the Holodomor, the Soviet Ukraine in particular experienced three smaller-scale famines, in 1921-1923,[49] 1928-1929[50] and 1946-1947.[51] Anne Applebaum explains that while historically, Russian and Ukrainian peasants survived 'periodic bad weather and frequent droughts' due to the 'careful preservation and storage of surplus of grain',[52] in the Soviet period, adverse weather conditions were compounded by the regime's mismanagement and inadequate aid that reflected 'the cynicism of a government that knew people were starving'.[53] A stark contrast between Ireland's 1845-1852 and Ukraine's 1932-1933 calamities is clear from the start of the latter. It is not without reason that the Holodomor, probably one of the under-researched acts of inhumanity carried out by the Soviet regime, is referred to as 'man-made', 'forced' or 'artificial', for its emergence did not entail any natural factors, but was

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[45] Stephen Velychenko, 'Ukraine' in *Colonialism: An International Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia*, Volume 1, by Melvin E. Page, ed. (Santa Barbara, California/ Denver, Colorado/ Oxford, England: ABC-CLIO, 2003), pp. 599-600, p. 600.
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid*.
[48] Ludwik Kowalski, *Hell on Earth: Brutality and Violence Under the Stalinist Regime* (Shelbyville, KY: Wasteland Press, 2008), p. 22.
[49] On the Famine of 1921-23 see Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, fourth edition (Toronto · Buffalo · London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 381, and Слюсаренко А. Г., Гусєв, В. І., Дрожжин, В. П., Козицький, М. Ю. та інші, *Новітня Історія України 1900-2000* (Київ: Вища Школа, 2000), pp. 248-250.
[50] On the famine of 1928-1929 see Людмила Гриневич, *Голод 1928-1929 рр. у Радянській Україні* (Київ: Національна Акедемія Наук України, Інститут Історії України, 2013).
[51] On the Famine of 1946-47 see Oleksandra Veselova, 'Famine in Ukraine after the Second World War' in Andrea Graziosi, Lubomyr A. Hajda and Halyna Hryn, eds., *After the Holodomor: The Enduring Impact of the Great Famine on Ukraine* (Cambridge · Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 183-196, and Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, pp. 293-294.
[52] Anne Applebaum, *Red Famine* (UK · USA · Canada · Ireland ·Australia: Allen Lane, 2017), p. 61.
[53] *Ibid*., p. 64.

entirely ideologically driven. Initiated by Stalin's policy of collectivization, its main causes were 'political decisions of Bolsheviks'.[54] Polish-American physicist, anti-Communist author and professor Ludwik Kowalski voices a Ukrainian view on the famine:

> Determined to force all Ukrainian farmers onto collective farms, to crush the burgeoning national revival, and to forestall any calls for Ukraine's independence, the brutal Communist regime of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin embarked on a campaign to starve the Ukrainian people into submission.[55]

This perspective has been steadily repudiated both by the Soviet authorities before the fall of the USSR and by all suceeding governments in Russia. Referring to the Soviet famine of 1932-1933 as 'totalitarian', Ó Gráda notes that 'denied or downplayed at the time by the regime, it has been the subject of heated controversy'.[56] Indeed, almost until the last days of the existence of the Soviet empire, it was one of the USSR's most heavily guarded secrets. It can be characterized best by Toni Morrison's words: 'Silence from and about the subject was the order of the day',[57] and described by Pierre Berland's testimony: 'A sort of conspiracy of silence surrounds the food situation, even though the nature of the catastrophe is an open secret.'[58] Linda Jacobs Altman maintains that Stalin went to a great deal of trouble to preserve the fiction that 'the Ukrainian difficulties' were 'misfortune and not malice'.[59] Under his rule, any reference to the famine meant 'an offence carrying five years in labour camp', and blaming it on the Soviet authorities 'led to a death sentence'.[60] Dana G. Darlymple affirms that 'one of the most peculiar characteristics of the 1932-34 famine was the fact that the Soviet leaders went to such lengths to hide it'.[61] This aura of secrecy, one of the main distinctions between the Russian and British political systems, is highlighted by Russian intellectuals. Russian historian Georgiy Mirskiy's reflection on the nature of the Soviet state is telling, for example:

> 'А сейчас когда студенты спрашивают: "Действительно ли советская система была самой бесчеловечной и кровавой?", — я отвечаю: "Нет, был и Чингисхан, и Тамерлан, и Гитлер. Но вот более лживой системы, чем наша, не было в истории человечества."' — 'Now when students ask me: "Wasn't the Soviet system the most inhuman and murderous", I reply: "No, it wasn't. There was Genghis Khan, and

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[54] Kowalski, p. 22.
[55] *Ibid*.
[56] Ó Gráda, 'Making Famine History', p. 25.
[57] Toni Morrison quoted in Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 1.
[58] Pierre Berland quoted by Dana G. Dalrymple, 'The Soviet Famine of 1932-1934', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Jan., 1964), pp. 250-284, p. 254.
[59] Linda Jacobs Altman, *Genocide: The Systematic Killing of People* (USA: Enslow Publishers Inc., 2009), p. 50.
[60] Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (New York · London: W. W. Norton & Company), p. 96.
[61] Darlymple, p. 277.

Tamerlane, and Hitler. But there wasn't a more deceitful system than ours in the history of humankind.'"[62]

Soviet lies about the Holodomor were not rebuffed in the West. Robert Conquest observes that the truth was available, and 'in some sense known in the West', yet it was 'ignored or denied'.[63] The historian explains that 'the enormous set of falsifications' that were used to conceal the Holodomor, came from 'Western academics of the highest standing'.[64] Andrea Graziosi stresses the impressive 'success of the Soviet effort to control the news' that was achieved largely due to blackmail and threats, applied by the Soviet authorities to Western journalists and diplomats.[65] Despite the fact that all major European countries and the USA did have fact-based information about the appalling conditions in Ukraine and in the Kuban[66] — a heavily Ukrainian-populated region in southern Russia, their position revealed that they chose not to jeopardise their relations with Moscow, deemed potentially fruitful from political and economic perspectives at that time. This point is validated, for instance, by the diplomatic recognition of the USSR by the USA in November 1933.

It is only from the mid-1980s,[67] that the Holodomor came into the public domain and started to receive greater attention in Ukraine, most likely generated by her forthcoming liberation from the Soviet regime.[68] From 1991 on, an interest in the research on the famine 'hidden from the outside world'[69] has increased. Moreover, it has become a sort of 'a screening device'[70] for Ukrainian society, and 'a kind of identity tag in Ukrainian politics',[71] used to highlight the destructive effects of Russian influence on Ukraine, the awareness of which has greatly strengthened since the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Donbass. A surge in the publication of archival documents, articles, memoirs and literary artefacts, as well as production of documentaries and feature films dedicated to the Holodomor,

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[62] Георгий Мирский, 'Ложь длиной в 75 лет', *Радио Эхо Москвы*, 10 марта 2014 - Mirskiy, Georgiy, 'A lie that lasted seventy years', *Radio The Echo Moskvy*, March 10, 2014, [my translation].
Mirskiy's quotation is also available from 'Россия - самая лживая страна в истории человечества', *Едина Країна*, Copyright 2010, 'Russia is the most deceitful country in the history of mankind' [my translation].

[63] Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow* (London: Pimlico, 2002), p. 311.

[64] Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, p. 124. Conquest discusses 'academic self-deception' of leading British academics on pp. 124-127.

[65] Andrea Graziosi in *Stalin's Secret Genocide*, produced by *Holodomor National Awareness Tour*, directed by Andrea Chalupa, (7:26 - 7:38 min.).

[66] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 311.

[67] David R. Marples mentions 54 years of official denial of the existence of the Holodomor in 'Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (May, 2009), pp. 505-518, p. 510.

[68] Ukraine obtained her independence on August 24, 1991.

[69] David C. Engerman quoted in Ó Gráda, 'Making Famine History', p. 11. Engerman uses this expression referring to the effects of totalitarian regimes in the 1930s and 1950s.

[70] Peter N. Stearns uses this expression to emphasize the importance of knowledge of historical facts in his article 'Why Study History? (1998)', *American Historical Association*, <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998)>.

[71] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. 361.

proves that the underlying causes of the process of image formation are often both for political and ideological reasons. Ardent debates on the Holodomor have been fuelled by another important consideration: its recognition as genocide. While some scholars deny that the 1932-33 famine in the Soviet Ukraine was engineered by Soviet leadership, the Ukrainian view of the Holodomor as an act of genocide is based on an understanding of its multi-layered nature. It is regarded as one of the stages of the enforcement of Ukraine into submission to Soviet rule, which was threatened by the Ukrainians' attempt to establish their national independence after the collapse of the Tsarist regime in Russia. The Holodomor was preceded by the elimination of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, the destruction of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox[72] church clergy, and the suppression of numerous revolts and protests that started from 1928 and climaxed in the famine[73] — all these measures involving 'psychological, social and physical violence' lasted for four years,[74] and were meant to crush the Ukrainian resistance to Soviet dictatorship. It should be pointed out that researchers highlighting that famine also occurred in other regions of Soviet Russia in 1932-33 overlook the fact that those regions were populated predominantly by Ukrainians. The aforementioned Kuban region, for instance, was 'the historically Cossack and majority Ukrainian-speaking province of the North Caucasus',[75] which had 'a strong pro-Ukrainian movement' in 1917, and in 1926, '47.1 per cent of the region's inhabitants considered themselves Ukrainian and 41 per cent Russian'.[76] Conquest reminds us of 'unofficial figures', which 'imply that about 80% of the mortality was in the Ukraine and the largely Ukrainian areas of the North Caucasus.'[77] Yevhen Zakharov explains:

> Kuban was the second after Ukraine and single region of the USSR where more than two thirds of the population were ethnic Ukrainians. Of all regions with a dense Ukrainian population, it was the one most under the influence of Ukraine.[78]

The 'pro-Ukrainian leanings' of the Kuban intellectuals and public resulted in their enthusiastic attempts to form closer ties with the Ukrainian state. For a brief period, the Ukrainian language was adopted as 'the language of the Kuban Cossacks', and the Ukrainian word for council *Rada*

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[72] According to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, an autocephalous church is 'independent of external and especially patriarchal authority', <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autocephalous>.

[73] Denis Hetman and Ihor Yukhnovskiy, *The Holodomor 1932-33: Genocide Against the Ukrainian People* (Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishers, 2008), p. 3.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. 198.

[76] Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine & Russia: Representations of the Past* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 179.

[77] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 302.

[78] Yevhen Zakharov, *Can Holodomor 1932-33 in Ukraine and Kuban be Classified as Genocide?* (Kharkiv: Human Rights Publisher, 2015), p.17.

was opted for the name of the local political body.[79] Analyzing the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine, Renate Stark concludes that it was 'a sinister example of an artificial and undoubtedly intentional induction of famine through unfavourable government decisions' and considers its recognition as genocide 'appropriate and justified'.[80] Kulchytsky reflects on the Russian scholars' restraint when it comes to the question of genocide, pointing out that 'it has become possible to build the concept of the Ukrainian Holodomor as an act of genocide only on the basis of documents publicized in Moscow'.[81] He emphasizes that the decisions of the US Congressional Commission on the Ukraine Famine in 1988 and the International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine in 1989 that the Holodomor was an act of genocide, was no accident.[82]

A strong validation that the Holodomor was an act of genocide is upheld by the fact that it was one of the cases used by Raphael Lemkin to coin the term 'genocide' in the 1940s.[83] Identifying the chief steps in 'the classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment in Russification — the destruction of the Ukrainian nation', Lemkin particularizes its four 'blows': first, the elimination of the Ukrainian intelligentsia; second, of what Lemkin considers the 'soul' of Ukraine — her 'churches, priests and hierarchy'; third, Ukraine's farmers and the large mass of independent peasants; and fourth, the fragmentation of the Ukrainian people.[84] Applebaum analyzes Lemkin's explanation of genocide, and elucidates why the Holodomor, one among several horrific assaults in the twentieth century, does not 'fit into neat legal definitions'.[85] Discussing the difficulties that Ukraine encountered, and still faces, in her pursuit to classify the Holodomor as genocide, Applebaum explicates that the USSR 'lobbied to ensure the definition was associated with the race theories of Nazi-fascism, rather than its own attempts to liquidate national political groups in Ukraine and elsewhere'.[86] Other

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[79] Georgi M. Derluguian and Serge Cipko, 'The Politics of Identity in a Russian Borderland Province: The Kuban Neo-Cossack Movement, 1989-1996, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 8 (Dec., 1997), pp. 1485-1500, p. 1489.

[80] Renate Stark, ''Holodomor, Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933: A Crime against Humanity or Genocide?', *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies*, Vol. 10: Iss. 1, Article 2, 2010, pp. 20-30, p. 28.

[81] Stanislav Kulchytsky, 'Why did Stalin exterminate the Ukrainians? Comprehending the Holodomor. The position of soviet historians', part I, день/ *day.kyiv.ua,* 22 November 2005, <https://day.kyiv.ua/en/article/history-and-i/why-did-stalin-exterminate-ukrainians-1>.

[82] Kulchytsky, *Ibid.*, part III, *день/ day.kyiv.ua*, 01 November, 2005, <https://day.kyiv.ua/en/article/history-and-i/why-did-stalin-exterminate-ukrainians-3>.

[83] See John Cooper, 'Introduction' to *Raphael Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 5. In addition, see Roman Serbyn, ed., *Raphael Lemkin: Soviet Genocide in Ukraine. Article in 28 Languages* (Kyiv: Maisternia Knyhy, 2009).

[84] Raphael Lemkin, *Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine* (1953), Source: Raphael Lemkin Papers, *The New York Public Library*, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation, Raphael Lemkin ZL-273. Reel 3. Published in L.Y. Luciuk (ed.), *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), <https://uccla.ca/SOVIET_GENOCIDE_IN_THE_UKRAINE.pdf>.

[85] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. 362.

[86] Gavin Jacobson, 'Red Famine by Anne Applebaum – enemies of the people', *Financial Times*, September 15, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/ffa161ae-97af-11e7-8c5c-c8d8fa6961bb>.

researchers also emphasize 'the immorality of the Soviet system, its reliance on murder, torture, intimidation, terror and genocide',[87] and view Ukraine's 1932-33 Famine as a case of genocide. Stéphane Courtois equates the "class genocide" of Communism with the "race genocide" of Nazism, and, categorizing both as "crimes against humanity", raises the question of the "complicity" with Communist crime of the legions of Western apologists for Stalin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, and indeed Pol Pot who, even when they "abandoned their idols of yesteryear, did so discretely and in silence'.[88] Consequently, if Lemkin's original term 'genocide' were not to be applied to one of the cases used for its formulation, that is, Ukraine's 1932-33 Famine, then it cannot be applied also to other cases classified as 'genocide', and should not be used in the domains of politics and law.

The peculiarities of the Irish and Ukrainian contexts

Despite differences between British and Russian methods of rule, both the British colonial and the Soviet communist systems made food their weapon,[89] which resulted in terrifying numbers of deaths. In the Irish case, the British policy of laissez-faire exacerbated the effects of the potato blight; and for Ukraine, the policy of industrialization, imposed by Moscow, became just as deadly. The British non-intervention in the country's economy and the Soviet state's complete control led to 'one of the most devastating humanitarian disasters of the nineteenth century'[90] and 'one of the most devastating episodes in the history of the twentieth century'[91] respectively, causing an unconceivable scale of destruction in their colonies. In Ireland,

> between 1845 and 1855 — the period that encompasses the crisis years of 1845 to 1847 and their immediate aftermath — the Irish population of almost 8.2 million shrank by a third. Starvation and disease killed 1.1 million; emigration claimed another 2 million. […] At the end of the famine, one out of every three people was gone…[92]

While the numbers of deaths due to An Gorta Mór are largely agreed upon by most researchers, the Holodomor death toll arouses much dissent. The most common death toll of Ukraine's famine victims is usually estimated at 7 million people. This number is mentioned in a report

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[87] Patricia Dillon, Frank C. Wykoff, *Creating Capitalism: Transitions and Growth in Post-Soviet Europe* (Cheltenham, UK · Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar), p. 16.

[88] Martin Malia, Foreword 'The Uses of Atrocity' to *The Black Book of Communism. Crimes, Terror, Repression* by Stéphane Courtois et al. (London, England; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. ix.

[89] I relate this point to the reflection 'Food is a weapon', expressed by Russian revolutionary and Soviet diplomat Maxim Litvinov, quoted by Dana G. Dalrymple in 'The Soviet Famine of 1932-1934; Some Further References', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Apr., 1965), pp. 471-474, p.250.

[90] Kinealy, 'Saving the Irish Poor', p. 1.

[91] Cover endorsement (front) in *Red Famine* (UK · USA · Canada · Ireland · Australia: Allen Lane, 2017).

[92] John Kelly, *The Graves are Walking* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 2.

from the German Embassy in Kharkiv on January 26, 1934, describing a critical situation in Ukraine in 1933.[93] The same figure is provided by Former German Ambassador to the USSR, Otto Schiller, in his book published in 1943.[94] John Kelly likewise indicates that 7 million perished in the early 1930s Ukrainian famine.[95] Yet, other figures are also given. American demographer and sociologist Oleh Wolowyna maintains that 'the number of Holodomor losses is most likely between 4 and 5 millions [*sic*]',[96] and that the 'upper estimate range of 6.8 – 7.0 millions [*sic*] Holodomor losses is an absolute maximum'.[97] According to Robert Conquest, the number of those who perished in the Ukrainian famine is 5 million, the Chief Commander of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) Vasyl Kuk provides the number of 5 to 7 million people dead, and Dmytro Solovey, author of the first Ukrainian study on the Holodomor published in 1954, estimates Ukraine's demographic losses between 4 to 5 million people.[98] Ukrainian leading Holodomor researcher, historian Stanislav Kulchytsky determines the total losses between 5.5 and 6 million people.[99] Noting that the number of victims of the famine 'has elicited as much debate as its causes', David R. Marples supposes that estimated famine losses vary from 3 to 10 million people.[100] Analyzing the history of famines in the twentieth century, Ó Gráda points out that estimates of famine mortality in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s are 'controversial', and confirms that scholars report different numbers of famine-induced deaths, 'from the 7 million claimed by Robert Conquest to between 4 million (Serguie Adamets 2002) and 5 to 6 million (R. W. Davis, Mark Harrison and Stephen G. Wheatcroft 1994; Davis and Wheatcroft 2004)'.[101] In their most recent analysis of Ukraine's demographics at the time of the Holodomor, Omelian Rudnytskyi et al estimate the number of total losses at 4.5 million.[102] Applebaum gives the number of 3.9 million Ukrainians who perished of hunger,[103] Askold Lozynskyj — between 7 and 10,[104] and Anna Bolubash conveniently systematizes variant

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[93] Denis Hetman and Ihor Yuhnovskiy, *The Holodomor 1932-33: Genocide against the Ukrainian People* (Kyiv, Ukrainian Institute of National Memory: Olena Teliha Publishers, 2008), p. 39.

[94] Андрій Козицький, *Геноцид та Політика Масового Винищення Цивільного Населення у XX ст.* (Львів: Літопис, 2012) — Andriy Kozytskyj, *Genocide and the Politics of Mass Extermination of Civilian Population in the XX century* (Lviv: Літопис, 2012), p. 160.

[95] Kelly, p. 2.

[96] Oleh Wolowyna, 'The Famine-Genocide of 1932-33: Estimation of Losses and Demographic Impact', pp.1-12, <http://ncua.inform-decisions.com/eng/files/Wolowyna_9-08.pdf>, p. 11.

[97] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[98] Kozytskyj, p.160.

[99] Hetman and Yuhnovskiy, p. 39.

[100] David R. Marples, 'Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (May, 2009), pp. 505-518, p. 515.

[101] Ó Gráda, 'Making Famine History', p. 19.

[102] Rudnytskyi, Omelian and Nataliia Levchuk, Oleh Wolowyna, Pavlo Shevchuk, Alla Kovbasiuk, 'Demography of a man-made human catastrophe: The case of massive famine in Ukraine 1932–1933', *Canadian Studies in Population* 42, no. 1–2 (2015), pp. 53–80, p. 53.

[103] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. xxiv.

[104] Askold S. Lozynskyj, 'The Case for Seven to Ten Million', *International Holodomor Committee (IHC) 75th Commemoration of the Ukrainian Genocide 1932-1933*, pp. 1-5.

estimates of the Holodomor losses, suggested by different researchers, in a table with numbers ranging from four to ten million people.[105] The discrepancies in death tolls result mainly from inaccuracies in Soviet statistical data, for instance, from the 'faked 1939 census',[106] as Conquest bluntly puts it, for the actual mortality rates were concealed by the Soviet government. Wolowyna explains that

> In the case of the Holodomor there were attempts by the Soviet government first to falsify the statistical information and then, when this proved to be impossible, to hide it from the world (especially the 1937 census).[107]

The concealment strategy, adopted by the Soviet government from the first days of the famine and which lasted decades after it, hindered the calculations of famine losses. Darlymple's remark on the secrecy of Ukraine's 1932-33 Famine highlights the treacherous nature of the Soviet regime, pointed out by Mirsky: 'The Soviet government not only has refused official recognition of its existence, but has not published any figures that might be used to calculate mortality.'[108] Given that the Holodomor and its outcomes were kept hidden from the public, and that the starving Ukrainians were prohibited to travel in search of food,[109] while at least some of the Irish poor had a chance to survive due to emigration,[110] the USSR appears to have surpassed its British counterpart in the ruthless treatment of its citizens. In this case, it can be suggested that Ireland's An Gorta Mór, referred to as 'a disaster without comparison in Europe',[111] is a fitting equivalent for comparison with Ukraine's Holodomor. Suffice it to mention a letter to the Soviet Union's General Secretary, Joseph Stalin, written by Mykola Reva, a collective farmer from the Ukrainian village of Hylivka, in the Poltava region. In his letter, Reva brings Stalin's attention to the suffering of the Ukrainian people and describes

> The dark reaction of the hungry year of 1933, when people ate bark, grass, and even their own children, when hundreds of thousands of people died of starvation, and all this

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[105] Anna Bolubash, 'The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 as an Instrument of Soviet National Policy', *League of Ukrainian Canadians*. *At the Forefront of Ukrainian Issues*: 'The Great Ukrainian Famine', <http://www.lucorg.com/index.php/id/198>.
[106] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 302.
[107] Wolowyna, p. 1.
[108] Darlymple, p. 259.
[109] 'Peasants were prevented from leaving their villages by the NKVD and a system of internal passports.' (*Ukrainian Famine - Library of Congress*, 'Revelations from the Russian Archives. Ukrainian Famine', <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/ukra.html>. Also, see the decree issued by the Soviet government: 'Travel Ban: Directive of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) and the USSR Council of Peoples' Commissars "On preventing mass flight of the rural population," January 23, 1933' in Hetman and Yuhnovskiy, p. 29. In addition, see chapter 'Borders' in Anne Applebaum's *Red Famine*, pp. 200-208.
[110] Mentioning emigration during An Gorta Mór, Gail Seekamp and Pierce Feiritear observe that the famine turned the 'stream' of 'into a flood'. See *The Irish Famine* (Dublin: Pixie Books, 2012), p. 37.
[111] Bruce Robbins quotes the editors of *New Left Review* in 'Telescopic philanthropy: professionalism and responsibility in Bleak House', published in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Bhabha, p. 213.

before the eyes of the communists, who drove their cars across our bodies and impudently praised life.…

… [T]he people were dying of hunger not because of 'the poor harvest' but because the state took their grain…[112]

It is particularly interesting to juxtapose Reva's letter with the aforementioned letter from the Quakers to British Prime Minister Russell.[113] While the Quakers continued giving aid to the Irish poor, Reva was charged with anti-Soviet propaganda and sentenced to six years imprisonment. Kowalski refers to 115 letters received by the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. Those addressed to Stalin 'were returned from Moscow to Ukraine with orders to punish the writers as enemies of the people'.[114] While those letters are individual acts of desperation, there were multiple attempts of resistance to Moscow rule. For decades, Soviet historians, propagandists and 'scholars' have underlined Ukraine's willingness to join the Soviet Union. However, the figures paint a different picture. Harvard University historian Serhii Plokhy notes the large number of protests in Soviet Ukraine at the beginning of the famine: 'By the spring of 1930, a wave of peasant uprisings engulfed the Ukrainian countryside. In March 1930 alone, the authorities registered more than 1,700 peasant revolts and protests.'[115] Ukrainian historian Andriy Kozytsky maintains that

'комуністична ідеологія довгий час не могла завоювати тривких позицій в українському селі' — 'for a long period of time, communist ideology could not secure a steady position in the Ukrainian village'.[116]

Reminding us that during 1927 and 1929 in Ukraine, 1,804 incidents were recorded, which were qualified by the authorities as 'terrorist acts', Kozytsky maintains that 'ще більше повстанський збройний рух активізувався на початку 1930 року — the armed rebel movement even intensified at the beginning of 1930.'[117] The Soviet authorities exerted all possible means to conceal the Ukrainians' resistance to Russian domination in the 1930s from public knowledge and eliminate their desire for their own statehood. Nadine Gordimer's

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[112] An excerpt of Reva's letter can be found in *The Holodomor Reader. A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine* (Edmonton-Toronto: Canadian Studies of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2012), ed. by Bohdan Klid and Alexander J. Motyl, pp. 187-8. Reva's original case file was discovered by the author of this research during her work in the archives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) in Poltava, in July 2016.

[113] See p. 13 in this chapter.

[114] Kowalski, *Hell on Earth: Brutality and Violence Under the Stalinist Regime*, p. 23.

[115] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine* (UK/ USA/ Canada: Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books, 2015), p. 249.

[116] Козицький, *Геноцид та політика масового винищення цивільного населення у XX столітті*, p. 106 [my translation].

[117] *Ibid.* [my translation].

reflection on Memmi's inability to see that the Soviet system was a greater harm compared to Western regimes underscores the depravity of the former:

> It is extraordinary that Memmi does not acknowledge that what was regarded as the worst of all dangers was not the reformist liberalism that "humanitarian romanticism" implies […] but the theory and tactics of Communism reaching the colonized.[118]

One of the most tragic and devastating events in Ireland's and Ukraine's histories, An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor, continue to initiate debates and offer new discoveries. Much material has yet to be assessed and evaluated, especially when, or perhaps if ever, the Soviet archives in Russia are open to the public. An important point to address in relation to the emergence of the two famines is how the destruction of such large groups of people, carried out with the authorities' full knowledge and, hence, their authorization, became possible in two European countries in relatively recent times. An investigation of the rhetoric of government policies in the contemporary British and Soviet discourses sheds light on the mechanisms facilitating ruthless treatment of the Irish and Ukrainian peasantry.

The Irish image

An examination of the political and ideological contexts, in which An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor occurred, shows that they were markedly influenced by particular perceptions and images. Kinealy highlights the widespread feeling, prevalent in the nineteenth-century British Empire towards the poor: 'In general, the poor were deemed to be masters of their own destiny, with poverty regarded as being a self-induced condition caused by laziness, improvidence and excessive reproduction', pointing out that it was expressed in Thomas Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), which provided 'an ideological prism' for a discussion of population growth and poverty in Great Britain.[119] Kinealy explains that Ireland's 'repeated appearance of potato blight after 1845' was viewed 'through a providentialist prism', and interpreted by many evangelicals 'as retribution for the Catholicism of the Irish poor'.[120] Her point that 'the draconian Poor Law of 1838 helped to reinforce the idea that the Irish poor were less deserving than the poor elsewhere'[121] indicates that this way of thinking was strengthened legislatively. Moreover, it was deepened and disseminated due to numerous negative reports in

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[118] Nadine Gordimer, 'Introduction' in Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 36.
[119] Kinealy, 'Saving the Irish Poor', p. 2.
[120] *Ibid*., p. 10.
[121] *Ibid*., p. 3.

the press, for example, in such 'influential newspapers' as the *Times* and *Punch*, which 'were suggesting that the news of suffering had been deliberately exaggerated.'[122]

Michael de Nie's study of the Irish image in the British press establishes a connection between images and the contemporary political agenda. It provides a clear picture that the press was used as a tool to exercise power by the ruling class. De Nie reflects that an exploration of the political and ideological context in which the government operated and formed its relief policies reveals that these were influenced by political, moral as well as economic considerations,[123] which strengthens the point that governments are often influenced by an image-based approach in their decision-making.

Importantly, at an early stage of An Gorta Mór, public opinion in Britain was not devoid of critical insights into the British dealing with the Irish situation, and a range of opinions within Britain was therefore noted. Some newspapers blamed the government, its policies and a 'long period of unwise and unjust rule',[124] while others refused to blame it. In the later stages of the famine, however, attitudes in the press underwent a change. De Nie reminds us that the Whig-Liberal British government adopted a '"moralist" view of the famine and Irish society' which reinforced the idea that the famine was a result of the flaws inherent in the Irish, and this outlook was promoted in key London newspapers, particularly in the *Times*.[125] De Nie explains that underneath all British public and official views of Ireland's famine, including discussions of political economy and 'divine providence', lay conceptions of prejudice — 'traditional hierarchical ideas about Irish and British identities based on racial, religious, and class contrasts', which bolstered the perception of British superiority and cemented a deep-rooted 'British ambivalence toward the Irish peasantry'.[126] De Nie convinces that these views and perceptions influenced the character of British relief during An Gorta Mór. To strengthen his argument, he presents copious excerpts from various British newspapers, such as the *Economist*, the *Morning Post*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Satirist*, the *Pictorial Times*, the *Kentish Gazette*, which provide highly unflattering characteristics of the Irish. In many cases, the British press depicted Irish distress as 'a direct act of God' and 'punishment for breaking God's natural moral law on earth,' with a particularly reproachful attitude towards the Irish expressed in the *Times*: the newspaper deemed the famine to have been 'an Irish responsibility in every way.'[127]

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[122] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[123] Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798–1882* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 85.

[124] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[125] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[126] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[127] *Ibid.*, p. 86-7.

A paragraph from the *Times*, published on September 1, 1846, exemplifies this discriminatory outlook:

> They have come amongst us, but they have not become of us. They have earned our money; but they have carried back neither our habits nor our sympathies, neither our love for cleanliness nor our love of comfort, neither our economy nor our prudence. Is this distinctive character incapable of subjugation or change?[128]

An abundance of similar portrayals, offered to readers of leading national newspapers, demonstrates the ways in which a socio-political discourse was constructed, and a societal thought-frame formed by the ruling class. This helped secure a cultural distance between the two peoples, legitimizing British superiority and, hence, British colonial rule. De Nie's observation that the Irish were depicted as 'the mirror opposite of the British'[129] highlights the dialectical relationship between the Self and the Other. Clarifying that 'the positive qualities […] were increasingly believed to be representative of the British nation as a whole, though these qualities may have had Anglo-Saxon or English origins',[130] de Nie describes the English auto-image in contemporary British discourse as follows:

> Anglo-Saxonism was essentially the belief that the "free-born Englishmen" possessed some natural and inheritable genius for political order, justice, efficiency, and commerce. These skills allowed Britain to become first a commercial and then an imperial world power, while other nations failed for lack of the traits that had led to Anglo-Saxon and British success.[131]

The impact of power on image formation is clear and unambiguous from this explanation, and it can be further corroborated by Menno Spiering's mention of 'the imperial consolidation of Britain's colonial power' in the nineteenth century, and his emphasis on 'the impact of imperialism on the English self-image'.[132]

Within a colonial context, the construction of Otherness is closely linked to the issue of power — Memmi reaffirms that it serves the colonizer to 'justify the colonial system'.[133] De Nie's clarification that the Irish were perceived as 'incomprehensible because they had failed to assimilate'[134] echoes Memmi's characterization of colonial oppression: 'Almost always, the colonialist also devotes himself to a systematic devaluation of the colonized.'[135] The suitability

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[128] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[129] *Ibid.*, p. 269.
[130] *Ibid.*, p. 22. De Nie notes that he prefers to use the term 'British' to 'English', explaining that in Britain, 'the contrast of national character in terms of Irish and British' was likely to be described 'as Celtic and Anglo-Saxon'.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[132] Menno Spiering, 'English' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 148.
[133] Memmi, p. 110.
[134] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, p. 90.
[135] Memmi, p. 110.

of Memmi's point to the British-Irish context can be gleaned from de Nie's surmise that 'in many periodicals Ireland's misery was presented as ultimately the product of its Celtic identity.[136] Its salvation could be found only in anglicization'.[137]

It must be borne in mind that the nature of British-Irish relations was complicated by divisions within Irish society. The uncertainty of the demarcation line between the Self and the Other is well-expressed by Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick in her 'Introduction' to *Castle Rackrent* by Maria Edgeworth. Mentioning the writer's feeling of 'political and social dislocation' during the rebellion of 1798, Kirkpatrick points out that Edgeworth was 'appalled by the brutality of her Protestant neighbours' and equally 'shocked by the behavior of those Irish Catholics she considered loyal'.[138] Kirkpatrick believes that multiple betrayals were made possible due to colonialism, which influenced the formation of national identity, had an impact on people's religious and political affiliation, and affected their values and behaviours. Making reference to Edgeworth's feelings, Kirkpatrick provides us with a telling example of identity ambiguity,[139] which highlights the lack of a clear demarcation between the Self and the Other.

On the one hand, Ireland's long-term colonization generated a response of resistance. British oppression made the majority of Irish people feel 'rejected because of their race, status, or ethnic origin',[140] which fuelled their defiance of British domination. The effect of oppressive rule on the consolidation of national feeling is stressed by Timothy J. White: 'The desire to overthrow the yoke of this British tyranny united the different elements of Irish society'.[141] On the other hand, at the crossroads of two cultures, religions and political alliances, there were also those who found themselves caught in the middle. They were perceived as the Other both by the Irish and the English. Edgeworth's account of a middle man in *Castle Rackrent*, for instance, is an example of literary representation of Otherness within the self-image:

> Middle men. — There was a class of men termed middle men in Ireland, who took large farms on long leases from gentlemen of landed property, and set the land again in small portions to the poor, as under tenants, at exorbitant rents. […]

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[136] De Nie discusses the qualities, assigned to the Irish Celt, and distinctions between Irish and British identities in his 'Introduction' to *The Eternal Paddy*, pp. 3-27.

[137] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, p. 86.

[138] Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick, 'Introduction' to *Castle Rackrent* by Maria Edgeworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. xxiii.

[139] This term is used by Kevin G. Corley and Dennis A. Gioia in 'Identity Ambiguity and Change in the Wake of a Corporate Spin-Off', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Jun., 2004), pp. 173-208, and Luciana Turchick Hakak, 'Strategies for the Resolution of Identity Ambiguity Following Situations of Subtractive Change', *The Journal of Applied Behaviour Science*, Vol. 51, Issue 1, pp. 129-144, March 1, 2015.

[140] Timothy J. White, 'The Impact of British Colonialism on Irish Catholicism and National Identity: Repression, Reemergence, and Divergence', *Études irlandaises* [Online], 35-1 | 2010, p. 4.

[141] *Ibid*.

> The characteristics of a middle man *were*, servility to his superiors, and tyrant towards his inferiors — The poor detested this race of beings.[142]

This negative characterization is corroborated by the view of middlemen as 'the most oppressive species of tyrant that ever lent assistance to the destruction of a country', and ones who are 'rapacious and relentless in the collection' of rent,[143] which reinforces their categorization as the Other in famine fiction. The middlemen's callousness parallels the cruelty of those Ukrainian Communist party activists who, obeying the orders of their Moscow superiors, took away all food stock from their starving countrymen at the height of the famine. They were 'motivated by hunger, fear and a decade of hateful and conspiratorial rhetoric'.[144] The mention of motivation indicates that identity is not a rigid, fixed construct, which is especially germane for an understanding of this state of being in the middle, the in-betweenness, conveyed by hybridization. Friedman's definition of hybridity also includes the notion of motivation: the scholar affirms that hybridity is 'like all acts of identity, a question of practice, the practice of attributing meaning' that 'can be understood only in terms of its social context and the way in which acts of identification are motivated.'[145] Revealing the 'fuzzy or porous boundaries' of 'extant reality',[146] defined by eight hundred years of 'a close and generally painful political involvement' with England,[147] mixed identity in Ireland developed from the interaction between the two opposing constructs, and formed a separate layer of contemporary Irish society — the Anglo-Irish middle-class community, whose backgrounds were often shaped by intermarriage between classes. This group's adoption of the language and religion of the dominant class, their cultural affiliation and political loyalty often stemmed from their wish to secure a better social position in society. Mary Kelly notes that mixed identities were 'Othered' and evoked negative feelings:

> In the Irish context one dominant narrative has been that which has painted the colonial community (the Anglo-Irish) as a class of alien Others who lived parasitically off Irish land and labour and were out-of-place in the Irish landscape both during colonialism and after it.[148]

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[142] Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*, p. 20.

[143] Artur Hutton quoted by Kirkpatrick, 'Introduction' to *Castle Rackrent*, p. xv.

[144] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. xxiv.

[145] Friedman, p. 85.

[146] Jonathan Friedman uses these terms explaining the process of hybridization and elite formation in 'Global Crises, The Struggle for Cultural Identity and Intellectual Porkbarrelling: Cosmopolitans versus Locals, Ethnics and Nationals in an Era of De-Hegemonisation' in *Debating Cultural Hybridity. Multicultural Identities and The Politics of Anti-Racism*, by Phina Werbner and Tariq Modoo, eds. (London & New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), p. 73.

[147] Leerssen, 'Introduction' to *Mere Irish and Fior-Gael*, p. 6.

[148] Mary Kelly, 'Writing the Colonial Past in Postcolonial Ireland: an Anglo-Irish Response', *Historical Geography*, *An Annual Journal of Research, Commentary and Reviews*, Volume 41 (2013).

In literary representations depicting the colonial period, however, the combination of Anglo-Irish characteristics has never been unambiguous. The examination of hybrid images in Mullen's and Macken's works reveals a difficulty in their categorization, for they have features of both the auto- and hetero-images and can be perceived from different standpoints. Also, in these novels, the characters' self-determination and sense of belonging is shown to reflect their individual choices. Generated by various circumstances and influenced by social, economic and political developments, these choices cannot be envisioned. Leerssen's indication of the importance of the presence of 'intermediate or hybrid groups'[149] for the development of a national self-image proves the impossibility of a clear-cut categorization of images.

It should be observed that while in *The Silent People* and *The Hungry Land* hybridity constitutes a noticeable aspect in the process of image construction, in *Maria* it is perhaps more relevant to consider the theme of disintegration, which occurs when the characters move from one group to another. In *Sweet Snow*, too, the theme of hybridity does not constitute a point for discussion. It is possible that the processes of hybridization and disintegration are conditioned by the length of the colonial period. It would be interesting to investigate whether the development of hybrid identity of the Irish image depended on the fact that the Irish land was under the domination of the English[150] for a significantly longer period of time prior to An Gorta Mór than Ukraine's territory under Russian/ Soviet rule before the Holodomor.[151] It may be the case that the prolonged conflation of two cultures, languages, religions, customs, and attitudes in Ireland led to a deeper enmeshment of features of the Self and the Other. Perhaps the process of Russification in Ukraine can be thought of in juxtaposition with Ireland's hybridization. It can be supposed, then, that the process of hybridization of Ukrainian identity was only starting to gain momentum in the 1930s due to the most rigid agenda of Russification,[152] and therefore, was not pronounced in the representations of the famine in fiction depicting that time in Ukraine's history. This point can be supported by Ivan Z. Holowinsky's explanation that even though the policy of Russification in Ukraine as a political process has its roots in the 17th century, the period from approximately the 1930s through the 1980s was the time of the most forceful Russification and political terror. Serhy Yekelchyk's mention of 'cultural hybrid' emerging 'late in the war and especially after 1945' also suggests the aptness of the view on the

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[149] More precisely, 'the Hiberno-Norman noblemen in the middle ages, the Old English in the Tudor period, the Anglo-Irish in the eighteenth century'; see Leerseen, 'Introduction' to *Mere Irish*, p. 13.

[150] English dominance in Ireland can be counted down to the twelfth century. See Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 6.

[151] It is believed that Russian domination in Ukraine started from the 1654 Pereyaslav agreement. See Serhii Plokhy, 'The Ghosts of Pereyaslav: Russo-Ukrainian Historical Debates in the Post-Soviet Era', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (May, 2001), pp. 489-505, p. 489.

[152] Ivan Z. Holowinsky, *Psychology in Ukraine: A Historical Perspective* (Lanham, Boulder, New York Toronto Plymouth, UK: University Press of America, Inc., 2008), p. 39.

process of hybridity in Ukraine within the Soviet context.[153] Equally important, Yekelchuk's explanation that the Moscow policy was either undermined or reinforced by 'republican bureaucrats and members of the intelligentsia themselves', and that more often than not, 'the intellectuals' dialogic responses were already infused with deference and servility'[154] demonstrates that by that time, Moscow succeeded in creating an obedient Ukraine.

In our analyses of the Irish and Ukrainian works of famine fiction, the issue of identity ambiguity is provided in a discussion of the fluidity of images. Significantly, in identifying the Other, these literary artefacts are clear in conveying the message that Otherness does not stem from national or religious criteria, or other cultural aspects. In all four novels, the main markers of Otherness are lack of humanity, cruelty and violence — all these are stimulated by unjust systems, which create a remorseless 'race of beings', as Edgeworth puts it. Friedman's thought that 'the discourse is expressive of a certain position and self-identity'[155] can be substantiated by the point that the discourse also shapes certain positions and influences self-identification processes.

Both language and visual images in British colonial discourse were attuned in conveying the idea of Irish inferiority. Acrimonious portrayals of the Irish were bolstered by equally offensive illustrations and cartoons.[156] Most of them, for example, 'The English Labourer's Burden' (17 February 1846), 'Young Ireland in Business for Himself' (1846), 'Union is Strength' (10 October 1848), 'The New Irish Still' (11 August 1848), 'A Physical Force Chartist Arming for the Fight' (26 August 1848), 'The British Lion and the Irish Monkey' (1 April 1848), 'The New St. Patrick' (7 April 1849), published in *Punch*, advanced an exceptionally biased position towards the Irish and Ireland's distress.[157] Analyzing the impact of the political economy on Ireland's Great Famine, Tadgh Foley presents more essentially anti-Irish drawings from *Punch*, such as, 'The Real Potato Blight of Ireland' (1845), 'Peel's Panacea for Ireland' (1849), 'Gog and Magog Giving Paddy a Lift Out of the Mire' (1849), or 'The Irish Ogre Fattening on the Finest Pisantry [*sic*]' (1843).[158] The date of publication of the last illustration indicates that in British discourse, negative perceptions of the Irish precede the famine. In Niamh O'Sullivan's *The Tombs of a Departed Race: Illustrations of Ireland's Great Hunger*, one can find more derogatory illustrations regarding the Irish image, which were published in

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[153] Serhy Yekelchyk, 'Diktat and Dialogue in Stalinist Culture: Staging Patriotic Historical Opera in Soviet Ukraine, 1936-1954', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Autumn, 2000), pp. 597-624, <https://www-jstor-org.dcu.idm.oclc.org/stable/2697347>, p. 601.

[154] *Ibid.*, p. 599.

[155] Holowinsky, p. 39.

[156] See Appendix for the illustrations mentioned on this page.

[157] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, pp. 92-136.

[158] Tadhg Foley, *Death by Discourse? Political Economy and the Great Irish Famine* (Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University Press, 2016), pp. 20-41.

different periodicals prior to An Gorta Mór: 'Irish Physiognomy' (*The Illustrated London News*, 1843), 'The Irish Frankenstein' (*Punch*, 1843) and 'Connaught Man' (*The Illustrated London News*, 1843),[159] and others. Discussing '"A Street Door" in Tarmons' (*Pictorial Times*, 1846), O'Sullivan observes that 'The more tragic (or radical) the Irish became, the more they were dehumanized illustratively.'[160] This notion parallels de Nie's indication of 'the sense of disgust and disaffection' that had been growing 'among the British people since shortly after the famine began', and of 'a general hardening of the public attitude towards their suffering neighbor'.[161] Verbal descriptions and visual images regarding the Irish in the British press constitute compelling evidence that the construction of Irish Otherness was a significant part of the contemporary British colonial discourse. It is not surprising that this process, conducted continuously and consistently at a national level, had an impact. De Nie draws attention to a change in the British perception of the Irish:

> While some papers took a hard look at British policy in the early years of famine, by the later years the majority of British newspapers were reinforcing traditional stereotypes of the Irish and promoting British chauvinism.[162]

The development of the negative image of the Irish — 'the stereotypical lazy, violent Irish peasant and rapacious, improvident landlord' that was 'present in every major debate of the period',[163] generated a feeling that they were not worthy of commiseration. The fact that for the better part of the century, *Punch* was 'the undisputed leading comic weekly' shows that the negative stereotypical representations of the Irish in the British press did not raise much objection, and, as de Nie puts it, were 'at the very least widely tolerated by readers'.[164] This general, unfavourable attitude could not but have impacted on government policies. De Nie believes that it added to the creation of 'an ideological and political climate in which the extensive relief measures necessary to prevent mass death were simply neither desirable nor possible'.[165] It emerges, therefore, that the Otherness of the Irish was a social construct, and a matter of discursive practice. The examination of the Ukrainian image shows that the way of attributing the meaning of Otherness takes different forms and manifestations depending on the socio-political context.

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[159] Niamh O'Sullivan, *The Tombs of a Departed Race: Illustrations of Ireland's Great Hunger* (Ireland's Great Hunger Museum, Hamden, Ct: Quinnipiac University Press, 2014), pp. 30-32.
[160] *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
[161] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, p. 126.
[162] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[163] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[164] De Nie, '"A Medley Mob of Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes": The British Press and Transatlantic Fenianism', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Apr., 2001), pp. 213-240, p. 228.
[165] De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy,* p. 143.

The Ukrainian Image

Echoing Edgeworth's criticism of 'the misuse of power in both systems — the feudal oppression of Catholic custom and the ruthless greed of Protestant law',[166] the discussion of the image of the Other in the context of Ukraine's Holodomor demonstrates that power can be abused in any system of government, and in any historical period. To begin with, a striking polarity between the two constructs — the Irish and Ukrainian images — must be highlighted. While the former were perceived as and labelled the Other because of their poverty and inferior social position, in the Soviet Ukraine, Otherness was initially applied to wealthy peasants. The polarity in the construction of the image of the Other attests to diametrical opposition between the two socio-political systems, proving that the 'othering' process is factitious and subjective, and can be manipulated for different purposes. At the same time, a discursive tactic for the identification of the Other in the USSR was analogous to the construction of Otherness of the Irish in the British Empire. In both contexts, newspapers played a huge role in moulding attitudes to the marginalized groups. In Britain, the press 'wielded considerable, perhaps unparalleled, authority in shaping popular understandings of the empire and its peoples',[167] and in the Soviet press, too, stereotypical constructs became a significant part of the state's political context. Moreover, in the Soviet case, these constructs, disseminated in the press, were coordinated by the authorities. In contrast to the large number of quite distinct standpoints on Ireland's famine, offered in the British newspapers and periodicals, the Soviet press conveyed the views established by the Kremlin[168] solely. Any dissent from the official line of the central power was unthinkable and fraught with consequences. In the early years of the new regime, newspaper articles were dotted with the phrases 'class enemies', 'enemies of the state', and 'enemies of the people'. Enemies were legion, yet, especially from the mid-1920s, the press became the vehicle for a consistent expression of negative ideas about peasants.[169] This social group in general was regarded by the Bolsheviks as harmful to the Soviet system, 'a purely reactionary class socially as well as politically'.[170] In the early 1990s, French historian Alain Besançon highlighted that representatives of the Communist movement traditionally demonstrated disdain and contempt

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[166] Kirkpatrick, p. xiii.

[167] Michael de Nie, '"Speed the Mahdi!" The Irish Press and Empire during the Sudan Conflict of 1883-1885', *Journal of British Studies,* Vol. 51, No. 4 (October 2012), pp. 883-909, p. 888.

[168] The name of a fortified complex in the centre of Moscow, the seat of the Soviet/ Russian government. It is commonly used to represent Soviet/ Russian authorities.

[169] Sheila Fitzpatrick mentions waves of terror in the USSR in *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 191.

[170] Vladimir Zenzinov explains the Bolsheviks' attitude towards the peasantry in 'The Bolshevik and the Peasant', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Oct., 1925), pp. 134-143, p. 135.

for the peasantry, reminiscent of Karl Marx's statements about the 'idiocy' of rural life.[171] Considering peasants to be potentially counter-revolutionary, Western European Marxists generally did not have a positive attitude towards them.[172] Suffice it to mention that the Russian Bolshevik party originated from a Marxist party, and was later transformed into the Communist party. Considering Soviet Russia as 'the leader of the world revolution',[173] 'the first great socialist power in the history of mankind' and 'the Mecca and Medina to which fly the thoughts of the subjugated and oppressed and from which they await their saviour',[174] and that 'would bring about the liberation of all peoples and nations',[175] the Bolsheviks perceived themselves as the major force capable of organizing 'the spread of revolution to the rest of Europe'.[176] The Bolsheviks' feeling of self-importance can be traced back to as early as 1898, when the 1st Congress of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), held in Moscow, proclaimed the emergence of a Marxist party in Russia in a manifesto:

> On its strong shoulders, the Russian working class must and will carry the work of winning political liberty. This is a necessary step, but only the first, toward accomplishing the great historical mission of the proletariat — the creation of a social structure in which there will be no place for the exploitation of man by man.[177]

The positive image of the 'true Bolshevik' was propelled by the contemporary Soviet press. Bolsheviks were expected to be 'faithful party members', and from the 1930s, 'totally loyal to Stalin, willing to follow the Soviet lead in any direction, they obeyed all orders they were given, if to do so served the cause.'[178] Igal Halfin explains how the Bolshevik self-image was used to the advantage of the system:

> When the Bolshevik notion of the self was fixed, it acquired the ability to shape social events: contemporaries were forced to present themselves using existing formulae. In the late 1930s, the blueprint of the Bolshevik self — now called the new Soviet Man — was turned into the blueprint according to which party membership was judged. Those who lacked sufficient proletarian enthusiasm or proper Stalinist consciousness were executed. Those who wanted to take advantage of the remote chance of defending

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[171] Козицький, *Геноцид та політика масового винищення цивільного населення у XX столітті*, p. 104 [my translation of Kozytsky's reference to Besançon].
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] Chris Gilley, 'Volodymyr Vynnychenko's Mission to Moscow and Kharkov', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (Jul., 2006), pp. 508-537, p. 520.
[174] Hryhorii Palamar quoted by Gilley, p. 520.
[175] Gilley, p. 520.
[176] *Ibid.*, p. 514.
[177] David Joravsky presents a quote from the materials from the 1st Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), held in March 1898 in Moscow, in 'Communism in Historical Perspective', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (Jun., 1994), pp. 837-857, p. 853.
[178] Applebaum refers to Catherine Epstein while describing those Communists who survived purges in the USSR as 'true fanatics' in *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-56* (UK: Penguin Books, 2013), p. 67.

themselves had to show that they met the official expectations of what a worker should be like.[179]

In the newly-emerged Soviet state, the peasantry was a universal category. In the era of the forced collectivization, peasants from other regions, Russia, Central Asia and Kazakhstan, became victims of the state's repressive methods, too. The Ukrainian peasantry was not ethnically conditioned as opposed to the British-Irish context, yet it was regarded as particularly problematic by Moscow due to its fervent opposition to Sovietization and collectivization.[180] The 1917-1921 resistance movement was part of the process of 'the formation of Ukraine's agrarian society elites, oriented towards market economy'.[181] Yaroslav Motenko explains:

> "Куркульство" виявилося активним і в значній мірі національно свідомим учасником селянського руху в Харківській губернії у 1917-1921 р. р. Не в останню чергу, завдяки його впертому опору, більшовики були змушені відмовитися від політики воєнного комунізму і розпочати поступове впровадження елементів нової економічної політики в краї у 1921 р. — in Kharkiv province, Ukrainian 'kurkuls' were by and large nationally conscious participants of the peasant movements in 1917-1921. Their firm resistance was one of the reasons why the Bolsheviks had to abandon the policy of war communism and introduce the gradual implementation of the elements of the New Economic Policy in 1921.[182]

Motenko's mention of the New Economic Policy indicates a difference between the NEP period and the later Stalinist period, and he argues that Soviet rule was not a static process. Bertrand M. Patenaude observes that in the USSR, 'harder and softer phases of the system alternated'.[183] Indeed, during the 1920 and 1930s such important policies as indigenization or *korenizatsia* ('taking roots'), with its Ukrainian version of *Ukrainization*[184] were launched. According to Marples, the NEP 'may have been a genuine manifestation of Bolsheviks beliefs or a temporary retreat from communism enforced by economic difficulties and the consequences of seven years

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[179] Igal Halfin, 'Between Instinct and Mind: The Bolshevik View of the Proletarian Self', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), pp. 34-40, p. 40.

[180] For more detail on the Kremlin's perception of 'the existence of a Ukrainian citizenry as a menace', see Stanislav V. Kulchytskyi, 'Holodomor in Ukraine 1932-33: An Interpretation of Facts', pp. 19-33 in *Holodomor and Gorta Mór: Histories, Memories and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland* (London · New York · Delhi: Anthem Press, 2014), ed. by Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen and Vincent Comerford, p. 29.

[181] Мотенко, Я.В., 'Куркульство як активний учасник селянського руху в Харківській губерніі (1917-1921 р.р.),<http://repository.kpi.kharkov.ua/bitstream/KhPI-Press/22669/3/2002_Motenko_Kurkulstvo_yak_aktyvnyi.pdf> — Motenko Y. V.,'Kurkul class as an active participant of peasant movement in Kharkiv province (1917-1921)', p. 3 [my translation from Ukrainian].

[182] *Ibid.* [my translation from Ukrainian].

[183] Bertrand M. Patenaude, 'Regional Perspectives on Human Rights: The USSR and Russia, Part One', *Standford SPICE, Freeman Spogli Insitute*, Fall 2012, <https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/regional_perspectives_on_human_rights_the_ussr_and_russia_part_one>.

[184] On *Ukrainization* see Zbigniew Wojnowski, 'The Soviet people: national and supranational identities in the USSR after 1945', *Nationalities Papers*, 43:1, pp. 1-7, p. 2. Also, Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, fourth edition (Toronto · Buffalo · London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 387-390.

of almost constant warfare'.[185] Marples also points out that the Ukrainization brought about cultural revival to Ukraine, the area that had been 'culturally, politically, and economically repressed under the tsarist regime.'[186] Orest Subtelny notes that during the 1920s Ukrainians 'profitted' from 'Soviet flexibility' in the way that Ukrainian self-confidence and aspirations 'experienced surprising resurgence', and reminds us that this period has come to be viewed by many as 'the golden age for Ukrainians under Soviet rule'.[187] Matthew D. Pauly analyzes the educational system in the 1920s in Ukraine and claims that Ukrainization 'was not a zero-sum project'.[188] David Marcus observes that 'in the fiercely independent Ukraine, *korenizatsiia* was a double-edged sword' explaining that it 'stilled rebellious pressures'on the one hand, and 'encouraged an already strong nationalist identity' on the other. [189] Renate Stark sees Ukrainization as a response to the Ukrainain resistance: 'In order to pacify those nationalist movements, Lenin introduced certain reforms for 'Ukrainization' of this region and the Kuban area in the North Caucasus (where the majority of the population was Ukrainian) that enabled a nationalist Ukrainian community spirit to grow.'[190] The NEP, the Ukrainization, the Cultural Upsurge,[191] and other phenomena of the pre-famine period are complex and large topics,[192] and can be topics of research in their own right. However, they are not points for discussion in this thesis. For our comparative analysis of the literary works, it is important to provide a general outline of the Stalinist period in Ukraine, for this stage in the history of the USSR is regarded as the most destructive for her people. The knowledge of its main features and the reasons for the 1932-33 state-organized famine helps understand why the Soviets/ Bolsheviks/ Russians are negatively perceived and portrayed in Ukrainian famine fiction. Some other historical events from Russian-Ukrainian relations are briefly mentioned in the imagological analyses, if they are

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[185] David R. Marples, *Stalinism in Ukraine in the 1940s* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1992), p. 3. Also, see Marples' points regarding the NEP in Ukraine on pp. 11, 13, 16-18, 110.

[186] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[187] Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, fourth edition (Toronto · Buffalo · London: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 380.

[188] Matthew D. Pauly, 'Tending to the "Native Word": Teachers and the Soviet Campaign for Ukrainian-Language Schooling, 1923–1930', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 37, No.3, 2009, pp. 251-276.

[189] David Marcus, 'Famine Crimes in International Law', *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (Apr., 2003), pp. 245-281, p. 252.

[190] Renate Stark, p. 24.

[191] Subtelny, pp. 394-400.

[192] Subtelny discusses 'War Communism and NEP', 'The Creation of the Soviet Union', 'Ukrainization', 'National Communism', 'The Cultural Upsurge in the 1920s' in chapter 20 'Soviet Ukraine: The Innovative 1920s'', pp. 380-399. In addition, see Слюсаренко А. Г., Гусєв, В. І., Дрожжин, В. П., Козицький, М. Ю. та інші, *Новітня Історія України 1900-2000* (Київ: Вища Школа, 2000), on the NEP in Ukraine see pp. 245-248, 253-256; on Ukrainization see pp. 270-273. In addition, on Ukrainization and The Great Terror, see Jarosław Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy 1772-1999. Narodziny Nowoczesnego Narodu* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2000), chapter 'Ukraina Radziecka w latach dwudziestych. Ukrainizacja', pp. 171-180 and 'Ukraina Radziecka w latach trzydziestych. Dekada Wielkiego Terroru', pp. 180-187.

referred to in the novels, to additionally clarify the development of a Ukrainian negative perception of Russia.

To return to the issue of peasant resistance, Serhii Plokhy reminds us that by the spring of 1930, the Ukrainian countryside was 'engulfed' by a wave of peasant uprisings: in March alone more than 1,700 revolts and protests were registered by the authorities.[193] To thwart this process, the Bolsheviks ensured that the 1932-33 Soviet campaign of collectivization, described by Conquest as 'the central, classical demonstration of what might be called ideological insanity in practice', was particularly ruthless and had a devastating outcome in Ukraine, where 'millions of human beings perished', and 'the agricultural economy was ruined.'[194] Discussing ethnic issues in the 1932-33 famine period in Ukraine, Marples highlights that '"Ukrainian *kulaks*" seemed to be offering more resistance to the Soviet authorities than their counterparts elsewhere.'[195] In Stalin's eyes, the Ukrainians were 'a threat to the Communist ideal',[196] and therefore, he resolved to bend them to submission. Stalin's determination to solve the Ukrainian problem using force is discernible, for instance, in a letter written in 1932 by one of the leading Soviet politicians, and Stalin's protégé, Vyacheslav Molotov, on confiscation of foodstuffs:

> If we get the grain, we can impose the Soviet rule. If we do not get the grain, the Soviet rule will die. And who got the grain now? The reactionary Ukrainian farmer and the Kuban Cossack. They will not give us grain willingly. It needs to be taken.[197]

Referring to 'the reactionary' farmer, the term *kulak*,[198] and its Ukrainian equivalent *kurkul*, simplified the identification of the Bolsheviks' Other. Altman notes that the term meant to target 'land-owning (and therefore supposedly rich) peasants who resisted […] collectivized farming and state ownership of land', and explains the idea behind the term: 'Lenin had dubbed them *kulaks*, deliberately choosing a name that people would associate with greed and cunning.'[199] According to Zenzinov, the contemptuous word 'kulaki', meaning 'fists', was 'the old name for the village usurer', and, when the Bolshevik came to power, stood for 'well-to-do peasants',[200] or 'wealthier peasants'.[201] Ukrainian historian Mykola Tymoshyk clarifies that the term 'kurkul' was not created by the Soviet authorities, but had been in use in Ukraine's territory long before the Soviet time. In the Chyhyryn and Chernihiv regions, it was a derisive term for

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[193] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe* (UK: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 2015), p. 249.
[194] Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, p. 93.
[195] Marples, 'Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine', p. 514.
[196] Altman, *Genocide: The Systematic Killing of People*, p. 50.
[197] Kowalski, *Hell on Earth: Brutality and Violence Under the Stalinist Regime*, p. 22.
[198] The word 'kulak' literally means 'fist' in the Russian and Ukrainian languages.
[199] Altman, p. 45.
[200] Zenzinov, p. 137.
[201] *Ibid.*, p. 138.

the Black Sea Cossacks, who settled there. In his *Dictionary of Ukrainian Language* (1909), Borys Hrinchenko provides its definition as used in the Lower Dnipro[202] area, devoid of the negative meaning: 'прийшла, захожа з іншої місцевості людина, яка поселилася на постійне місце проживання' — 'a stranger from a different locality, who settled and acquired a domicile'.[203] Motenko explains that the term 'kurkul' or 'kulak' was used by the farming population to label a person engaged in financial operations, occasionally resorting to wiles,[204] whereas the more negative connotation was introduced by the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Russian Revolution. Another detail about this term is particularly noteworthy. Many commentators highlight that the term 'kulak' has never been clearly determined, which generated its various interpretations. James Mace elucidates the outcome of this lack of a clear-cut meaning:

> The notion of "kulak" ("kurkul" in Ukrainian) was never precisely defined. The term originally meant village money-lender, but Lenin extended it to the entire upper stratum of the village so that any more or less successful peasant farmer was considered a kulak. Since virtually anyone who tills the soil would like to make a decent living at it, the peasants — particularly the so-called middle peasants whom the Bolsheviks talked so much about attracting to their side — were far more interested in becoming kulaks than in fighting them.[205]

Emphasizing the lack of the term's precise definition, R. Beerman notes that 'the deciding bodies were the local administrative and party authorities and village meetings.[206] Such a setup often led to a situation where personal issues determined if people were categorized as kulaks. In addition, Beerman reminds us of other expressions, used alongside 'kulak' to label the enemies of the Soviet state:

> The authorities used every means to stir up strong emotions and to isolate the wealthy peasant, alias kulak, from the rest of the community. The actions against the kulaks were officially described not as judicial or police measures against a noxious social phenomenon but as a heroic and necessary fight against the class enemy. Furthermore the class enemy was described as wicked and cunning, well versed in the use of all sorts of clandestine and open ruses in order to subvert the necessary course of history. In order to split the closely knit village community a social distance had to be created between

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[202] Dnipro (Dnieper in English) is Ukraine's longest river, and one of the major rivers in Europe.

[203] Микола Тимошик, 'Куркулі. За що радянська влада не любила працьовитих українських господарів', *Тиждень·иа*, <http://tyzhden.ua/History/152560> - Mykola Tymoshyk, 'Kurkuls. Why did not Soviet authorities like industrious Ukrainian Farmers?' [my translation from Ukrainian].

[204] Мотенко, p. 1 [my translation from Ukrainian].

[205] James E. Mace, 'The Komitety Nezamozhnykh Selyan and the Structure of Soviet Rule in the Ukrainian Countryside', 1920-1933, *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Oct., 1983), pp. 487-503, pp. 487-8.

[206] R. Beermann, 'Comment on "Who Was the Soviet Kulak?"', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Jan., 1967), pp. 371-375, p. 373.

the *batraki*,[207] *bednyaki*[208] and *serednyaki*[209] on the one hand and the kulaks or wealthy farmers on the other, by the use of powerful and emotionally highly coloured pejorative invectives such as *zlostny* (malicious) and *makhrovy* (which can be translated by 'dyed in the wool') or such predicates as 'enemy of the Soviet order', 'bloodsuckers', 'spiders', 'vampires', all of which were in common use by both higher and lower authorities.[210]

The above passage from Beerman's article explains how a labelling strategy is used for political purposes, revealing that the construction of the mechanisms of Otherness, which pitted groups of people against each other, was a conscious, intentional process. His further indication that the labels functioned as a 'highly charged political stimulant'[211] proves that the 'othering' process can be engineered and controlled by upper echelons of power to their advantage. Conquest rightly remarks that 'the necessary hatreds were inflamed',[212] as he discusses the Leninist and Marxist attitudes towards the peasantry, and the Bolsheviks' negative labeling of 'kulaks'. Speaking of the methods used by the Bolsheviks to subjugate the majority of the population, Applebaum brings attention to their 'virulent and angry forms of propaganda', and to the fact that the Holodomor 'was preceded by a decade of what we would now call 'polarizing "hate speech"'.[213] The researcher highlights that the Soviet ideological language

> justified the behavior of the men and women who facilitated the famine, the people who confiscated the food from starving families, the policemen who arrested and killed their fellow citizens. It also provided them with a sense of moral and political justification.[214]

From Applebaum's analysis of the tactics, used by the Bolsheviks to 'deepen divisions inside the villages', and her mention of the role of Alexander Shlikhter, a Bolshevik and a native of Poltava in Ukraine, in 'instigating a vicious class war',[215] it can be seen how leaders consolidate and polarize groups of people, and form their perceptions and attitudes.

The Soviet authorities aimed to create a nation of obedient citizens from one end of their huge empire to the other. This required elimination of those who opposed Soviet rule, and the lack of a precise definition of the enemy enabled the authorities to ascribe enmity to anyone

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[207] 'A landless peasant or a peasant labourer who works for a wage; the lowest class of peasant in tsarist Russia', *Alpha History. Russian Revolution Glossary A-L*, <http://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/russian-revolution-glossary-a-l/>.

[208] 'A peasant possessed of some land but still desperately poor; the second-lowest class of peasant in tsarist Russia', *ibid.*

[209] Mid-income peasants; 'middle peasants […] whose households in the 1920s had enough land to support their extended family (*dvor*) and sometimes even the hiring of one of the poorer *bednyaki* or landless *batraki* of the neighborhood in busy seasons.' – *Encyclopedia.com*.
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/serednyaki>.

[210] Beerman, p. 373.

[211] *Ibid.*

[212] Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, p. 94.

[213] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. 364.

[214] *Ibid.*, p. 365.

[215] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

who disagreed with their policies. This is well summarized by Patricia Marchak: 'The word *kurkul* in Ukrainian, or *kulak* in Russian, was defined by the USSR as a usurer or rich farmer, but it became a political term for anyone who opposed collectivization',[216] and elucidated by Ilya Zemtsov:

> The term *kulak class* has never been really defined. The semantic indeterminacy allowed the Communists, whenever they found it convenient, to broaden the scope of this concept at will. Thus, they included within it various categories of peasants: those who relied on hired labor (in 1918-20), well-off peasants who owned a nice house and some livestock (1920-28), and in the end, poor peasants, if they resisted collectivization, were conveniently referred to by the specially coined term *podkulachnik*, or *protokulak*.[217]

Explaining the meaning of *podkulachnik* as 'a person aiding the kulaks', Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn stresses its artificiality: 'a new word was needed for all these new victims as a class — and it was born.'[218] Motenko refers to Conquest's point that the image of 'kurkul' as an exploiter was an artifice developed by Boshevik propaganda, and V. F. Verstiuk's describing it "a political scarecrow", which was actively used by the Bolsheviks in order to explain the peasants' disaffection with the politics of the war communism.[219] Moreover, Conquest convinces that the term denotes 'almost totally imaginary class categorization being inflicted in the villages',[220] Applebaum notes that kulaks were 'the most important Bolshevik scapegoats',[221] and Norman M. Naimark observes that they were 'an invented group of opponents'.[222] As can be seen, the process of 'othering' within the Soviet reality is an acknowledged issue that has generated a great deal of interest, resulted in an impressive amount of research, and cannot be gainsaid by Soviet apologists. However, the overwhelming majority of the published materials on 'this inhuman aberration'[223] has been informative, and reflects its socio-political and ideological nuances, focusing on the evidence of its factuaity and magnitude, while the image of the Other *per se* has been under-researched, especially from a comparatist perspective, either in fiction or non-fiction sources. From our discussion of de Nie's investigation of the Irish image, it can be concluded that the specifics of the construction of its Otherness within the context of British-Irish relations have points of similarity with the shaping of Otherness regarding the Ukrainian image against the backdrop of Russian-Ukrainian

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[216] Patricia Marchak, *Reigns of Terror* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), p. 177.

[217] Ilya Zemtsov, *Chernenko: The Last Bolshevik: The Soviet Union on the Eve of Perestroika* (New Brunswick (USA) and Oxford (UK): Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. 4.

[218] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn quoted by Altman, p. 46.

[219] Motenko, p. 1 [my translation from Ukrainian].

[220] Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, p. 93.

[221] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. 36.

[222] Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 24.

[223] Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*, p. 93.

relationships. De Nie's view that in the British press, Irish 'images were constructed and interpreted using a combination of old stereotypes and contemporary anxieties'[224] has parallels with the shaping of images of the Ukrainian peasantry in the Soviet media, prompting an interconnection between socio-political events, issues of power and images. The ensuing chapters demonstrate how this interconnection is expressed in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions.

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[224] De Nie, 'Pigs, Paddies, Prams and Petticoats', p. 47.

Chapter II. *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life*

'Under Soviet rule, Ukraine, "the breadbasket of Europe," became a basket case.'[1]

Maria: A Chronicle of a Life, originally written in the Ukrainian language by Ukrainian author Ulas Samchuk shortly after the famine in 1934, is the first work of fiction about the Holodomor. The novel recounts the life story of a Ukrainian peasant girl Maria from the small village of Hnyloryby. Descriptions of the years of Maria's happy infancy and her parents' early death, her work as a servant at the age of nine and her first love and disappointments, Maria's loveless marriage to Hnat and the loss of her children, a divorce and a family life with her second husband Korniy and their children are presented against the backdrop of the 1930s political and social developments in Ukraine. It is this socio-political context which leads to the most tragic pages in the protagonist's life story, and to the nation's greatest trauma. An imagological approach to Samchuk's portrayal of the events preceding the famine, and those that occur during it, reveals transformations in the perception of the Russians between the 1860s and the 1930s in Ukraine. The presentation of the protagonist's life against the background of the disquieting times of the Russo-Japanese war, World War I, the 1917 Socialist revolution in Russia and finally, the 1932-33 famine in Ukraine, provides the context for these transformations. The literary form of a chronicle lends itself well to an imagological analysis, as establishing a link between an imagined Ukrainian village and the entire Ukraine, it allows for a better understanding of the contemporary discourse. This is what imagology as a discipline seeks to achieve, as Beller and Leerssen explain:

> Imagology [...] aims to understand a discourse rather than a society. Literary works unambiguously demonstrate that national characterizations are commonplace and hearsay rather than empirical observation or statements of fact. Our sources are subjective and rhetorically schematized.[2]

Beller and Leerssen's recommendation that 'subjectivity, rhetoric and schematic nature […] must be taken into account in the analysis',[3] will be adopted in this study. The examination of the nature of perceptions and stereotypes in this literary work will be carried out in conjunction with a critical analysis of the socio-political and cultural climate of the time, in which they

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[1] Paul Cipywnyk, 'Introduction' to *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life*, p. 20.
[2] Manfred Beller, 'Foreword' in *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters. A Critical Survey,* ed. by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007), p. xiii.
[3] *Ibid*.

emerge and operate. Constructed upon complex historical processes that influenced the relations between Russia and Ukraine at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the novel displays structural features that create 'suggestive images of national character',[4] revealing the strategy for the development of a positive Self and a negative Other. Therefore, effective and practical use of Neumann's framework, developed for a discussion of cultural and historical imagology, can be drawn upon. Integrating 'a social constructivist view of national character and national identities with discursive, rhetorical and cultural approaches to literature and media', Neumann structures the framework around four central premises, which she deems 'essential' to cultural and historical imagology: 1) the ability of national images not only to describe 'a pre-existing reality of national others' but 'actively construct that very reality'; 2) the reliance of 'culturally significant images' on 'trans- and intermedial strategies' in order to be perpetually reaffirmed; 3) the ability of national auto- and hetero-images to be 'variable forms', liable to change depending on specific contexts, in which they are created and disseminated; and, finally, 4) the ability of national images to fulfil 'diverse functions in specific historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts, functions which cannot be reduced to the construction of national identity'.[5] Using this framework, Neumann explores 'a spectrum of aesthetic techniques'[6] that narrative texts can fall back on in order to perpetuate persuasive images of the Self and the Other. The scholar furthermore specifies four distinct features within narrative texts that emphasize cultural differences between the Self and the Other: 1) the adoption of a specific stance common to a certain genre and deployment of a narrative voice appropriate to the content; 2) the deployment of semanticization of space; 3) a suitable choice of character constellation; 4) the right choice of plot. All four features can be identified in *Maria*.

First, in order to create a sorrowful atmosphere, the novel adopts a tragic stance, common to famine fiction works. The dedication 'to the mothers who died of hunger in Ukraine in 1932-33'[7] immediately alludes to a sensation of grief and forebodes catastrophe, which intensifies as the story unfolds due to the structure of the novel. Even though *Maria* is narrated from the perspective of a third-person narrator, the reader is encouraged to identify very strongly with its protagonist's stance. The novel consists of three books, each of them dealing with a particular stage of Maria's life. The first book, entitled 'A Book about the Birth of Maria', has fourteen enumerated chapters that narrate the story of Maria's birth, love, first marriage and loss

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[4] Birgit Neumann, 'Towards a Cultural and Historical Imagology. The rhetoric of national character in 18th-century British Literature', *European Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, December 2009, pp. 275–291, p. 276.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 277.
[7] Ulas Samchuk, *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* (Toronto: Language Lanterns Publications Inc., 2011), p. 5. Henceforth in this chapter, all page numbers in parentheses, placed after quotations and preceded by *Maria*, refer to this text.

of children; the second, 'A Book of Maria's Days', comprises eleven chapters that relate Maria's life with her second husband and presents events preceding the 1932-33 famine. The last book, 'A Book about Bread', contains twelve chapters that show the establishment of Soviet power in Ukraine, and portrays the horrors of the famine organized by the Bolsheviks. The knowledge of all the issues about the famine is thus held back from the reader until the very final part of the novel, and in this way, a greater emotional effect is produced. The presentation of the Bolsheviks' negative character traits and behaviour, underscored by their unimaginable cruelty, enables the reader to see and 'pass judgement on customs and manners'[8] that are presented as foreign to the Ukrainian national character.

Second, the semanticization of space is used to reinforce an explicit distinction between the Self and the Other, and shows Ukraine as a victim and Russia as her oppressor. Physical descriptions of the territory of Russia in the novel are scarce in comparison with depictions of Ukraine's fertile land, which at times are idealised, reminding us of Neumann's description of 'the idealised nationscape',[9] and are also an indication of Russia's deficiency. Space becomes a reflection of the Russian character, promulgating the image of the Russian idleness throughout the narrative: 'Russia is rich in people, but the expansive fields are covered in weeds from one to the other, and there is no one left to rescue the soil.' (*Maria*: 175) An understanding that instead of toiling on their own land, the Russians are involved in ravaging and oppressing Ukraine, leads to the notion of territorialisation to acquire an 'ideologically charged'[10] character. The scope of the negative perception of Russia is heightened by connecting her deficiency to a larger space, which is achieved by means of listing the names of such remote places in Russia as Manchuria, Vladivostok, Sakhalin, and Siberia. Adding 'a sense of the real' to the 'spatial opposition between "here" and "there"', the true geographical names deepen contrasts between prosperity and poverty, and portray cruelty versus vulnerability, highlighting thus the 'binary polarity'[11] between Ukraine and Russia. It indicates the vastness of the Russian Empire and, therefore, its power. It becomes clear that in *Maria*, Otherness is constructed mainly upon the vector of the human-created phenomena of cruelty and moral corruption, which, spreading from Russia, engulf Ukraine. Brief, yet clear-cut references to these negative traits, presented as characteristic of Russia, furnish the reader with an understanding that Russia is the orchestrator of Ukraine's tragedy, and that directives to plunder Ukraine are coming from 'there': 'And from the centre Russian commands were being issued one after another... [...] The telegraphs and telephones were shouting: "Give us grain, Ukraine! Grain!"' (*Maria*: 198).

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[8] Neumann, p. 281.
[9] *Ibid*., p. 282.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid*.

Oppression coming from 'the centre' is a sign of the corrupt nature of its delegates, who are sent to Ukraine to organize the appropriation of grain, but, in fact, expropriate everything:

> They seized that buckwheat, they took away everything, a scrap of bread, a fistful of millet, a bit of mouldy biscuit, ten potatoes. They took everything that they could find. Moscow was demanding "grain". (*Maria*: 199)

The semanticization of space emphasizes the magnitude of Russia's oppressive cruelty and places it in stark contrast with Ukraine's defencelessness, strengthening thus the contrast between the Self and the Other.

Third, contrasting the virtuous Ukrainian peasants with the ruthless Bolsheviks, strongly associated with the Russians, the constellation of the novel's characters 'is organized in terms of a rhetoric of "us" and "them", which serves to insistently dramatise cultural difference'.[12] The characters' conduct, languages, character traits, and their moral virtues and vices highlight an understanding of the Self/Other duality, deepening the perception of polarity between the Ukrainians and the Russians. Such character traits as love of the land, religiosity and diligence are engaged to emphasize the positivity of the auto-image; and they contrast with the corrupt nature of the hetero-image, constructed upon indolence, use of bad language and cruelty.

Fourth, the tragic plot of the novel allows for the construction of images of national Self and its Other 'with an intelligible pattern'.[13] National differences are presented as 'asymmetrical binary oppositions',[14] generating the reader's sympathy and empathy with the oppressed, and condemnation of the oppressor. The events of the novel constitute a valuable source for the discernment of mechanisms in the development of the negative perception of the Other within the context of Ukraine's national trauma. The passages describing the Ukrainians' suffering from the cruel deeds of the famine's perpetrators are strengthened by the portrayal of traumatic emotional and bodily sensations, associated with hunger. Their realization that the famine was planned generates a strong resentment towards Russia and the Russians.

The auto-image

The positive auto-image in *Maria* is constructed upon recurrent motifs that are closely entwined: the beauty of nature and life, love of the land, the importance of hard work and religion. The presentation of these themes is set in motion by the portrayal of motherhood as a central part of life, which is given a significant place in Book I. The opening chapter touches upon the

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[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid*, p. 283.
[14] Beller, 'Barbarian' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 266.

protagonist's birth and the first days of her life — the infant's joyful days, her awareness of the sky and the earth, and the feeling of 'hunger pangs' that are made known loudly to her mother (*Maria*: 25). The emotive scenes present the newborn girl looking for her mother's breasts, which she senses 'from afar' (*ibid*.), and the mother, helping her daughter by gently pressing the breasts to her little mouth — the 'two warm and tender pink petals' that 'avidly' clasp the breasts (*ibid*.). Looking at her baby with 'devout wonder and admiration' (*ibid*.), the countrywoman Oksana is overfilled with joy, as she breastfeeds her daughter:

> Oksana, sitting slightly bent over the swaddled Maria, held the tiny human being in her left hand and used her right hand to assist her breasts in doing their appointed task. Her head was tilted to the right, her eyes were lowered and shaded by long eyelashes, and her lips were closed in a soft and artless smile. (*Maria*: 25)

The evocative and idealised images of Maria's infancy encourage the reader's affection for the little girl and her mother, and ensure their deeper engagement with the characters' destiny from the outset. Portrayed with simplicity, purity and a mother's reverent adoration of her infant, the blissful picture of Oksana and little Maria is an epitome of maternal love that echoes a centuries-old tradition of glorification of motherhood. Bringing to mind da Vinci's *Madonna Litta*, or other visual images of Madonna and Child by great artists, it reinforces the importance and beauty of motherhood. The connection of such a beatific presentation of motherhood with the plural form 'mothers' in the novel's dedication kindles a reflection of the universal characteristic of mother — her devotion for her child, and activates it as an intrinsic quality of Ukrainian women's character, a quality that passes on from Oksana to Maria. This impression is validated later in the novel when Maria becomes a self-sacrificing and caring mother herself, for whom the entire world revolves around her child: 'a young, smiling mother with heavy-laden breasts, and what else did she need? She was happy and she laughed, and she felt like embracing the world' (*Maria*: 72). This representation of the divinity of motherhood considerably adds to the positive perception of the Ukrainian national character by forming 'an impressionistic "ideal type"' [15] suitable for stereotyping — in the novel's imagined representations, Ukrainian countrywomen are typically good mothers. In the final part of the novel, however, the image of an ideal mother that gives life to and feeds her baby is drastically destroyed in one of the most dramatic episodes about the famine events. Maria's daughter Nadiya chokes her little baby Christina, who is dying slowly and painfully from starvation. Maria describes what she finds in Nadiya's house:

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[15] Weber quoted by Leerssen, 'Type, Typicality' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 450.

> The little one ate the biscuit yesterday. There was bark in it. She was just an infant. It gave her cramps. [...] She choked the little one... She choked it. The child was suffering and so she choked it. And she looks so wild. Go to see her. She no longer wants to eat, she's swearing and laughing... (*Maria*: 232-3)

The tragic act puts an end to the baby's agony, but proves devastating for Nadiya, who loses her mind. Nevertheless, the episode does not produce an ambivalent perception of the image of the mother, for Nadiya kills Christina in order to alleviate her suffering; in fact, she kills her out of love. Instead, it heightens an understanding of the monstrosity of the Bolsheviks' rule and encourages the reader's condemnation of the famine perpetrators. The horror of Nadiya's tragedy is even more distressing for any reader who is familiar with documented accounts of the 1932-33 events by the famine survivors, and who knows that similar scenes actually took place during the Holodomor.

Another element that strengthens the image of ideal motherhood, and therefore, the positive perception of the auto-image, in the opening chapters of the novel, is the continuing motif of the beauty of nature and the Ukrainian countryside. It serves as a background against which the deep bond between mother and infant is being forged. Oksana is happy to see that her daughter is 'fully in step with the rhythm of life' (*Maria*: 27), and the mother's delight is reinforced by descriptions of the joyful moments of Maria's growth alongside natural processes enveloping the world:

> It was springtime; trees were blossoming, birds were calling loudly, the moist black soil was steaming. Days went by, and the sun rose every morning and set every evening. Blossoms dropped off, floated downwards like downy fluff, sank to the ground, and withered. Small green buds formed on branches, shook off all signs of their birth, grew larger, and hastened to mature. (*Maria*: 26)

Such a portrayal of the child's development implies the inseparability of life and the Ukrainian land and activates decidedly positive images, or 'inner pictures — pictures in the mind, or in the soul',[16] which entail a connection between a particular family and a larger community, creating in this way a bigger picture of the Ukrainian countrymen's contented life in their beautiful world. Therefore, the description of the end of the idyllic existence later in the novel is all the more disquieting for the reader. At a certain point, there is a subtle clue that may be interpreted as a threat to the idyll: Oksana's untroubled motherhood is shadowed by a worry that she might not have enough milk to feed her daughter. However, her fear is immediately dispelled, as the young mother realizes that her breasts are 'full, distended, tumescent' (*Maria*: 26) and can provide the infant with plenty of milk:

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[16] Beller, 'Perception, Image, Imagology' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 4.

> When the delicate petals of Maria's lips touched the berrylike nipples, streams of milk gushed forth and Maria drank with sheer delight and with the earnest determination typical of a true warrior fighting for his existence. Into her veins flowed fresh, invigorating particles of life that with incredible mastery built cells, divided them, and fashioned out of them the marvellous, exacting forms of creation's crowning glory. Great mysteries were transpiring and the first of them involved the opening of her eyes and the recognition of the sun's light. (*Maria*: 26)

The seemingly insignificant sign of the mother's worry about food has an important function. It links Maria's personal situation with a bigger context by highlighting the fact that nourishment is essential for life, and that for the infant, the source of sustenance is her mother's milk, and for peasants their land. The emphasis on the significance of food in the opening of *Maria* considerably intensifies the sense of trauma, when the novel reaches the final part entitled 'A Book about Bread', in which sorrowful pictures of famished people envelop Ukraine. The sharp contrast between the plenitude of food and its lack is another binary opposition produced to illustrate Ukraine's trauma and to underscore the depravity of the Other. The referred to 'forms of creation's crowning glory' and 'great mysteries', used in the previous quotation, prompt the Ukrainian peasants' divine attitude to the mystery of life, and can be related to the representation of their spirituality as another attribute of their national character. In this instance, Samchuk's depiction of the mother and child can be considered a simulacrum of the divine personages. This is indicated by the choice of the characters' names — the protagonist is named after Mary, the mother of God, and the name of the protagonist's daughter Nadiya literally means 'hope' in the Ukrainian language. Maria's mother's distinctly Ukrainian name — Oksana, allows for the connection of the national agency to the divine world, and thus elevates the national auto-image to an even greater extent. Concurrently, Maria's comparison to 'a true warrior' fighting for 'his existence' suggests a connection to a hard-working nature and diligence and ensures that these two features become attributed to the auto-image.

Indeed, religion plays a fundamental role in presenting the intrinsic goodness of the Ukrainian national character in *Maria*. The characters' adherence to religious customs underlies their work and leisure, guides them at times of joy and sorrow, and supports them at the moments of birth and death, and this is shown in many episodes in the novel. For instance, God is evoked by the villagers as they greet one another: 'Good evening, Uncle Martyn! May God help you!' (*Maria*: 40) The protagonist refers to the name of God when she returns home from toiling in the field: 'Praise God we're finally on our way' (*Maria*: 41). Even when Maria is tired, she will not rest at home, as 'she has a thousand matters to attend to, but she'll take care of them lickety-split', and then she will put on her 'newest rustling skirt', and will walk for 'a good hour' to the vesper service, and the next morning she will go to pray in the church again (*ibid.*).

While a greater proportion of attention is devoted to the protagonist, on many occasions, her religiosity indicates that it is also a trait of all villagers:

> At Easter churches are brilliantly lit. On the monastery bell tower, there are colourful lights. From evening until morning lamps on it glow brightly. The sky is also glowing, as are all the windows of the houses. In Maria's home, *as in all homes*, a small lamp is burning under the icons, the table is spread with a white tablecloth, and on it stands the food that has been prepared to be blessed. When the roosters crow for the second time, it is time to get up and go to the church that is ablaze with lights. (*Maria*: 126, my italics)

The religious beliefs are presented in a positive context and correlate with virtuousness, adding in this way to the favourable portrayal of the dwellers of Hnyloryby. The mention that all homes look the same at Easter, and that all the villagers follow the traditional rite allows a connection to be made with a larger group — the Ukrainian peasantry in general, with an implication of the harmony and goodness of the auto-image.

From the presentation of the characters' love of God emerges another element deployed for the creation of the positive self-image — their reverent attitude to the land. The following quotation shows that Maria is attuned to the land:

> The field could not be left unsown. The ploughed loamy soil was pleading for seeds. And tomorrow was the "seventh day created by our Lord God"... The land would not wait; it was a sin to make it wait. We must finish the sowing and then we'll be on our way to the vesper service... (*Maria*: 39)

The novel abounds with the characters' similar reverent feelings towards their source of life. The dwellers of Hnryloryby often pray and bless themselves before, during and after work. Even at the busiest time of the year — during the sowing season, they would stop work on hearing the church bell to bless themselves. Young Maria not only learns how to till the earth from the older farmer Martyn, to whom she is an apprentice, but also follows him in religious practices, which emphasizes that spiritual goodness and love of the land cannot be separated:

> Martyn scatters the white kernels, and Maria walks behind him and shoves the tiny seeds into the crumbly soil. The billowing of the tolling bell swoops down over them, and Martyn pauses, doffs his grimy cap, and blesses himself three times with a wide, sweeping motion. Maria also blesses herself... (*Maria*: 38)

It is interesting to observe that similar to the experience of motherhood that passes on from mother to daughter, young peasants' spiritual values are cultivated by the older generation. This illustrates religiosity as a fundamental and deep-rooted quality of the Ukrainian national character, on which the peasants' traditional ethos is being formed. It brings about a reflection on the peasant in general from a comparatist's perspective. In this instance, Spring's observation

of the popular image of the peasantry 'as spiritually at one with nature'[17] can be viewed as the universal pattern of identification for the peasants' auto-image, notwithstanding their national belonging. In the context of the 1932-33 developments in Ukraine, the accurately reproduced atmosphere of the Bolsheviks' aggressive rejection of sacred practices, such as 'marriage ceremony', 'birth celebrations' and 'death rites' (*Maria*: 167), along with their ruination of churches, carried out under the motto that 'religion was the opium of the people' (*Maria*: 166), acquires great realism, but also, juxtaposed to the Ukrainians' spirituality, serves to bring out the difference between the moral purity of the auto- and corruption of the hetero-images. It becomes clear, then, that the formulation of cultural values of the auto-image at the beginning of *Maria* serves as a basis for the identification and condemnation of the Other.

The hetero-image

A clear line of distinction between the auto- and hetero-images before the famine strikes is drawn by means of a set of three main negative features: cruelty, use of bad language and indolence. These are ascribed to the Russians, the Bolsheviks and the Komsomols[18] — names that are synonymous in the novel and applied to identify the Other. One of the episodes depicts the Bolsheviks appropriating the villagers' clover, cows and horses, while 'swearing lively' (*Maria*: 170), shouting and yelling in Russian (*Maria*: 171, 173); another passage discloses how 'expeditiously' they deal with those who tried to protest — 'line them up against the wall and shoot them' (*Maria*: 173). The protagonist, astounded by the barbaric behaviour of the Bolsheviks, exclaims trying to stop them: 'But after all, you're not Tartars!'[19] (*Maria*: 171) Similar remarks that illustrate the Bolsheviks' savagery are numerous, and they clearly show that in order to emphasize the depravity of the Other, the writer has recourse to a well-known cliché, as the perception of the Russians as uncivilized is one of the most widely circulated features ascribed to their national character, found both in works of fiction and nonfiction in Ukraine and in Western literature.

European perceptions about the cruelty of the Russians may have been influenced by the accounts of riots and uprisings written by foreign observers that appear in the Western press in the 16th and 17th centuries. Malte Griesse points to the abundance of such sources in the

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[17] Spring, 'Norwegians' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 215.

[18] Members of a youth organization controlled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or simply, by the Bolsheviks.

[19] 'A Turkic ethnic group subjugated by the Mongol Emire', which 'swept much of modern-day Ukraine and Russia' in the 12th and 14th centuries. See 'Glossary' in *Maria*, p. 246. The word 'Tartars', or 'Tatars' conveys a sense of Otherness.

'highly commercialized' German newspaper-system of the 17th century, with its 'whole network of correspondents',[20] and confirms that 'Muscovy had the reputation of a barbarian and savage country' since at least the 16th century due to its suppression of revolts, regarded as a sign of backwardness.[21] Griesse's mention of the country's original name, Muscovy, is noteworthy. The official introduction of the term 'Russia' during the formal proclamation of the Russian Empire in 1721 by the Russian Tsar Peter I is often indicated by Ukrainian commentators as a confirmation of Russia's aggressive and expansionist policy towards Ukraine, for the term derives from Ukraine's ancient name — 'Kyivan Rus'. Furthermore, analyzing accounts about Russia in the Western press, Griesse points to 'recurring patterns that allow for conclusions', and reflects that stereotypes and distortions 'are often even more revealing than descriptions that stick closely to historical facts'.[22] Griesse's observations, supplemented by Leerssen's clarification about image formation, illustrate that through the linking of social facts, in this case, the violent suppression of riots and uprisings, cruelty becomes one of the 'imputed collective psychologisms'[23] attributed to the nature of national character of the Russians, which has been successfully incorporated in accounts about the Russians and closely interweaved into descriptions of other features of their national character. In Western literature, one of the earliest known sources that present the Russians as brutish is perhaps Marquis de Custine's *Empire of the Czar* (1839), in which the civilized world — Europe — is contrasted to barbarous Russia. In the accepted view, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Russia was characterized by its lack of *kul'turnost'*, that is, 'inner cultivation in the sense of intellectual development, refinement of manners and moral development', due to its closer location to '"Asiatic" barbarism than to western-European civilization'.[24] It is possible that the impression of a Russian lack of culture was increased by the empire's expansionism, which invariably involved force and violence.

In *Maria*, the Bolsheviks' cruel conduct is accompanied by the use of Russian swear words, which instantly acquires metonymic value signifying the Russians. The fact that their prowess at swearing is not a novel phenomenon, and has been often highlighted in various sources, confirms that Samchuk continues to rely upon well-established topoi of 'Russianness' in order to create a literary image of Ukraine's enemy. Discussing the usage of *mat* — Russian

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[20] Malte Griesse, ed., *From Mutual Observation to Propaganda War. Premodern Revolts in Their Transnational Representations* (Bielefeld: Verlag, 2014), p. 207. As an example, Griesse mentions Georg Korb, a secretary at an imperial embassy to Moscow in 1688-89, who witnessed 'brutal massed repressions against the *strel'tsy* accused of large-scale rebellion', and whose diary was published in 1700 or 1701. (See p. 208).

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

[23] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 342.

[24] S. A. Smith, 'The Social Meanings of Swearing: Workers and Bad Language in Late Imperial and Early Soviet Russia', *Past & Present*, No. 160 (Aug., 1998), pp. 167-202, p. 178.

swear words, S. A. Smith points to a claim that the Russians swear 'more than other nationalities', even though there is a lack of 'systematic comparative work' to substantiate it.[25] He notes that the Russian has an 'extraordinarily fertile language of obscenity',[26] and explains that in nineteenth-century Russia, swearing was characteristically masculine speech, the language of 'power and assertion',[27] and functioned as a trope to convey the brutalization of the common people in fictional representations of the lower order. Smith refers to Dreizin and Priestly's view of Russian obscenity as 'an extended parody of standard language, one in which millions of Russians are more or less proficient, and one which in some cases is raised to the level of folk-art'.[28] Smith also mentions Malinowski's opinion that 'the incestuous type of swearing [...] is in Europe the speciality of the Slavonic nations, among whom the Russians take the lead'.[29] Smith's research shows that the Russians' propensity for the use of obscene language has had a long history; it was observed by many authors and circulated in various genres prior to the 1930s. In the process, it has acquired distinct properties of 'standardized images of others', or hetero-stereotypes. Literature's ability to textually codify stereotypes and use them for the pictorial or verbal representation of prejudice, as Beller puts it, is noticeable in *Maria*.[30]

At the same time, as Beller points to the need to realize that the formation of stereotypes is 'a mental and cognitive rather than a literary process',[31] it should be noted that Smith's article also adds to an understanding of social psychology of the time depicted in *Maria*. In this respect, Smith's indication that the use of *mat* by the Russian peasantry increased between 1905 and 1907 is important, as precisely this time of social and political unrest is chronicled in the novel. Therefore, the usage of *mat* is clearly not a contrived mechanism invented by the writer purely for the purposes of negative presentation of the Other, or simply transferred from other literary sources, but one of the elements that moulds the discourse of the 1930s, shapes people's behaviour, and influences their subjectivity. Russian swearing becomes a narrative schemata or narrative abbreviation that, according to Neumann, is 'deeply entrenched in specific cultural knowledge and embedded in a whole tradition of cultural narratives dealing with the nation in question'.[32] This illustrates once again that the image of the Other is constructed on established knowledge, on hetero-stereotypes, and that Samchuk's deployment of such well-recognized

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[25] *Ibid*., p. 171.
[26] *Ibid*., p. 167.
[27] *Ibid*., p. 176.
[28] Dreizin and Priestly quoted by Smith, p. 172, footnote 14.
[29] Malinowski quoted by Smith, p.169, footnote 6.
[30] Beller, 'Stereotype' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 429.
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] Neumann, p. 277.

schemata increases a sense of credibility of the events presented in the novel, and bolsters the negative perception of the Russian national character to a greater effect. This is in line with Neumann's explanation that 'the cultural power of national stereotypes is located not so much in themselves, but in the inter- and transmedial adaptations, i.e. in constant processes of translation, appropriation, renarration, and remediation'.[33]

Swearing and cruelty are inseparably linked throughout the novel. Their escalation represents the trajectory that shows that the increase of negativity towards the Russians is proportionate to their brutal behaviour. The villagers' initial response to cruelty is their negative labelling of the Bolsheviks. The attribution of derogatory terms towards the Other is revealed in the episodes dealing with the 1920-21 smaller-scale famine, when a pejorative term *katsapy*, attributed to the Russians, meaning 'billy goat'[34] in its plural form, emerges: 'You fiendish katsa-a-apy! You've befouled all of Russia, and now you're pushing your way into Ukraine!' (*Maria*: 175)

The otherness of the Bolsheviks, the Russians, the Komsomols

It is noteworthy that the interchangeability of the images of the Bolsheviks and the Komsomols with the image of the Russians arises from the fact that Bolshevik ideology is brought to Ukraine from Russia. John S. Reshetar explains:

> In the eyes of the non-Russians Bolshevism has always been regarded as something of a Russian phenomenon. The Communist Party, as well as its precursor, the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labor party, was controlled by Russians and by thoroughly Russified non-Russians. The Red Army which fought its way into the non-Russian territories of the defunct Empire was composed largely of Russians. In the post-revolutionary period the Communist Party was very weak among the non-Russians, although it found support among the Russian colonists in Ukraine, in Turkestan, and in the Caucasus.[35]

The popularity of Bolshevism in Russia and the increasing numbers of its supporters add to the fact that it becomes viewed as one of the ingrained imputations of the Russian national character. This shows that ideological discourse wields a weighty, at times the most important, influence on the perception of a given nationality. The ideological aspect is strengthened by a cultural aspect, for it is highlighted on numerous occasions that the Bolsheviks speak Russian. Because

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[33] *Ibid*., p. 278.

[34] Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in Donbas: A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 43.

[35] John S. Reshetar, Jr., 'National Deviation in the Soviet Union', *The American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Apr., 1953), pp. 162-174, p. 162.

the use of the Russian language is explicit in the descriptions of Bolshevik wrongdoing, it becomes a distinct feature of the cruel oppressors and acquires an ultimately negative connotation. For instance, when Maria and her son Lavrin work on the meadow turning over the clover with pitchforks, the men from 'a military camp on the move' start to swear 'vilely' (*Maria*: 170), take half of the clover swaths, trample the remaining into the ground, and yell in reply to Maria's heartrending cry: '"Shut up, granny! They shouted in Russian. "Lenin will pay you for everything!"' (*ibid.*) In this episode, the Bolshevik and the Russian form a single identity, and throughout the novel, there are many such examples that make it clear that 'the Bolsheviks' are synonymous with 'the Russians'. Maria's reflection about the incident in the field is important for our imagological analysis also because of her uncertainty about who the people are: 'They were our people! No. They were not our people. She had not seen any like these before.' (*ibid.*) Her hesitation evinces that at this stage, the Russians are not unfailingly defined as the Other, and that their language is not negatively entrenched as the language of the Other. It appears that the word 'Lenin' is more important in this quotation, as the novel's developments confirm that ideology bolsters the utter negativity of the image of the Other. From this moment on, the text makes it clear that Bolshevik ideology is to be blamed for Ukraine's tragedy, of which the reader is made aware once again by Maria's noting 'little scraps of red material that looked like wounds' (*ibid.*) on the chests of those, who took away the clover — those red pieces of fabric are a revolutionary symbol representing the Red Army and the Bolsheviks.

It can be seen that in the context of aggressive behaviour and cruelty of the Other, ideological specificity is more likely to engender their negative perception by the oppressed rather than cultural differences. However, cultural aspects, for instance, the use of the language, will be used as cementing elements. From this emerges an accessible pattern of the stereotypical image of the Other that can be simplified as follows: those who speak Russian are Bolsheviks, and they are cruel. A conclusion, then, can be made that if the Bolsheviks/ Russians were not brutally imposing their ideology, they would not have stirred up resentment and incurred negative stereotyping. This reminds us of Neumann's observation that national stereotypes 'are never fixed once and for all, but are something that has to be processed and circulated time and again'.[36] It can be extended by an understanding that the process of formation, circulation or alteration of stereotypes depends on power relations, ideological underpinning and political developments between the nations in question. This is tangible from the characters' perception

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[36] Neumann, p. 278.

of their countryman Korniy Pereputka, and from their judgements of the Japanese and the Chinese during the 1905 Russo-Japanese war, which are worth examining.

Transition from the auto- to hetero-image

The Ukrainian villager Korniy Pereputka can be thought of as a transitional character, as, after spending years in Russia, he acquires features of the Russian national character, and becomes perceived as the Other in his native village. However, his return to life among his fellow-countrymen leads to a change, and Korniy's conformity to the local manners, lifestyle and mindset helps him re-establish the positive self-image. A closer look at Korniy allows us to trace the trajectory of the development of Ukrainian perception of the Russians in the period prior to the tragic events of the famine.

Korniy is drawn to the Russian army, where he serves as a sailor for seven years. He returns from the army, when the village is struck by scarlet fever, and his Otherness is particularly pronounced against the background of the condition of the village, and the state of its inhabitants:

> In the autumn, people began dropping dead like flies. Every day they were driven off by the dozens to their place of eternal rest. Sorrow, despair, and weeping engulfed the village. Hungry dogs howled in the dark, freezing nights. They sensed that cruel death was going from yard to yard and indiscriminately mowing people down, both the young and the old. (*Maria*: 93-94)

Korniy Pereputka, by contrast, is portrayed as 'hale and hearty', 'robust, with a ruddy complexion, speaking Russian, and blowing his nose in a handkerchief' (*Maria*: 95). Korniy's healthy looks and his worldly-wise experience appear inapposite and trigger a deeper understanding of the distress that embraces Ukraine and its people at the time. One feature — his use of the Russian language, is particularly negatively perceived. For instance, Maria is bewildered by Korniy's addressing her in Russian, and she cannot utter a word in response: 'If only he would speak the way normal people speak, but God only knew what he was saying...' (*Maria*: 95) It is clear that the phrase 'normal people' appertains to the villagers, who use their native language. Yet, Korniy's portrayal cannot be viewed entirely negatively. His use of a handkerchief reflects an almost cultivated manner, something that distinguishes and elevates him over the villagers. Also, his remarkable experience when in Russia, emphasized by the adverb 'even', makes him stand out among his countrymen: 'He had even seen the Tsar and had shouted hurrah...' (*Maria*: 95) On the one hand, this prompts the reader to understand that Korniy is seen as a man of the world, whose arrival becomes an exciting event in the village;

on the other hand, the depiction of his exploits in Russia can be interpreted as ironically diminishing. Both perceptions are seen in the following quotation:

> All the neighbours rushed in to see him, and he just stood there — a strong oak tree among the skeletons crushed by typhus — and spouted off a lot of nonsense. A heavy cloud of tobacco smoke filled his low hut. (*Maria*: 95)

The contrast between the villagers and Korniy marks the initial phase of a distinction between the auto- and hetero-image. Maria's meaningful thoughts about the destitution that fills the village after a severe winter, just before Korniy's return, can be interpreted as illustrative of this process:

> There was no medical help of any kind. The authorities, whoever they were and wherever they were — beyond the white seas, beyond the tall mountains, beyond the dark forests — did not know and did not care to know what was happening with their innumerable nations. (*Maria*: 93)

It can be argued that authorities are generally perceived as distant by traditional peasant communities,[37] and hence the protagonist's allusion to the vast natural areas emphasizing the distance. However, Maria's mention of 'innumerable nations' suggests that she means a larger entity of power, the empire, behind Ukraine's desolation. This becomes clearer in the following parts of the novel that portray Maria's observation of the imposition of Soviet rule in the village, in which she mentions 'Kronshtadt', 'Aurora' (*Maria*: 160), 'Comrade Lenin', 'Comrade Trotsky' (*Maria*: 165), '*Siberia*' (Maria: 209), '*Pravda* from Moscow' (*Maria*: 210), and from her reference to Moscow throughout the novel — the terms that are decidedly linked with Russia, and criticizes the Ukrainan authority for the lack of strength to fight against it. To her own question 'And where was the Ukrainian authority?', she sarcastically remarks that 'they had been too afraid to disturb the democratic principles of the new authority' (*Maria*: 165). The association of Russia with distant authotities is furthermore pronounced when Maria's son Demko is drawn to serve in the Russian army.[38]

Korniy's appearance and his use of Russian are not the only elements deployed for the construction of his Otherness. His unprincipled treatment of Maria is juxtaposed to that of her first husband Hnat, who had always cared for Maria, treated her with respect, and worked hard to support her, and therefore, can be considered a favourable representative of the auto-image. When after an accident in the forest, Hnat has to spend months in hospital, away from home,

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[37] For exampele, Emilio Willems notes that the relationship between peasantry and city is viewed in dichotomizing terms, as 'two worlds so far apart from each other'. See Emilio Willems, 'Peasantry and City: Cultural Persistence and Change in Historical Perspective, a European Case', *American Anthropologist New Series*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Jun., 1970), pp. 528-544, p. 528.

[38] See 'The role of violemce in shaping negative perceptions', pp. 59-60 in this Chapter.

Korniy starts to visit Maria, and they embark on a love affair. The villagers are shocked by Korniy's wrongful treatment of Maria:

> The youth who worked at Maria's place told the curious women neighbours how Korniy would pull Maria down from her bed in the middle of the night, curse her with the most foul of the curses, and make her stand undressed near the threshold all night long, and she didn't even dare to cry loudly. (*Maria*: 96)

This example of Korniy's grievous behaviour greatly adds to the perception of his Otherness, as does the example of his threat to throw Maria out of the house, when she gets pregnant. In order to stay with Korniy, Maria decides to have an abortion. This puts Korniy, not her, in a more negative light because of her sorrowful experience in the past — Maria lost her first children, a son and a daughter, to diseases at an early age, and she also had a stillborn baby. Violence and swearing connect Korniy to the Russian national character even more, and become the most pronounced characteristic features of the Other further on in the novel, when the scenes of cruel acts carried out by the Bolsheviks are presented.

Another aspect that distinguishes Korniy from his fellow countrymen is his laziness. Juxtaposed to the Ukrainians' commitment to work, numerously referred to in the novel, it serves to emphasize his belonging to the Other. When Korniy returns from the military service, he is more interested in entertainment rather than toiling on the farm:

> Korniy did have a fine droning accordion, bell-bottom trousers, and a few shirts with sailor's collars. On Sundays and holidays he would put on his bell-bottoms, pick up his accordion, and run his fingers over the keys... (*Maria*: 103)

References to idleness hint at Korniy's identification with the neighbouring nation, for this feature is often mentioned in connection with the Russians. In his polemics on the concepts of 'Russianness', published in 1938, Russian academic and church historian Georgy Fedotov shares his views on whether the Russians are indolent or hard-working. Observing that it is not easy to 'generalize about the volitional nature' of the Russian, Fedotov admits that 'more often than not he appears lazy'.[39] His reflections are particularly interesting to consider, for they are close in time to the historical period of the novel. Fedotov notes that there are also Russians 'of dogged industry, performing their tasks with restrained but intense passion' and clarifies that 'such were to be found among kulaks, inventors, scientists, even administrators'.[40] Fedotov's insights on laziness and diligence conform to the belief that set ideas activate generalization and participate in image formation, and this is exactly how the attribution of characteristic traits to

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[39] G. P. Fedotov, 'The Russian', *Russian Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Jan., 1954, pp. 3-17, p. 7.
[40] *Ibid.*

the auto- and hetero-images functions in *Maria*. Diligence is ascribed to the Ukrainian peasants, and all three books abound with the descriptions of their toiling from dawn to sunset on their land. Even Fedotov's mention of the 'dogged industry' of *kulaks*[41] prompts images of hard-working Ukrainian peasants, who were assigned this label by the Bolsheviks during the 1930s collectivization. Nevertheless, there is a subtle suggestion in *Maria* that points to the universality of laziness. It can be easily missed in the novel, yet a careful reader will discern its message from the short statement about Korniy's sister: 'Korniy's lazy sister could not tolerate Maria's regime' (*Maria*: 105). By 'regime', she means Maria's passion for toiling on the land and her hard-working nature. The sister's characterization of the protagonist suggests that even those who are not affected by 'Russianness' can be lazy, too. In other words, laziness is not typically Russian. This detail signals that both positive and negative traits can be attributed to either of the national characters with the purpose to serve the desired effect. It also confirms that the writer consciously structures the image of the Other around well-established clichéd images.

Finally, Korniy's transformation reinforces a virtuous auto-image versus a corrupt hetero-image. Life in the Ukrainian village of Hnyloryby leads to Korniy's change, and he becomes 'more and more accustomed to working' (*Maria*: 105). His attitude to Maria undergoes a change, he treats her with respect and care, and entertainment gives way to toiling on the land: 'After some time, Korniy had to put aside his accordion. And he had to put away his bell-bottoms as well. He took off his wristwatch and hung it on the nail under the icons.' (*Maria*: 104) Korniy grows grain and fruit, builds a barn, buys cattle, provides for his family, and takes a farmer's delight in his achievements. His hands 'turned black, took on the highly-valued peasant roughness' (*ibid*.), and Maria rejoices at such a change, which is also welcomed by the entire community. One of the notable aspects of Korniy's change lies in the use of language — instead of Russian, he resumes speaking in Ukrainian:

> He also had to part with the Muscovite language. He kept only a single phrase: "Yes indeed, for example..." Everything else that he had said was now spoken in the way normal people speak. It sounded warmer to speak that way. (*Maria*: 104)

With Ukrainian defined here as the language most fitting for 'normal people', and with its characterization as 'warmer', Korniy's switch to the language of the Self marks his permanent departure from the vices of the Other, and his complete metamorphosis. The element of language confirms that cultural distinctions play a significant role in stereotypical constructs:

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[41] 'well-to-do peasants' or 'farmers', *Maria*, 'Glossary', p. 245.

His days as a freewheeling sailor are being forgotten and he is becoming a true human being. He slowly shakes off his vile cursing, begins using his native language, and this change restores him to the bosom of his family. (*Maria*: 108)

Korniy's acceptance of the norms of life in the village, the change in his manners and his transformation from a lazy sailor into 'an upstanding farmer' and 'a respected man in the community' (*Maria*: 141) is a triumph of the virtuous nature of the Self over the negative Other. The presentation of Korniy's susceptibility to the influence of the Other and his subsequent edification fulfil an important function in the novel. First of all, they allow us to identify characteristic traits of the Other, while strengthening the positive image of the Self. Secondly, they show how the stereotype formation mechanism works: from personal — relating to one character, it expands to the general — to a group of people, or a nation. Leerssen notes that images can be mobile and changeable and that changes 'are often driven by a complex combination of cultural taste and political circumstance'.[42] In the case of Korniy's edification, the reason for his change appears to be cultural adaptation, which enables him to harmonize with his people and enjoy all aspects of life in the countryside. Political circumstance of change will be presented while discussing another character, Maria and Korniy's son Lavrin, who affiliates himself with the Other.

The features introduced by the image of a young Korniy and presented as characteristic traits of the Russian national character serve to highlight the subsequent negative traits of the Bolsheviks, which are shown in the descriptions of the Bolsheviks' atrocities in times of revolutionary turmoil and during the Holodomor.

The role of violence in shaping negative perceptions

The novel's mention of the 1905 Russo-Japanese war, albeit a brief episode, provides a good example of negative perceptions and cruelty, and the formation of stereotypes in general. When Russia embarks on the military conflict with Japan, large numbers of Ukrainians are mobilized for the war. Even though the characters have no cultural knowledge of or contact with the Japanese at that time, their attitude towards the enemy is unambiguous: 'The cursed Japanese decided to attack the Russian Tsar.' (*Maria*: 119) Ukrainian perceptions of the Japanese, marked by labelling them as 'cursed', are the effect of political circumstances and not cultural distinction. Being part of the Russian empire, the Ukrainians have to fight on Russia's side, and

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[42] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 343.

there are several indications in the novel that Russia and Ukraine are regarded as one by the Ukrainians.[43] This is revealed in their sense of pride about Russia's vastness:

> I tell you, *our* Russia is huge! You could walk for a year, and not reach the end of it. You know, you have to travel by train for a whole month. And they say that the Japanese land is only as big as *our* province, but yet, may their mothers be slaughtered, they dared to... So *ours* will spit on them... (*Maria*: 122, my italics)

It can be seen that relations between Ukraine and Russia are not presented as black and white. The Ukrainians' perceived belonging to Russia, expressed by the personal pronoun 'ours', generates a hostile posture towards Russia's enemy. The attribution of aggressiveness to the Japanese, therefore, is not justified by any established knowledge of the nation but stems from the Ukrainians' compliance with the Russians. It is more than likely that Ukrainian perception of the Japanese as the 'evil ones' would not have occurred if Ukraine had not been involved in the war. What furthers, then, the emergence of negative stereotyping in this case, is the military aggression and not the cultural differences between the two peoples. It brings to mind Leerssen's thought that the direction of image formation processes 'is determined at least in part by power relations',[44] but in the context of the 1905 Russo-Japanese war, there is a reason to suggest that this process is governed solely by power relations. As we shall see in the next part of our analysis, the process of image formation is complex, and the Other is not always Russian.

While negativity towards the Japanese is established even before the Ukrainians encounter them, the participation in the armed conflict brings to the fore the unfavourable perception of another 'Other' — the Chinese, with whom the soldiers come into contact during the war. On his return from the front, Korniy tells his fellow countrymen about the war, and shares his impressions about his meeting the Chinese, 'who do not talk at all the way we talk, and who, to top it off, have braids like our women...' (*Maria*: 139) The villagers laugh at such an oddity: 'Well, they're something else again...Whoever heard of decent men taking on women's fashions? There's no need to say anything more...' (*Maria*: 139) The description of the exotic-looking Chinese is clearly less bellicose than the portrayal of the Japanese, whose characteristics do not improve with the end of the war and Russia's defeat: they are portrayed as 'small', 'but so aggressive' (*Maria*: 139). The examples of stereotypical attitudes towards the Japanese and the Chinese demonstrate how specific traits are predicated to the whole nation, but what also becomes clear from such a presentation of the Other, is that negative perception

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[43] Serhii Plokhy points out that 'both ethnic Ukrainians and Russians who received their elementary education prior to the First World War were inclined to consider themselves members of one pan-Russian nation – a vision that some of them maintained for the rest of their lives'. See Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine & Russia: Representations of the Past* (Toronto · Buffalo · London: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 10.

[44] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 343.

that results from aggression and cruelty generates a greater outrage and a larger level of hostility. The register used to characterize both the Japanese and Chinese is based on cultural and physical differences. However, the portrayal of the Japanese —— 'small but so aggressive' and 'evil', is distinctly harsher than the description of the Chinese. In fact, the Ukrainian perception of the Chinese appears more like innocuous banter rather than animosity. By contrast, the vehement wish 'may their mothers be slaughtered' in relation to the Japanese confirms that aggression stokes hatred. Hence, the presentation of the Ukrainians' stereotypical attitudes toward the Japanese and Chinese is another juxtaposition in the novel, which shows the possibility of the formation of stereotypes for various reasons and in different contexts. This supports Neumann's observation that national images can fulfil 'diverse functions in specific historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts.[45]

The imagological significance of the mention of the Russo-Japanese war lies in the novel's reflection of its contemporary social context, which demonstrates a lack of negativity towards the Russians in that period. Although the blame for the defeat in the war is directed at the Russian generals who 'aren't any good' and 'treacherous', and not only at the 'evil' and 'aggressive' Japanese (*Maria*: 139), the Russian Tsar is absolved from the responsibility — 'What can the Tsar do ... The Tsar can't keep watch over everyone...' (*Maria*: 139) This attitude can be more broadly interpreted as the Ukrainians' loyalty to the Tsar, and thus to the Russian Empire. Hence, the presentation of the 1905 Russo-Japanese war shows that at the beginning of the 1900s, the Russians are not perceived as Ukraine's Other. Instead, the Ukrainians' sense of belonging to the empire suggests that they identify its enemy as their own adversary.

Changes in the Ukrainian perceptions of Russia

The Russo-Japanese war is not the only military conflict referred to in *Maria*, which illustrates how behavioural patterns and features of national character, embedded in political projects and fuelled by ideological nuances, can produce persuasive stereotypes. Indeed, it is warfare which gauges the change in Ukrainian perceptions of Russia. Samchuk makes it clear that war is a senseless affair for Ukraine, whose people are mired in it, and that the Ukrainians' realization of this leads to a change in their attitude to Russia:

> All the villagers talked about nothing else but war. No one could picture either that war, or the Japanese and everything that they, the evil ones, had started. Manchuria,

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[45] Neumann, p. 276.

Vladivostok, Sakhalin — these words were often spoken but no one knew where these places were to be found. (*Maria*: 122)

The names of those far-flung places provide not just a picture of Russia's largeness, but are indicative also of her expansionist ambitions. This is the moment in the novel when pride in the Russian Empire's vastness gives way to serious reflection on its cost for Ukraine. When some years later Maria and Korniy's eldest son Demko becomes a recruit and has to go 'to fulfil his duty to the Tsar' (*Maria*: 145), criticism of the warlike nature of the empire comes to the fore.

Demko is assigned to the artillery and sent to the 'distant Caucasus' (*ibid.*), and the reference to a faraway place is not incidental. By indicating the remoteness of the territory, the fact that Russian military service is detrimental for Ukraine and its people is emphasized. It also implies the necessity of Russia's constant control of her vast territories, for which purposes Ukrainian recruits are used. However, even at this stage, compulsory military service and continuous participation in armed conflicts do not invoke negativity in Ukrainian perceptions of the Russians themselves, but rather show that the Ukrainians deplore Russia's expansive politics. Maria's thoughts after Demko's departure reflect the callousness of the Russian empire with greater clarity:

> The Tsar had no idea when and how our oldest son grew up. The Tsar only knows about my son when he needs him. [...] When the war comes, they'll drag the poor fellow away, and who knows if he'll ever come home. The Tsar doesn't know how many tears, how much grief, how much anxiety my son has cost me. No, the Tsar doesn't know that. And he doesn't need to know. Why would he need to? (*Maria*: 145)

The difference between the characters' perception of the Tsar who could not be blamed for mistakes in the 1905 war, referred to previously, and the Tsar who now is the reason for mothers' despair is apparent. The subsequent military campaigns mentioned in the novel belabour the awareness of Russia's constant involvement in warfare, and in this way, the characters' distrust towards its politics is justified. Ukrainian views on Russia's engagement in the war with Germany, and her participation in the First World War are presented in the emotionally expressive scenes of Maria's grief over 'multitudes of sons, husbands, and sweethearts' (*Maria*: 147), who are being sent to war. Her feelings of injustice about the mobilization signal that the Ukrainians are beginning to understand Russia's responsibility for the tribulation, into which Ukraine is drawn:

> Mothers! Why are you weeping, mothers? Are you feeling sorry for your sons?   Don't cry. There are millions of sons in Russia!
>
> Wives! Are you saying you can't get along without your husbands? That they'll perish? Don't worry... Russia will give you other husbands! (*Maria*: 147)

A strong connection between Maria's family and the nation in general is made in this passage, which also shows by means of bitter irony that Russia is emerging as a threat to Ukraine and her people. An effective rhetorical device, or, as Deupmann points out, 'a rhetoric technique of discrediting others' that persists 'in intercultural discursive practices of stereotyping the culturally different',[46] irony functions here in a persuasive manner, building up the reader's critical attitude towards Ukraine's Other, especially as more emphasis is given to Ukrainian soldiers' senseless deaths in distant places, away from their Motherland:

> They were not dying at home. They were dying somewhere far away, and that is where they were buried. And when that happened there was no one to comfort them and no one to weep for them. (*Maria*: 152)

It is repeatedly highlighted in *Maria* that the Ukrainians do not fight for their own land; and by connecting Maria's feelings with the plural form of the dedication 'to the mothers', the magnitude of sorrow is brought out. In order to show that the condemnation of Russia's role in Ukraine's tribulations is not expressed by Maria solely, the imagery of grief is portrayed further by the depiction of disillusionment of those who return home after the war. In this way, the scale of Ukraine's trauma is highlighted:

> Cripples returned, related what had happened, cursed, tore the medals for bravery from their chests and trampled them underfoot. The quiet, longsuffering people bristled, grew increasingly angry, spread their claws. In the quiescent, forgotten villages a ferocious beast was stirring. (*Maria*: 152)

The emergence of disaffection with the Russian Empire heralds changes, bringing to mind the Russian term *smuta* that probably conveys the atmosphere of the time best. Laqueur explains the meaning of the word as 'a time of troubles, the outcome of which cannot be predicted'.[47] For Russia, the 1917 Socialist revolution becomes precisely such a time, but it also brings a lot of distress and chaos to Ukraine. During this time, the Ukrainian perception of the Russians becomes distinctly hostile. An indication of the upcoming troubles in the novel is provided by the meeting in the church, where the priest delivers startling news on the Tsar's dismissal: 'Our All-Russian Tsar-Emperor, Mykola II, has renounced his throne.' (*Maria*: 152) The priest is corrected by a wounded Bolshevik officer with a bandage around his neck and a large fresh scar on his forehead (*Maria*: 152-153), who emphasizes that the Tsar was 'removed' from the throne, and had not renounced it (*Maria*: 153). The Bolshevik's looks and abrasive words mark a transition to an even more belligerent mood in *Maria*. This episode reflects the political context

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[46] Christoph Deupmann, 'Irony' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 350.
[47] Walter Laqueur, 'Russian Nationalism', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No.5 (Winter, 1992), pp. 103-116, p. 103.

of the events preceding the 1932-33 famine, reminding us of the use of force in the 1917 revolution, and of the forceful nature of Bolshevik rule. In connection with a highly symbolic place of the meeting — the church, which is a sort of moral scaffolding for the peasants that the Bolsheviks vehemently destroy in this period, it shows the interdependence and inter-penetration of politics and the process of image formation. The episode in the church can be viewed as the start of the countdown leading to the most gruesome events in the novel.

The sensation of *smuta* is also prompted by the villagers' perplexity at the officer's addressing them as 'comrades': 'The people shuddered. This word had never been heard before. No one said things like that.' (*Maria*: 153) Although seemingly insignificant, this detail contributes to the effect of pending danger, looming over the characters' actions, feelings and responses to the events, which show exactly how the Bolshevik leadership manipulates people using ideology, and manages to gain their support. The villagers' initial distrust and fear are quickly dispelled by the Bolsheviks' declaration that in their new republic, all the land will be given to peasants. Needless to say, there is no better strategy to induce the peasantry to support the revolution than promise them land, and as a result, the Ukrainians ardently welcome the new order:

> There was no counterrevolution. Everyone was for the revolution. Under villagers' thatched roofs all talk revolved around the land. The land, the land, the land. Give us the land! The one who gives the land to the peasants will gain the soul of the nation! (*Maria*: 153)

This euphoric mood is shattered by the Bolsheviks' violence and depredations in the village. The definitive separation of the Self and the Other can be seen in the first conflict between the peasants and the Bolsheviks that takes place at the church, when two Russian sailors smoke cigarettes 'during the divine service' (*Maria:* 154). It is reminiscent of Korniy's earlier behaviour on his return from Russia and invokes the perception of Otherness. The sailors' aggressiveness and offensive conduct, bolstered by the use of the Russian language and swearing, becomes a pattern, which from now on characterizes the Russians, the Bolsheviks, and the Komsomols, showing how certain behaviour is transmitted from a person or several persons to a larger group of people. This concurs with the traditional imagological paradigm of attribution of specific characteristics to different groups, societies and nations. In *Maria*, the characters' growing disappointment, anger, and ultimately hatred, are rendered by means of bitter irony: 'Let's have more! Let's burn everything that calls to mind peace, well-being. Revolution!' (*Maria*: 156) The violence of the Other leads to a point when the presence of the Russians is seen as utterly harmful for Ukraine:

> Field jackets, boots, and riding breeches. With a clattering sound the terrible Russian peasant is shaking up the planet like the Krakatoa volcano. The Ukrainian land resounds with the stumping of the revolutionary hordes. (*Maria*: 158)

Such elements as military clothing, warlike sounds, and the implication of barbarism, conveyed by the word 'hordes' and attributed to the Russians, emphasize the perception of their cruelty. Importantly, for the first time in *Maria*, the derogatory name for the Russian — *moskal*, is used. Maria's eldest son Lavrin asserts that 'the moskal was never our brother', and 'destroyed our kozak state...' (*Maria*: 161) This statement implies that there may have been some contentious issues in the past, which legitimize the perception of the Russians' Otherness. Perhaps in this instance, Ukrainian feelings about the 1654 Pereyaslav agreement, regarded by Ukraine as the starting point of Russian subjugation of their country can be considered, or the liquidation of the Zaporozhian Sich[48] by Russian empress Catherine II reflected upon. The following account of the phases of the Bolsheviks' violent behaviour in the process of imposition of Soviet rule in Ukraine constitutes an insightful explanation of the development of Otherness resulting from violence:

> Long before the collectivization began, the phenomenon of the violent expropriator — a man who brandished a gun, spouted slogans and demanded food — was familiar in Soviet Ukraine. Such men had appeared in 1918 and 1919, looking for grain to feed their armies. They had appeared again in 1920, when the Bolsheviks returned to power. They came back in 1928 and 1929, as a new wave of food shortages began. In the winter of 1932-3 they were back again... [49]

Recreating real events, *Maria* clearly registers all these phases in its textual microcosm and leaves no doubt that at the time of the 1917 socialist revolution, and in its aftermath, the Ukrainian negative perception of their neighbour gathers momentum. It becomes prevalent in the passages that describe their appearance, cursing, and laziness: 'The men were unshaven, their unbuttoned shorts were grimy like the earth, their ashen chests were thrust forwards, the sound of accordion was fading away in the fresh morning air...' (*Maria*: 170). The same themes were exploited at the beginning of the novel to distinguish between the positive auto- and negative hetero-images. Also, the mention of an accordion, a musical instrument that denoted an idle life with reference to Korniy on his return from the Russian army is used again to emphasize the Russians' perceived indolence.

One of the most telling uses of comparison between the auto- and hetero-images is the portrayal of the characters' attitude to animals. In order to reinforce the negative perception of

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[48] A fortified settlement on the islands beyond the rapids in the Dnieper River. See Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe*, p. 79.
[49] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, p. 226.

the Other, the novel deploys the techniques of personification and heroization. The protagonist observes in despair the hungry, unattended horses that had been used during World War I, and whom at the time of the Russian 1917 socialist revolution, the soldiers left roaming about 'on endless snowy fields' (*Maria*: 156). Maria casts her mind back to the animals' devoted service to people, and laments that every day draws them 'nearer to the terrible, inglorious end' (*Maria*: 156). A page-long expression of her sorrow over the destiny of 'the finest Kirghizian horses, reduced to living skeletons' (*ibid*.) reveals the attribution of human qualities to the animals. Addressing the horses, one of whom is given the Russian male name Vaska, Maria remarks, 'You think that you will find at least a small blade of straw' (*ibid*.), and 'you are keenly aware of the horrible injustice' (*Maria*: 157). Enhancing the reader's sympathy for the cruelly treated creatures, this case of anthropomorphism also strengthens the positive perception of the auto-image due to the kindness of the protagonist, conspicuous in this passage.

In addition, the concept of heroization and perhaps also martyrdom is conferred upon the horses dying on the fields, which is introduced by Maria's pronouncement: 'O placid, patient creatures that bear the scars of battle, you are superfluous now.' (*Maria*: 156) It is further expressed by an epitaph-like utterance, concluding the scene about the horses: 'It is the unknown heroes of the Great War that are lying there in their eternal sleep.' (*Maria*: 157) The presentation of the state of the horses reveals a strong link between war, cruelty and hunger. Importantly, the plight of the horses is symbolic of the destiny of people. Shortly after the passage, in which Maria pities the animals, the reader finds out about Demko's death, and the connection between horses and people is not incidental. The emotionally charged images of the animals buried under mounds of snow trigger the reader's pity, and lead to a situation when the grief for the tortured, starving and eventually dying people is magnified. In this way, the techniques of heroization and personification of the horses strengthen the negative perception of the Other and serve to greatly intensify the expression of Ukraine's trauma of the famine.

In the passage on the horses, special attention should be given to a certain detail. The text describes that when the horses try to draw near 'human habitations', people become 'infuriated' by their 'intrusive search for food' and start to 'rain blows' on the horses' 'protruding ribs' (*Maria*: 157). This scene provides an indication that some representatives of the auto-image can also act in an undignified manner. However, the villagers' treatment of the horses is motivated by hunger and can be explained by the impossibility of feeding the poor animals. The reader further learns that before the 1917 revolution, 'a bearded Tambovets' (*ibid*.), 'a man from the Tambov district of Russia' (*Maria*: 246), used to take good care of Vaska. The Tambovets fed the horse well, and 'curried him with a currycomb and a brush', yet, he 'abandoned everything, for he heard the call of the revolution' (*Maria*: 157) — this detail

demonstrates with great clarity that war and political unrest can unleash people's immoral behaviour despite their belonging to either side of the conflict.

The knowledge about the Tambovets triggers ambivalent feelings in relation to the hetero-image. On the one hand, the Russian clearly liked the horse and treated him well, which refines the perception of his Otherness. Yet, on the other hand, the fact that he abandoned Vaska can also geneate a damning judgement of his deed. These two attitudes towards the Tambovets demonstrate that the construction of the auto- and hetero-images is complex, and their interpretation can be ambiguous. The story of the Tambovets and Vaska and the local dwellers' treatment of the horses correspond to Leerssen's explanation of the phenomenon of an accumulation of counter-images, or layering. Leerssen notes that images may include 'a compound layering of different, contradictory counter-images, with (in any given textual expression) some aspects activated and dominant, but the remaining counterparts all latently, tacitly, subliminally present'.[50] Nevertheless, the novel makes sure to emphasize the positivity of the auto-image, which is achieved by means of the presentation of Korniy's treatment of his dog Sirko, particularly in their final hours together before they die:

> "Come, my good dog! We'll go together. We'll go out into the world, we'll fall down somewhere, we'll hug one another and die together..."
>
> Korniy hobbled straight into the field, and the dog trailed after him with a lowered head and a drooping tail.
> They never came back. (*Maria*: 235)

The most revealing examples of kindness are ascribed to the representatives of the auto-image, the main characters Maria and Korniy, suggesting that this quality is by and large inherent in the Ukrainian national character.

The portrayals of the Bolsheviks and Russians demonstrate that Ukrainian perception of their neighbour is unfavourable even before the famine. The novel's ensuing account of political and historical background shows a considerable increase of unconcealed resentment during a wave of starvation in the years of 1920-21, when a requisition for 'leftovers' and 'surpluses' for the Red frontlines takes place (*Maria*: 174) and reaches the highest level of enmity during the tragic year of 1932-33. Clearly, combining the actual behaviour of the Bolsheviks, with clichéd traits ascribed to the Russian national character, the process of image formation in *Maria* takes the form of 'linking social facts and imputed collective psychologisms'.[51] In this way, portrayals

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[50] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, pp. 343-344.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 342.

of Bolshevik cruelty interwoven with Russian cultural peculiarities produce an upsurge in negative stereotyping during the Holodomor, which is reproduced in great detail in *Maria*.

An important element that predetermines the negative connotation of the words 'Bolshevik' and 'Russian', making them 'definitively fixed in their role'[52] of cruel brutes and barbarians, is the mention of torture. The aforementioned cruel treatment of horses, doomed to death from starvation after 1917 that can be thought of as a form of torture, is extended by the practice of torture of people. In the text, there are several references to acts of torture committed by the Bolsheviks. It is noticeable that the degree of cruelty intensifies closer to the famine period. At the beginning of the establishment of the Soviet power in Hnyloryby, the novel describes the Komsolmols' brutal behaviour, when they play a 'joke' on the old priest:

> oh, how much fun they all had when they harnessed old Fr. Spyrydon to a plough and ploughed with him "as if he were a horse!" Ha-ha-ha! No, that old priest really amused them. He fell down and could not get to his feet again, and so they pulled him "by his mane, by his mane", and they roared with laughter as if they were devils. (*Maria*: 189)

Because the 'joke' is presented in mock humour, it achieves the reverse effect, and the young people's actions can be identified as torture. The moral transgression of the Bolshevik followers, whom the narrator describes as 'animals-hyenas' (*ibid.*), looks even more reprehensible due to the knowledge of their parents' religiosity, provided below the 'joke' in the text.

During the grain collection, tortures are severe. When the Bolsheviks pillage villagers' houses and yards in search of grain, and indeed all kinds of edible products, some peasants hide them in order to survive. Then, 'they' — this is the word most often used to define the Other, or the Bolsheviks, resort to torture to extract information about the whereabouts of the hidden grain:

> For ten days they burned the subkurkul Petro Kukurika on an iron plate heated with gas, and kept asking him: "Where did you hide the grain?" He wouldn't tell them. He was toppling over like a mown stalk but he remained as silent as a stone being split by a hammer. [...] He remained silent like one who is cursed, and he didn't even peep when they mercilessly broke his bones. And so he was sentenced to ten years for his stubbornness. (*Maria*: 196)

The senselessness of torture can be seen from the questions Petro is asked. This is especially clear to the reader who has knowledge of the context of the Soviet collectivization. Petro does not utter a word, as he may not have any grain left; yet, if he had hidden some, his confession would mean starvation for his family, and therefore, he must remain silent. Also, Petro may not be in a position to provide his torturers with an answer to the question about who asserted

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[52] Beller, 'Barbarian' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 267.

influence on him to resist joining the collective farm, or 'the commune', as there may have been none. Perhaps, it was his spontaneous decision and he acted like millions of other peasants, who did not wish to part with their property, land and cattle, and whose opposition to collectivization was widespread in Ukraine in that period. Another scene of torture points to the fact that this degrading practice is widespread in the Soviet state:

> They took him away, to the centre, twisted and tortured him every which way. Karpo endured everything, he no longer felt pain, he had become wooden, he no longer shouted or groaned, he was growing stiff.
> They took one after another in that way, they took everyone, they did not bypass anyone. (*Maria*: 199)

The quotation makes it clear that violence and torture are sanctioned by the Soviet authorities. Fittingly, many works of fiction and various documented accounts of Bolshevik rule have amassed a large corpus of evidence showing that torture was a regular part of life in the Soviet Union, and this makes the boundary between representation and reality blurred, making events described in *Maria* credible.

Because the tortured villagers say nothing, the reader may consider that they truly had hidden nothing. In this instance, the unpredictability of people's reaction to torture mentioned by Victoria Emma Pagán comes to mind. In her discussion of torture in *Seneka Controversiae 2.5*, Pagán notes that some slaves 'would say anything, even if it were untrue, to stop the torture. Others would maintain obdurate silence in the face of cruelty, even to the point of death'.[53] Despite the temporal distance between the time examined by Pagán and one portrayed in *Maria*, there has been very little change in such 'morally reprehensible'[54] deeds. Moreover, Petro's and Karpo's silence can be interpreted as a manifestation of their inner strength, adding thus to a positive picture of the Ukrainian national character. The presentation of torture calls into question the Bolshevik policy of the extraction of surplus grain from well-off peasants, the so-called 'kulaks' in Russian, or 'kurkuls' in Ukrainian, which was declared by the Bolsheviks at the beginning of the collectivization programme, and proves that it is in opposition to their practice. In fact, any peasant, without discrimination, could be plundered of any means to survive. The emergence of the term 'subkurkul',[55] or 'podkulachnik',[56] shows that even on a semantic level a group of peasants eligible for prosecution is enlarged. This strengthens the idea that torture is not used to merely ensure sizeable grain collections for the Soviet state, but also

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[53] Victoria Emma Pagán, 'Teaching Torture in Seneca Controversiae 2.5', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 103, No.2 (Dec. - Jan., 2007/2008), pp. 165-182, p. 169.
[54] Pagán, p. 166.
[55] Robert Conquest discusses the term in *The Harvest of Sorrow* (London: Pimlico, 2002), p. 119.
[56] See Applebaum's explanation of the term in *Red Famine*, p. 125.

to break the peasants' resistance to the regime by infusing fear in them. Then, the primary meaning of the term 'torture' as 'the infliction of excruciating pain, as practised by cruel tyrants, brigands, etc in hatred or revenge, or as a means of extortion, etc.',[57] does not provide a sufficient understanding of its role in the 1930s Soviet Ukraine. David Hope elaborates on what torture can be, and his extended description fits well within the context of the establishment of Soviet power. Hope explains that torture 'may be an end in itself, with no purpose other than to inflict pain on the victim and satisfy the desires of the torturer. Or it may be used as an instrument of coercion, to intimidate, on a large scale', and further adds that 'People can be controlled by fear, and torture is a means of instilling fear'.[58] A similar view can be drawn from Christopher J. Einolf's commentary on the motives of the torturer, among which he believes several are commonplace: 'These include gathering information, forcing confessions, asserting social control through the spread of terror, and punishing people who are considered enemies of the state'.[59] Einolf's mention of 'enemies of the state' strikingly reminds us of the Soviet labelling its opponents 'an enemy of the people',[60] the extensive use of which led to death or imprisonment of millions of Soviet citizens.

The representation of torture in *Maria* points to Bolsheviks' behaviour at its most savage, emphasizing their moral corruption and reinforcing empathy towards the besieged villagers. Bolshevik rule is viewed as the most detrimental, and this is reiterated by Danylo Knyaz, one of the villagers, who experienced Soviet torture methods during the collectivization:

> I, my good people, have even read some history. Things happened. Many things happened. But our country has never known such barbaric behaviour, and perhaps it will never experience it again. (*Maria*: 199)

The character's words are ambivalent. One cannot be sure, whether Knyaz thinks that Ukraine will never have to face times as bad as these because he believes in a better future for Ukraine, or whether he reckons Bolshevism to be the end of Ukraine. It is certain that the representation of torture contributes to an ultimately negative perception of the Bolsheviks and their rule.

The role of ideology

The examination of the auto- and hetero-images within the socio-political developments that shape people's perceptions and form stereotypical images leads to a growing realization that the

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[57] David Hope, 'Torture', *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Oct., 2004), pp. 807-832, p. 808.

[58] *Ibid*.

[59] Christopher J. Einolf, 'The Fall and Rise of Torture: A Comparative and Historical Analysis', *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Jun., 2007), pp. 101-121, p. 104.

[60] Petro G. Grigorenko, *Memoirs*, translated by Thomas P. Whitney (London: Harvill Press, 1983), p. 103.

key factor that negatively reinforces the image of the lazy and ill-mannered Russian is the Bolsheviks' violence. In Western imagination to date, the perception of the Russian is often associated with the trait of cruelty. The image of the cruel Russian, particularly that of the Russian soldier, is prevalent in many texts, both historical and works of fiction, and in films.[61] In his analysis of the evolution of Russian image representation on the Western screen, Alexander Fedorov asserts that 'the image of Russia in the majority of the Western fiction films of 1946-1991 is treated as an image of something "enemy", "alien", "different", often hostile…'[62]

A better understanding of the nature of Bolshevik ideology can be provided by somebody who witnessed its origin. That cruelty has been at the core of Bolshevism from the outset is revealed by a member of Russia's Socialist-Revolutionary Party, a participant of the First, Second, and Third Russian Revolutions, Vladimir Zenzinov, who highlights the aggressive nature of Bolshevism by recalling the words by Leon Trotsky, one of Lenin's 'faithful pupils' that 'Bolshevism is organized civil war'.[63] Zenzinov maintains that opposition between the Bolsheviks and the peasants was at the ideological foundation of the Russian Bolshevik party line, and explains that the peasants were regarded by the Bolsheviks as 'a class of petty bourgeoisie, alien and antagonistic not only to Socialist ideals but also to all social progress'.[64] At the same time, the Bolsheviks realized that they needed peasants as 'a powerful revolutionary force', and, taking advantage of peasants' 'age-long craving for the land', they proclaimed the 'nationalization of land'.[65] According to Zenzinov, the Bolsheviks' leader Vladimir Lenin never denied that it was just a tactical move to gain the peasants' support — 'a means of attracting the peasant or at least neutralizing him politically'.[66] Lenin even admitted

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[61] See, for example, Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany. A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, Massachusssets, London, England: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), Viktor Suvorov, *Inside the Soviet Army* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1982) and *The Liberators: My Life in the Soviet Army* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981, 1983), Marta Hillers, *A Woman in Berlin. Eight weeks in the Conquered City* (New York: Picador, A Metropolitan Book, Henry Holt & Company, 2003), translated by Philip Boehm, Gabriele Köpp, *Warum war ich bloss ein Mädchen?* (Knaur-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 2012). In Ukrainian works of fiction, see Teodosii Osmachka, *Plan do dvoru* (*Plan to the farm* or *Annihilation*, 1951) and *Ротонда душогубців* (*The Rotunda of Assassins*, 1956; published in English as *Red Assassins*, 1959), Ivan Bahrianyi, *The Tiger Trappers* (1947), Vasyl Barka, *The Yellow Prince* (written in 1963, published in 1991), Vasyl Shklyar, *Black Raven* (2011), Maria Matios, *Sweet Darusia: a Tale of Two Villages* (2004), Oksana Zabuzhko, *The Museum of Abandoned Secrets* (2009). In films produced in Ukraine: *Сад Гетсиманський* [*Gethsemane Gardens*] directed by Rostyslav Synko («Укртелефільм», 1993), *Голод – 33* [*Famine – 33*], directed by Oles Yanchuk (Dovzhenko Film Studio, 1991), *Chervonui*, directed by Zaza Buadze (Insightmedia Producing Center, 2017)

[62] Alexander Fedorov, 'The Image of Russia on the Western Screen in the Ideological Confrontation Epoch (1946-1991): From the Late Stalinism to the "Thaw", from "Détente" and "Stagnation" to the "Perestroika", *European Researcher*, Vol. (53), № 6-2, 2013, pp. 1772-1786, p. 1772. Fedotov discusses films produced in the USA, UK, Germany, Canada, France and Italy.

[63] Vladimir Zenzinov, 'The Bolsheviks and the Peasant', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Oct., 1925), pp. 134-143, p. 137.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[66] *Ibid.*, p. 137.

that as a result of these tactics, 'nine-tenth of the peasants [...] have gone over to our side within a few weeks...'[67] The Bolsheviks' strategy is voiced in *Maria*: 'The one who gives the land to the peasants will gain the soul of the nation!' (*Maria*: 153) When the peasantry's support was gained, the violent nature of Bolshevism revealed itself in all political developments without exception. The Bolshevik policy resulted in civil war throughout the country, which lasted for three years — a time that 'brought ruin, curtailment of areas under cultivation, the nightmare of the famine of 1920-21, and never-ceasing peasant uprisings which the Soviet Government drowned in rivers of blood by means of its well organized police forces'.[68] Zenzinov observes that even though the 1920s New Economic Policy that was introduced 'to better the condition of the peasant'[69] brought some relief, the wealthier peasants — *kulaki* — remained the class enemy of the proletariat at all stages of their hegemony, and were to be annihilated.

Past events can be interpreted in different ways in the course of time. Subtelny's point that each generation of historians 'seeks to develop its own perspective on the past'[70] can be applied to writers and ideologists, too. The fact that Zenzinov's article was written in 1925 makes it relevant to our analysis of Samchuk's text due to the proximity in time of both texts: *Maria* was written only nine years later. Zenzinov's viewpoints, therefore, help grasp the atmosphere described in Samchuk's text, especially considering that Samchuk also initially 'succumbed to Soviet propaganda'[71] when he was young. It can be suggested that in their works, these two authors reflect their personal, first-hand experiences of Bolshevism as it was perceived by its contemporary opponents. There are also other perspectives on Bolshevism that have emerged over the past century.[72] Interestingly, eighty-six years later George Walden echoes Zenzinov in his review of Robert Service's detailed analysis of the Russian Revolution *Spies and Commissars: Bolshevik Russia and the West* (2011), as he concludes that 'the subsequent history of communism confirmed that terror was always at the heart of the Marxist-Leninist creed'.[73]

The presentation of Bolshevism in Samchuk's fiction, indeed, demonstrates a striking resemblance to Zenzinov's documented account: the Bolsheviks' enticement of the Ukrainian

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[67] Lenin quoted by Zenzinov, *ibid*.

[68] *Ibid*.

[69] Lenin quoted by Zenzinov, *ibid*., p. 138.

[70] Orest Subtelny, Review of *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* by Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther, The American Historical Review, Vol. 115, No. 3 (June 2010), p. 812.

[71] Oksana Bryzhun-Sokolyk, 'Author Biography: Ulas Samchuk', *Language Lanterns Publications*, <http://www.languagelanterns.com/maria_samchuk_bio.htm>.

[72] See, for example, Stephen Kotkin, '1991 and the Russian Revolution: Sources, Conceptual Categories, Analytical Frameworks', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (June 1998), pp. 384-425.

[73] George Walden, '*Spies and Commissars: Bolshevik Russia and the West* by Robert Service: review', *The Telegraph*, 15 December 2011, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/historybookreviews/8940774/Spies-and-Commissars-Bolshevik-Russia-and-the-West-by-Robert-Service-review.html>.

peasantry to support the revolution, the forcible collectivization of the 1920s and the organized 1932-33 famine — the novel closely follows the sequences of the real events, whose veracity is boosted by the elaborate descriptions of the characters' emotions and feelings. This builds up an exceptionally unfavourable image of the Bolsheviks, and Moscow's central and detrimental role in Ukraine's tragedy. The detailed compound of socio-political events, instilled with an array of images that reproduce them, leads us to draw the inference that the process of formation of stereotypes is determined by power relations. These relations are shaped and enforced by the top leadership, and certainly not fostered by a set of arguments arising from cultural disparities between nations.

Oppression as a cause of national disintegration

The novel's accurate reconstruction of the tense and highly politicized atmosphere prevailing at the time involves the disclosure of Ukraine's national problems and challenges that are largely affected by her aggressive neighbour. The Ukrainians' feeling about their own authorities can be interpreted from the expression of their critique of Ukrainian officialdom, which is blamed for not having made efforts to control the situation in the country:

> And where was the Ukrainian authority?
> What had the buffoons in riding breeches and with cigarettes stuck in their teeth been doing at that time? They had stood there, they had observed the meeting, but they had been too afraid to disturb the democratic principles of the new authority... (*Maria*: 165)

In the quotation, several expressions deserve attention. First, the ironic phrase 'democratic principles of the new authority' can be understood from the perspective of Deupmann's observation that in the case of historical texts irony 'usually requires reflection on the specific conditions of understanding for reconstruction'.[74] It may thus be that the writer chose this literary device to help readers understand that the main element of Bolsheviks' rule is terror. Readers' critical reflection on Bolshevik ideology is likely to generate condemnation, highlighting in this way the destructive role of the Other in Ukraine's famine.

Second, the decidedly negative term 'buffoons' suggests disapproval of Ukraine's political weakness, revealing the writer's indication that the inadequacy of authority and lack of leadership makes it easier to carry out the subjugation of the country by the Other — 'those over there, behind the walls of the Kremlin' (*Maria*: 176). The critical judgement of Ukraine's authority mirrors the lack of unity and integrity within the auto-image, and signals that the novel

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[74] Deupmann, 'Irony' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 349.

aims to reproduce people's real experiences and emotions. As a result, a full picture of the trauma of the entire nation is narrated through the story of Maria's family. This is particularly distinct in the final lines of Book II:

> The germ of disintegration fell upon fertile soil. The beginning of the end was approaching.
> Maria's days were numbered.
> The sun still rose and set as it always did. But there were signs in the east that pointed to the end that was drawing near. The cruel spirit of ruination was approaching, walking steadily, and conquering everything, and there was no stopping it, because Korniy and Maria, and hundreds, thousands of Korniys and Marias did not know, nor could they know, that their annihilation, their end, was drawing near... (*Maria*: 168)

The passage that introduces the account of the pre-famine years reflects a sense that Ukraine may be at peril of tragic consequences. With mass starvation, death and destruction in the background, the final chapter presents the most tragic chain of events that demonstrate what can happen to people subjected to long-term food deprivation and perpetual violence and terror. It can be seen that the ground for the literary expression of Ukraine's most traumatic experience is being prepared gradually in the novel. The first mention of food shortage, as we saw earlier, is indicated by the young mother's unjustified worry — Oksana's sudden thought that she might not have enough milk to feed her baby daughter. Another mention of scantiness of food emerges when we learn about Maria's life with her aunt Kateryna after her mother's death. Then, the girl often feels hungry:

> She gulped down scraps of dark bread, gnawed on fruit that had not yet ripened, and gobbled up mouldy, watery potatoes — potatoes that had been boiled for chickens and piglets. Her tummy was large and distended. (*Maria*: 31)

Providing children with food in the aunt's house is explained by the fact that 'there are five mouths clamouring to be fed' (*Maria*: 31). The feeling of hunger is forgotten when nine-year-old Maria begins working for a wealthy farmer. The image of hunger only reappears after many years, at the time of World War I, when Maria receives a letter from her son Demko in German captivity, in which he asks to send him some 'rye biscuits' (*Maria*: 150). Maria and Korniy's exchange makes it clear that hunger is the worst of disasters:

> "God forbid that he should die of hunger somewhere way over there. It would be better to die of a bullet, than from hunger..."
> "Oh, that's true. The most terrible death of all is dying from hunger. God forbid that even an enemy should die a death like that..." (*ibid*.)

Clearly, the characters see hunger as the most hideous way to die, and their words become prophetic. From now on, the novel's events unwaveringly approach the presentation of the 1932-33 Famine. Although the peasants' food supplies are confiscated in the summer of 1932, some dwellers of Hnyloryby manage to survive through the winter, and Maria is 'half alive' (*Maria*: 212). The spring of 1933 brings hope for new harvest; yet, it also brings with it a bad omen, symbolised by the arrival of the Komsomols, who conduct 'an enthusiastic campaign to liquidate the remnants of religious cult' — they remove the church bells, knock down the cross and organize 'a movie theatre' in the building (*Maria*: 208). Those villagers, who oppose the vandalization of the church, are arrested and will be 'on their way to Siberia' (*ibid.*). There emerges a feeling that the hunger strike is a retribution meted out by God:

> Many people awaited God's punishment. Nothing happened, there was only hunger. Hunger everywhere. There was no spot on this land without hunger. The thought of food persecuted every person in this expanse. (*ibid.*)

The quotation highlights the scale of hunger and allows for the understanding that the famine is exactly the punishment drawn by those, who destroyed the divine order of a peaceful and contented life. The military symbolism comes into view again, at a time when there is no war or any unrest, generating a sense of threat: 'As soon as the grain ripened the fields turned into a massive front line. The army came — drab, pitiful people wearing peaked caps' (*Maria*: 210). The mention of the titles of two newspapers, *The Proletarian Truth* and '*Pravda* from Moscow' (*ibid.*), alongside the reference to the soldiers, creates a link between danger and Russia, and reinforces the awareness of who is behind the famine. In further descriptions, the apocalyptic pictures of famished people struggling to survive represent the ultimate horror:

> At the other end there are emaciated, pathetic-looking little children. Their small bodies creep through the weeds, their scrawny hands reach for ears of grain. Back home, their father has collapsed and is lying motionless, their mother is not getting out of bed. At home there is death, and they, these little ones, are running forth to look for life. (*Maria*: 210)

The emphasis on the Bolsheviks' ruthlessness is made by means of the discrepancy between the bland appearance and merciless conduct of the soldiers, who arrived 'from the distant north' (*Maria*: 211) — another indication of Ukraine's oppressive neighbour, to secure grain fields from the starving peasants. This scene represents hideous cruelty with the utmost clarity: 'They aim at every little head that raises itself towards an ear of grain. Shots, shouts, blood, little bodies topple over, small holes are dug, the ground is leveled.' (*ibid.*) In this part of the text, among apparent indications of Russia's organization of the mass hunger of the Ukrainians, there emerges an important detail, which highlights the view of disintegration within the auto-image,

demonstrated by the example of Maksym. Along with referring to Moscow as the centre of didactic orders 'to completely fulfil the grain collection plan' (*Maria*: 210), Kharkiv — Ukraine's then capital, is mentioned. Hence, the Other is not necessarily in Russia and/ or Russian; sub-groups within the Self can become the Other. The novel makes it clear that the result of Bolshevik rule is Ukraine's disintegrated, divided people. The nation's disintegration is part of Ukraine's trauma, whose real impact and magnitude are provided by the accounts dealing with the portrayal of the characters' gruesome deaths. Because the cruel nature of Bolshevism manifests itself in the inhumane and degrading treatment of the peasants, therefore, it is all the more startling that some of the villagers join the ranks of the Bolsheviks.

The disintegration is evident from the village dwellers' debates on socialism, religion, collective farms and other issues that cause controversy and generate conflicts. A better understanding of the total damage caused by disintegration is provided by the dramatic scenes of the stand-off between father and son, Korniy and Maksym. In contrast to the analysis of Korniy's metamorphosis, which serves to give special importance to the favourable portrayal of the auto-image, the introduction of another transitional character, this time a villager who accepts Bolshevik ideology, and joins the Bolsheviks ranks shortly before the 1932-33 Famine, brings the perception of the moral corruption of the Other to the fore. The fact that this character is one of Maria and Korniy's sons, Maksym, reinforces the sense of trauma caused by disintegration. Their family conflict, therefore, is a microcosm of the disintegration of the wider Ukrainian context.

Maksym's looks and behaviour on his return from the war immediately signal his Otherness: 'dressed in a field jacket and riding breeches' (*Maria*: 159), 'the young peasant was donning a Bolshevik skin' (*Maria*: 158-9). The first thing he does is shoot from his six-shooter revolver at an 'ornate Kyivan icon' that hangs on the wall in his parents' house, shattering it 'into smithereens' and producing 'a loathsome curse' (*Maria*: 159). The scene makes it clear that Maksym's transition to the Other is attained through his affiliation with Bolshevik ideology. This is strengthened by the village dwellers' contemptuous remarks about the newly-hewn Bolshevik:

> Oh, that Maksym was now a big deal. He was the authority — terribly so! He was a 'Socialist-Revolutionary' — don't you even dare to approach him. Just think how much the riding breeches that he had pulled off a Polish officer were worth, and the red boots that he had taken from one of Petlyura's soldiers, and the English great coat that he had taken from one of Denikin's commissioned officers. No, no matter what you thought of it all — Maksym was greatness personified. (*Maria*: 181)

Here, again, Samchuk falls back on irony to emphasize the negative perception of the Other, which is bolstered by a feeling of uncertainty concerning the source of Maksym's clothes: it is unclear whether he removes the clothes from the dead soldiers, or if he is the one, who first kills them and then takes the clothes. One way or the other, both possibilities shed negative light on Maksym and point to his brutality, decidedly categorizing him as the Other. Cultural difference is then deployed to reinforce his Otherness — it is mentioned briefly that he speaks exclusively in Russian (*Maria*: 182). Maksym's Otherness leads to his estrangement from his parents, siblings, and from the village community. Importantly for our analysis, it demonstrates the disintegration of the nation, the division of the self-image into oppressors — local executors of collectivisation and forced grain requisitioning designed in Moscow, and the oppressed — the majority of the village dwellers.

The complexity of the process of disintegration of the auto-image is significantly aided by the presentation of Maksym's younger brother Lavrin as an ardent proponent of an independent Ukraine. Lavrin's brave declaration 'We're kozaky! Moscow ruined our Sich.' (*Maria*: 161) that draws our attention to the old Zaporozhian kozak fortress, symbolic of Ukraine's struggle for independence, confirms that their family's disintegration is grounded in ideology. Lavrin's remark evokes the feeling that Russian domination of Ukraine is not a new phenomenon, and that it has deeper roots than the tragic developments of the 1930s. The mention of the Sich and Cossacks enhances an understanding of Russia's oppressive role in Ukraine's history.

Maria and Korniy are horrified by Maksym's hand in the atrocities committed by the Bolsheviks in the village. Maria acknowledges that 'that son of hers was rotten to the core, to the nth degree' (*Maria*: 184), and Korniy's judgement of Maksym confirms that he sees cruelty as the main gauge of his son's Otherness — railing against the governing Soviet power, he nails down: 'No wonder that monster son of ours went over to them.' (*Maria*: 172) Categorizing Maksym as the Other depends solely on his cruel behaviour, and hostility towards him increases, as the Bolsheviks toughen their politics and become even more ruthless. This is clear from his parents' changed attitude towards him. Initially, they distance themselves from Maksym and try to evade him. However, when the Bolsheviks banish as exiles to Siberia those, who oppose the regime, and ensure that those, who are left in the village cannot procure food thus sentencing them to a slow death, Korniy begins to loathe the newly-enlisted Bolshevik, his son: 'A violent hatred gripped his heart, and all-consuming pain, a poisonous feeling of injury.' (*Maria*: 186) This parent-child relationship shows the trajectory of how cruelty inevitably leads to hatred and confrontation. The culmination of violence and hatred can be seen in Korniy's response to the harrowing event when Nadiya kills her baby. Korniy lays responsibility for the destruction of

his family, the village and the country on the Bolsheviks and kills the one who symbolizes them
— his son:

> He saw before him the dim outlines of the bed and Maksym. He walked up to Maksym
> with a few quick steps and swung his axe forcefully once and then a second time.
>
> There was a wild, desperate cry and then silence. The sharp blade of the axe had
> struck something soft, something that gave in easily, and so it burrowed itself deeply.
> From the white, warm bed there came a few groans, but they soon died off.
>
> Korniy kept on striking and striking.
>
> He was striking the way a little boy keeps striking nettles or weeds until his arm
> gets tired.
>
> And then Korniy finally came to his senses; he stopped and listened to hear if
> everything was as it should be. (*Maria*: 234)

Korniy's killing of his son conveys the idea that inasmuch as the integrity of Maria's family is
destroyed by Maksym's adoption of Bolshevik ideology, the process of destruction befalls the
Hnyloryby community, and enfolds the entire Ukraine. From an imagological perspective, the
image-formation schemata are disrupted, and the distinction between the Self and the Other on
a cultural basis is erased as a result of disintegration. The ambiguity of the auto-image in *Maria*
thus exposes disintegration as large of a tragedy of the nation as the deaths of millions.

In contrast to Korniy's antipathy towards his son is his pity for his 'dear dog'
(*Maria*: 228). Maria is weak from hunger, and Korniy is aware that she will not survive long
without food. Therefore, he considers killing his dog Sirko. Having sharpened his axe, Korniy
calls the dog outside. Yet, he cannot force himself to kill the old friend, with whom they shared
many years of life, and who has always been most loyal to his master:

> And suddenly Korniy felt sorry for the dog. He dropped the axe on the ground, sat down
> beside it on the damp grass, and hugged Sirko. The dog whined and cuddled up to the
> old man. And they stayed like that for a long time. (*Maria*: 227-228)

The polarity of Korniy's feelings towards his son and the dog is revealing of the damage that
ideological discord, fuelled by cruelty, can have on relationships between people. Korniy has
no compassion towards his own child because, in his eyes, Maksym is dehumanized due to his
barbaric conduct. Hence, Maksym is worse than the dog that has never done any harm, and
whom Korniy regards as a true friend. Beller's point that 'the most frequent hetero-image is the
appellation "barbarian" or "savage"'[75] substantiates the phenomenon of disintegration within
the auto-image in *Maria*. Yet, it should be observed that Korniy's ability to kill his son,
devastatingly shown in the scene of Maksym's murder, indicates that he himself loses humanity.

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[75] Beller, 'Barbarian' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 266.

It is important to point out that the scene in which Korniy kills Maksym is a recurring motif for the expression of the nation's disintegration in Ukrainian literature. In one of his most famous artefacts *Taras Bulba* (1835), Nikolai (Mykola) Gogol depicts the scene of Taras killing his son Andriy. Gogol's romanticized novella is a 'historical work',[76] in which the father-son tension also derives from disintegration. Andriy's affection for a Polish noble lady leads to his betrayal of the Ukrainian Cossacks. After his joining ranks of Ukraine's enemy — the Poles, Taras shoots Andriy. Another example of an analogous motif is found in the epic poem *The Haydamaks* (1841) by Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko. The poem describes the 1768 peasant revolt, during which the Ukrainian Cossack Gonta kills his two sons, who convert to Catholicism, and therefore, are seen as traitors and deserve death. These are just two well-known examples, which indicate that for the expression of the Ukrainian nation's trauma Samchuk deploys well-established images and motifs already in use for the formation of the images of the Self and the Other in the past. Reliance on such motifs shows that Imagology functions according to the literary record of an image, or as Leerssen puts it, Imagology works 'primarily on literary representations.[77]

The adoption of the ideology or religion of the Other by the representatives of the auto-image demonstrates that a distinction between the Self and the Other is not preordained and cannot be drawn by national belonging or cultural difference, but by people's individual responses to various processes that have political and socio-cultural significance in their lives. This assumption brings us to the concept of power and to the thought that leaders who are at the forefront of those processes exert influence on their followers in order to secure their support and hold onto power. In *Maria*, the adoption of Bolshevik ideology is also related to the issue of power. Those who perish from hunger are not the Bolshevik party or Komsomol members; neither are they peasants, who joined the Soviet collective farms. Those who side with the Bolsheviks are all presented as the Other, even though they are local dwellers of Hnyloryby. Samchuk makes sure that their appearance is reflective of their position. For instance, one of them, 'a diminutive, gnarled peasant with sly Little Russian eyes and a finger cut off his right hand', Bezpalky, is made the foreman for 'a dozen of others with eyes that are just as sly' (*Maria*: 196), and who are like 'shock troopers' (*Maria*: 197). The deprecating expression 'Little Russian', used to describe Bezpalky's looks, signals the narrator's condemnation of this peasant's role in the sovietization of the village. This is emphasized by the ironically contemptuous form of the character's surname, which literally means 'fingerless'. Considering

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[76] Carl R. Proffer, 'Gogol's *Taras Bulba* and *the Iliad*', *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring, 1965), pp.142-150, p. 142.
[77] Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 26.

the Bolsheviks' extreme violence, it can be suggested that Bolshevik ideology seems to attract people devoid of moral principles. Interestingly, this point is indicated by Lenin's expectation of a revolutionary: 'The best revolutionary is a youth devoid of morals.[78] Bolshevik ideologists appear to succeed in creating the right conditions for groups of people with certain behavioural traits. In other words, Bolshevism uses people, who have some kind of susceptibility to commit violent acts, which, naturally, cannot be attributed to one nation. Applebaum fittingly describes them as 'a fanatical and devoted minority, one that would kill for the cause', and refers to the 'founders' of the 1917 Revolution as 'the men and women who had been motivated by such passion for destruction'.[79] In the novel, it is suggested that Bezpalky and his 'troopers' are unprincipled people that can be easily manipuated: 'The sly-eyed ones simply do not know what those at the top are planning.' (*Maria*: 198)

The moment, in which Korniy kills Maksym is a turning point, an act that becomes the culmination of the expression of Ukraine's ultimate horror — the vast silence, in which everything means death. By means of silence, the novel's representations of destruction, torture, hunger, and suffering reach their inexorable doom:

> A dragged–out silence, without a beginning or an end, descends on everything. The days are like corpses, and the nights, especially the autumnal, moonless nights, are like sepulchral underground caves. And there are no fires anywhere, and when the moon peeks out, the poplar trees stand straight and silent, and every shadow seems like an entrance into the nether world. A cemetery. An endless cemetery. The wind blows in the stench of corpses from all sides.
>
> Where have the birds disappeared, why are owls not hooting where are the wolves? There aren't any. Perhaps that's how it has to be. The earth finally got the urge to be empty, the air spontaneously grew putrid, the wind became dangerously infected, the sky smeared itself cadaverously. (*Maria*: 212)

The reference to silence is the novel's final juxtaposition that can be contrasted with the myriad sounds throughout the narrative. It emphasizes that death from hunger is the worst of all forms of death. Life in the village of Hnyloryby is alive with sounds before the 1932-33 Famine. These are the sounds of nature and animals, but most importantly, the sounds of people singing and laughing during work on the fields and at weddings, and celebrating holidays, and ringing church bells. For instance, Nadiya would 'sing happily the whole time' (*Maria*: 144), and at Christmas one could hear 'loud bursts of laughter roll forth, jabbering women chatter and buzz.

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[78] Lenin quoted by Janice Shaw Crouse in *Marriage Matters: Perspectives on the Private and Public Importance of Marriage* (New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.): Transaction Publishers, 2012), p. 145.

[79] Applebaum, '100 years later, Bolshevism is back. And we should be worried', *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/bolshevism-then-and-now/2017/11/06/830aecaa-bf41-11e7-959c-fe2b598d8c00_story.html?utm_term=.70adb5c792e8>.

Carols, songs, crushing embraces, succulent kisses. Everyone is rejoicing, roaring with laughter...' (*Maria*: 53) Even at times of distress, the village resonates with sounds. When Maria's father is killed by a rock in a quarry, his burial is accompanied by sounds of Maria's crying and her mother's wailing (*Maria*: 28), and when Maria's mother dies shortly after, there is sobbing and crying, and calling for her (*Maria*: 30). The nature of sounds changes when the Bolsheviks start to forcefully impose their rule in the village — it becomes unpleasant and threatening: sounds of shouting, 'strings of curses' (*Maria*: 163), shooting, and arguing. Hunger brings about poignant silence, which can be viewed as a symbol of death, when even dogs do not bark, as 'they had been eaten' (*Maria*: 224). Korniy tells Maria, who is too weak to leave the house, what he sees in the village: 'They're dying off already. Children are dying.' (*Maria*: 225) The apocalyptic picture of 'a deep silence' (*Maria*: 224) reigning in the village is made particularly intense by the image of the church full of grain in the midst of the desolate village. The grain is locked and secured by a guard with 'a machine gun' (*Maria*: 215) so that the peasants could not get it. The following passage sounds like the final indictment of those who engineered the ruthless elimination of Ukraine's people without naming them:

> The Church of the Holy Trinity stands quietly, gloomily, warily. It still rises a bit over the village and it looks out in all directions. The fir trees are still rustling as they formerly rustled, and heavily barred windows still peek out among them.
> But in the church there is grain. It has been poured like sand, like soil among the columns, under the iconostasis. Occasionally rain leaked on it, and it grew mouldy and hardened into clumps. (*Maria*: 215)

Without grain, there can be no life, there can only be 'darkness and silence' (*Maria*: 214). The elliptical sentences that conclude the novel, each of them on a new line, confirm the end:

> Night.
> A night without beginning and without end.
> The night of eternity. (*Maria*: 241)

By dint of these three pithy sentences, the immeasurable pain of the agonized people is captured in darkness and silence, and there seems to be nothing left to express the magnitude of Ukraine's trauma. The imagological analysis of the auto- and hetero-images in *Maria* suggests that the rhetoric of national character, shaped in the stark contrast 'Russian versus Ukrainian' and defining the Self against the Other, furnishes the writer with a possibility to express Ukraine's national trauma, which, in turn, reveals his strong condemnation of the Bolsheviks, irrespective of their national belonging.

The Silent People

'Even the noise of argument is better than the silence of hunger.'[1]

The novel *The Silent People* (1962) is probably one of the best-known works of fiction by the Irish author Walter Macken about Ireland's biggest tragedy — An Gorta Mór. It is part of a trilogy that follows the adventures of several generations of one Irish family. Written over a century after this tragedy, this story of a young Connacht man has the striking ability to bring the atmosphere of the time into our contemporary context. Perhaps this is due to the 'exhaustive research on that period of Irish history' that Macken carried out while gathering 'the material needed for the background',[2] Macken's writing talent and also his personal humanistic qualities and compassion. Ultan Macken, the writer's son, recalls: 'When my father was reading vivid descriptions of what happened to people during the famine years, the terrible deaths they suffered from disease and starvation, my mother would find him in tears.'[3]

In *The Silent People*, Macken creates believable characters and imbues them with true human qualities, making them appeal to readers up to the present day by generating a deep interest and feelings of indignation, fondness and respect. An imagological approach to the examination of Macken's characters allows for the discernment of the processes in image construction and perpetuation that play an important role in the formation of the different and often complex perceptions between the English and the Irish between the 1820s and 1840s in Ireland.

Macken presents the main theme of the famine after first describing a large number of events in a sequential timeline long before An Gorta Mór, and his novel has the quality of a chronicle.[4] Narrated from a third-person perspective, and divided into thirty-three chapters, *The Silent People* presents a succession of episodes detailing the life of the Irish protagonist, Dualta Duane, from about 1826 to the 1840s, when the Great Famine struck. Dualta's parents and siblings died from famine and fever in 1817, and he was brought up by his uncle Marcus in the town of Fáirche. After an incident with the Half-Sir, the son of a local landlord, and in order to avoid punishment, Dualta is forced to escape from Fáirche. The young man travels far in search

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[1] Walter Macken *The Silent People* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1965), p. 41.
[2] Ultan Macken, *Dreams on Paper* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2009), p. 369.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] 'A usually continuous historical account of events arranged in order of time without analysis or interpretation', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/art/chronicle-literature>.

of a safe place and on his way, does his best to survive, makes friendships and faces disappointments, gets involved in the struggle for independence, and encounters young Daniel O Connell.[5] On joining a group of rebels, Dualta is sent to work in a big estate belonging to the wealthy landlord George Wilcocks, with a plan to help organize a raid on his house. Having fallen in love with Wilcocks' daughter, Una, and out of some kind of fondness for Wilcocks himself, Dualta warns him of the forthcoming raid. This time, Dualta has to flee again in order not to be caught by Wilcocks' horsemen, who now know that he is involved with freedom fighters. Eventually, he reaches the Valley of the Flowers, where he starts his life anew, dreaming 'to be commonplace' and 'to be one with the people' (*SP*: 115). Following Dualta's trials and exploits, the life in the Irish countryside under the hugely unjust socio-political conditions is explored. These conditions further a feeling of resentment towards the oppressor.

The imagological analysis of *The Silent People* shows the novel's reliance upon well-established images within the rhetoric of Irish and English national characters. The English perception of the Irish is structured around the negative stereotypes about the Irish national character; and the Irish perception of the English reflects an unfavourable view of the English. However, a close reading of the novel reveals the most striking feature of these images — their remarkable ambivalence and ambiguity that make it difficult to distinguish complete virtue from absolute vice. Due to this feature, Macken's characters constitute a powerful medium which in turn amuses, annoys, instils with fear, induces pity, provokes laughter, or inspires respect, but never leaves the reader unaffected — this shows the large impact of literature on people's emotions.

Image formation

Christine Kinealy in her *Apparitions of Death and Disease. The Great Hunger in Ireland* reminds us that Irish negative perceptions of the English were not new prior to An Gorta Mór due to centuries of 'discrimination against the native Catholics by successive British rulers and governments'.[6] She notes that intermittent crop failures in the century before 1845 were not unusual; however, they 'had been eased with a combination of private and public charity'.[7] The Great Famine became the most severe of all earlier crop failures, for by that time, the

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[5] In *The Silent People*, this surname is used without an apostrophe.
[6] Christine Kinealy, *Apparitions of Death and Disease. The Great Hunger in Ireland* (Connecticut: Quinnipiac University Press, 2015), p. 8.
[7] *Ibid*.

dependence of Ireland's rapidly grown population upon the potato increased significantly — at least one-third of the Irish depended almost solely on this vegetable. When the famine struck in 1845, the British government demonstrated an 'unsympathetic and inflexible attitude'[8] towards Ireland's problem. Irish response to the government's cruel negligence was the intensification of negative perceptions. Because all important decisions regarding Ireland were made in Westminster, the government was largely associated with England and the English. However, this association was complicated by the fact that the Anglo-Irish upper middle class, gentry and nobility were also regarded as the Other by the Irish poor. Discussing cultural confrontation between the English and the Irish, Leerssen explains the duality of the Anglo-Irish identity:

> Within Irish society, those two cultural camps, native and English, while being implacably opposed to each other, did not exist in mutual isolation. There was always a hybrid middle ground where the black-and-white contrast could become complicated or blurred.'[9]

The ambiguity of image formation and the connection between cultural hybridity and power relations in society are pronounced in *The Silent People*.

Macken's decision to narrate the story of Dualta Duane by beginning in the 1820s indicates the importance of events preceding An Gorta Mór to the discourse of the famine period. This strategy makes the narrative more intricate and interesting and achieves greater engagement by the reader with the fates of its characters. It is also useful for an imagological analysis, as it allows us to see that the process of image formation was shaped by an array of factors, the most crucial of which were power relations. This is suggested by the poem that introduces *The Silent People*:

> We are the silent people.
> How long must we be still,
> to nurse in secretat our breast
> an ancient cuture?
>
> Let us arise and cry then;
> Call from the sleeping ashes
> of destiny a chieftan who
> will be our voice.
>
> He will strike the bras
> and we will erupt

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[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, 1996, p. 383.

        from our hidden caves
        into the golden light of new-born day. (*SP*: 5)

The poem has a highly contrasting register: on the one hand, it conveys a sensation of sadness and hopelessness by using such expressions as 'silent people', 'still', 'sleeping ashes', and 'hidden caves'.[10] On the other hand, it creates a sense of hope by dint of the phrases denoting a struggle for freedom, such as, 'let us arise and cry', 'strike the brass', 'we will erupt', and 'new-born day' (*SP*: 5). The poem's lines paint a picture of the long-lasting subjugation of Ireland, and even though the oppressor is not named, it presupposes England. Determining the two nations' reciprocal views of one another, the twofold message of such a prologue announces a rather complex treatment of the novel's themes. That the perception of the Irish and English national characters heavily depended on power relations between the two countries has been widely discussed over time by researchers and reflected in works of fiction. In as much as the issue of power relations is a highly complex topic to grapple with, so is the emergence of images, not least because these aspects are interconnected. Beller and Leerssen's study of images gives a comprehensive outline of the English and Irish national characteristics that allow us to see the dependence of image formation on power relations. In particular, Leerssen's analysis of the Anglo-Irish self-image of the late eighteenth century that 'emerges from the imaginary fusion between two contradictory and hostile cultural traditions'[11] is important for an understanding of the polarity of images. Therefore, before our attention is drawn to the imagological analysis of *The Silent People*, and the discussion of the hybrid nature of its images, Beller's and Leerssen's insights on the Irish and the English national characters should be examined.

In his article 'Perception, image, imagology' on the origin and formation of the Irish image, Beller points to contradictions that reflect two divergent hetero-images of the Irish from the Middle Ages onwards. The first is the image of Ireland as an ardent votary of Christian learning that actively participated in its revival. The second is the perception of a country and its inhabitants as of an uncouth, wild and barbaric nature. The latter was continuously bolstered by means of descriptions of 'Irish savagery and sinfulness' and used by the English to justify their 'hegemonial expansion as a civilizing mission' from the late twelfth century.[12] Buttressed by the socio-political context, as seen earlier, these contradictory ideas exerted influence on literary representations of the Irish. Leerssen reminds us that the image of the Irish as 'a naïve

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[10] Macken, *The Silent People*, p. 5. Henceforth, all page numbers in parentheses, placed after quotations and preceded by *SP*, refer to this text.
[11] Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, 1996, p. 383.
[12] Leerssen, 'Irish' in Beller and Leerssen, 2007, p. 192.

character, uncivilized, tossed by primary, uncontrolled emotions, or either wicked or ridiculous, or both', and as the 'emotionally incontinent and intellectually handicapped' was shaped in Tudor times, remained a constant English trope until the mid-eighteenth century, and functioned as a contrast to the 'witty, self-controlled, and of upright virtue' Elizabethan or Stuart gentleman.[13] From the mid-eighteenth century, this image was compounded 'by a contrary, sentimental modality' due to the rise of a sentimental mood in literature and the development of the genre of sentimental comedy. Irish naivety came to reflect 'spontaneity, creativity, musical abilities and tenderness of feeling', and became perceived as a moral asset rather than a handicap.[14] These traits are found in *The Silent People* and are ascribed to the representatives of the auto-image.

The Gaelic/ Irish auto-image, developed in the works of Irish authors, also had a certain influence on the positive modality of the Irish image. The Irish saw themselves as 'moral superiors of their brutally-efficient English oppressors', and this image was strengthened by contemporary literary tendencies reflecting the polarity between realism and symbolism, which added a portion of sentimental mysticism to it.[15] Furthermore, the twentieth-century political developments, such as Ireland's struggle for Emancipation, the 1916 rebellion and the years of independence, and Northern-Irish unrest in the 1970-80s, perpetuated the perception of the 'fighting Irish', making the Irish image even more antithetical, and 'the tension and contradictoriness between violence and sentiment' in itself acquired the meaning of "typically Irish"'.[16] The complex processes of image formation confirm that images are subjective constructs, determined by social, political and cultural changes. All these are reflected by and represented in literature.

The English were also perceived in different ways by representatives of various nations. Menno Spiering notes that English national stereotypes took the form of the personifications of Englishness, and reminds us of such well-known personifications of the Englishman as that of 'the gentleman', 'morally upright and honest', but also 'phlegmatic'.[17] Spiering explains how the idea of the gentleman, which had originated from Chaucer's fourteenth-century descriptions of 'gentilnesse', had been transformed into the cult of the courtier in the Elizabethan period, and into the realm of stories about country squires in the eighteenth century, and finally, reworked into the domain of 'gentleman explorers serving the Empire' in

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[13] *Ibid*.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid*., pp. 192-3.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 193.
[17] Menno Spiering, 'English' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 145.

the nineteenth century.[18] In addition to these, two stereotypical personifications within the English self-image developed. One, coined in the eighteenth century, characterized an Englishman as choleric, and the other, developed in the nineteenth century, depicted the Englishman as phlegmatic. Notwithstanding different shades of the English image, they all shared 'a high regard for honesty and liberty', and after the separation from 'corrupt and despotic' Catholicism, became heavily influenced by 'Protestant moral values', leading to the self-perception of 'morally upright and guardians of freedom'.[19] Leerssen's and Spiering's insights on the Irish and English images show a consistent pattern of image formation: the Self constructed as virtuous, and the Other as depraved.

In *The Silent People*, the distinction between the English and the Irish is not black and white. We shall see that the hybrid nature of the images, presented by Macken, increases their ability to move between the groups of the auto- or hetero-image. Narrating the story of Dualta Duane from Connacht several decades prior to the Great Famine, and providing accounts of people's mode of life, manners, living conditions, religious values, the hardship and political unrest caused by the continuing strife between tenants and their landlords, the novel creates a network of interconnected themes that enable us to better understand Anglo-Irish relations. The benefit of a chronicled depiction of the pre-famine and famine events for an imagological analysis is that its progressive nature provides opportunities for a constructive examination of previously established images and the emergence of new ones. In its numerous descriptions and dialogues, the novel expresses the Irish tragic experience of the famine deploying explicit references to national characteristics of the Self and the Other.

The deployment of the rhetoric of national character is evident in the four distinct features mapped out by Neumann, discussed in the previous chapter. First, Macken's narrator adopts a principally sympathetic stance towards the Self, and a reproachful one towards the Other, signalling a clear disapproval of the landlords' welfare and power, and their indifference towards the deplorable condition of their tenants. Even in the midst of the famine, with people dying from the lack of food, landlords would press their tenants to pay rents. They would not wait until the next harvest and let the rents 'hang'. Dualta has to sell his only pony in order to pay his rent. Depicting the landlords' callousness, Macken shapes the reader's positive inclination and empathy towards the poor Irish tenants and a negative one towards their unsympathetic landlords, and motivates the reader's condemnation of unequal, contemptuous

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[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*., p. 147.

treatment of the former. The writer exploits this stance so effectively that the narrator is allowed to sound ironic and even somewhat unfavourably judgemental towards the Self at times, without the risk of changing the reader's attitude. This is evident, for instance, in the passage that deals with O Connell's win in the election: 'For good or ill, it proclaimed the reign of the Liberator, a demagogue, a thief, a scoundrel, a saint, a hypocrite, according to your impressions.' (*SP*: 218) The variegated characteristic traits of the Irish leader are perceived as witty and humorous rather than meaningful. They are in contrast with those of the landlords who are seen as ruthless.

Second, the semanticization of space is used to bolster the 'ideologically charged nationscape'.[20] The opposition between 'us' and 'them', or 'Irish versus English', is extended to create a spatial contrast, which is conveyed by means of juxtaposition of the Irish small and overcrowded houses to the English landlords' large, wealthy estates. Such territorialization of the contrasting images of the Self and the Other that goes hand in hand with the semantic opposition leads to the construction of two, reciprocally alien environments, significantly emphasizing the gross injustice that the Irish suffer at the hands of the English. Moreover, as the protagonist flees from home to avoid danger, he experiences how many other towns and villages in Ireland are afflicted by misery and exploitation. This depicts Ireland's tribulations on a larger scale, heightening the negative perception of the Other. Dualta's journey, hence, is another example that shows us ways in which spatial semantics participates in the construction of the rhetoric of national character.

Third, the constellation of the novel's characters is organized according to the 'rhetoric of "us" and "them"',[21] which serves to inflate cultural differences between the English and the Irish. Macken presents the Irish as perceived by the English: uncouth, dirty, uneducated, and opposes these characteristics to a number of positive features, thus establishing a perception of goodness of the Irish national character. The writer portrays his Irish characters as industrious and loving their land, witty and merry, faithful to their religious beliefs and freedom-loving people. Even the novel's minor characters are ascribed these traits, which ensures all Irish characters are generally perceived in a similar, notably positive, way. For instance, Máirtín Joyce and his family, noted for their hard work, hospitality and genial disposition, can be viewed as a typical Irish family. Dualta notes that even Máirtín's surname is good, and Máirtín proudly agrees with the remark that 'Our portion of it was never dirtied.' (*SP*: 29) The positive

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[20] Neumann, p. 282.
[21] *Ibid*.

character traits of the representatives of the auto-image are, as we shall see, in sharp contrast with the images of the rapacious landlords. This strategy is explained by Leerssen in his discussion of the imagological distinction between images: 'The auto-image is primarily the implied negative counterpart of a given hetero-image.'[22]

The most recognizable aspect of binary polarity between the Irish and the English, however, is provided by the presentation of power relations between the Self and the Other. The contrast between the two nations is constructed by means of detailed descriptions of inexorable injustices that the Irish suffer on every level of social, political and religious facets of life in that period. This view is validated by the novel's reference to a number of important contemporary documents and Acts, mention of well-known political figures, uprisings and other events, which reflect the social and political mood of the time in a factual way, leading to the reader's more eager acceptance of its characters as representative of real-life figures. In this way, the perception of the favourable image of the oppressed and the negative one of the oppressors is secured.

Fourth, the plot of *The Silent People* is constructed upon the pattern of the Irish struggle against British domination, which determines the nature of the novel's images and organizes them according to 'an intelligible pattern'[23] — the national Self as victim versus the Other as the oppressor. Dualta Duane's efforts to survive at a time of tyranny and hunger, from the outset — from his forced uprooting from home, through encounters with friends and confrontations with foes, and his dealing with incredible hardships, is narrated through the prism of contemporary political, ideological, and religious developments, which bring England's detrimental role in Ireland to the fore. The plot pattern makes the contrasting images meaningful, or, as Neumann explains, it ratifies the norms of the specific groups[24] — of the Self, or the Irish, who embody goodness, bravery, and courage, and of the Other, or the English, who exemplify moral corruption. Supported by the three above-mentioned aesthetic techniques, the plot adds to the positive image of the former, activating the reader's sympathy towards them, and their condemnation of the latter. Even though Neumann's framework clearly shows the mechanisms of the formation of the positive Self versus negative Other, it also allows us to realize the fluidity of the demarcation line between these two opposing images. The reader is thus invited to discover the way to know the Other and decide if the Irish who are negatively

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[22] Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 11.
[23] Neumann, p. 283.
[24] *Ibid*.

portrayed should be regarded as the Other. This process brings to mind Leerssen's reflection that 'the study of identity and alterity only makes sense if we do it self-reflexively.'[25]

The importance of food

The opening of *The Silent People* introduces a troubled atmosphere, which worsens in the chapters ahead, as the characters experience increasing difficulties and find themselves in dire straits. The first lines of the novel present Dualta at the fair, eating a piece of bread. This short episode reveals that the youth is poor, and rarely has good food:

> his tongue and palate were exploring and savouring with exquisite care the small penny piece of white bread that he had bought at a stall. That expenditure had exhausted his finances, but he thought it was worth it as he chewed and swallowed, oh, so carefully. (*SP*: 7)

The description of Dualta's delight in eating bread is expressive. The novel's ability to convey the sensual elicits a strong emotional connection between the reader and protagonist from the outset. This scene is also important in that it brings other significant aspects of Macken's story to the surface. First of all, it reminds us that Irish people were experiencing privation two decades before the Great Famine. It is quite natural, then, to think about its reasons and discover a wider picture of nineteenth-century Ireland. This is what Macken aims to achieve, and this view is validated later in the text, when another food shortage is referred to in a passage that tells us that Dualta's parents and siblings died in the 1817 famine. The mention of the famine and Dualta's life with his uncle Marcus — a teacher, who can hardly make ends meet, highlights that things have not changed much since. Marcus admits that he is poor: 'I own nothing. I built this house but it isn't mine. I grow potatoes in a two-rood field but it isn't mine.' (*SP*: 18) Marcus' words are revealing of the inferior position of the Irish, who are deprived of fundamental rights: in their own country, they have no home or land. Another character, Tom, confirms his fellow countrymen's miserable existence and expresses his sorrow that the land does not belong to the Irish: 'It belongs to them. You cannot snare a rabbit, cut a tree. You cannot even own the fresh air.' (*SP*: 271) In Tom's words, the Other is highlighted by his use of the pronoun 'them'. The thought that the 1845 crop failure was not the only reason for Ireland's famine, and not her first famine, is thus suggested to the reader. The mention of bread on the first page of *The Silent People* in combination with various other signs of privation

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[25] Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, 1996, p. 15.

throughout the novel, contributes to the presentation of a bigger picture of the novel's main theme — An Gorta Mór.

The protagonist's reverent attitude to bread stresses the importance of food, with a further focus on the potato. Potatoes are depicted as the Irish common people's main source of sustenance, and the novel abounds in references to them. In fact, whenever the issue of food is touched upon in *The Silent People*, the potato makes an appearance, and every description of Irish people's meals involves the potato. Dualta is offered potatoes by uncle Marcus after the incident with the Half-Sir at the fair; fleeing from Fáirche, Dualta has a 'drained pot of potatoes', 'a tin of coarse salt', 'a tin mug of buttermilk' for dinner in Paidi's house (*SP*: 32). The labourers planting trees at Wilcocks' estate eat hot potatoes, garnished with salt and buttermilk (*SP*: 97), and even those, who did not get money — the estate labourers, get 'paid their cottage and the few roods of ground for their potatoes by their labour' (*SP*: 97). When Dualta meets Daniel O Connell on a hare-hunt in the mountains, the Leader treats him with 'the buttered cake and the piece of meat' (*SP*: 121), but his men take 'potatoes from their pockets, joined with the pieces of wholemeal cake' (*ibid*.).

The potato fulfils a particularly important role in the novel drawing a distinction between the rich and the poor. When Dualta works in Wilcocks' house, he is given 'regular food, salt mutton and beef at frequent intervals' (*SP*: 107), while in the poverty-stricken Irish homes, he is offered potatoes. Interestingly, this direct opposition of 'rich-poor' does not undermine the role of the potato. On the contrary, its importance increases, as it is not an indicator of lack of wealth solely, but the essence of life for millions of people. The potato is not just necessary for physical survival but can be regarded as symbolic of the nation's cultural existence. For this reason, the potato is exalted in Dualta's uplifting considerations with an almost poetic inspiration:

> I love the flowers on the potato stalks. Who would not laugh if you said if a healthy potato field is like a poem, a song, a painting, a cathedral? There is creative satisfaction and a sense of frustration attached to all those things. (*SP*: 263)

Dualta eagerly develops his whimsical reflections explaining that the potato's 'added quality' of being edible makes it even more important than all 'these beautiful things' (*SP*: 264). He concludes definitively that 'If your belly is empty, then you will die, so in a way potato field is of higher cultural value than a poem or a song or a cathedral.' (*ibid.*) These thoughts reflect Dualta's positive disposition and a sense of humour. Yet, their utmost significance is revealed in the scene that follows this joyous contemplation, and which becomes all the more unsettling

precisely because of the protagonist's state of ebullience. Dualta's prophetic remarks on the potato appear in his mind shortly before he detects the odour of decay, and when, on examining the crop, he realizes that all the potatoes are rotten. The juxtaposition of these two contrasting pictures — Dualta's contentment from the thought of good crop as opposed to the frightful reality of its complete loss, activates emotive images: hope yields to despondency, and joy is replaced by fear. The contrast between the image of flowers on the potato stalk and the putrid smell described as that of 'like an unburied animal' (*SP*: 265) introduces the image of the looming famine. It is interesting to observe that the portrayal of the Great Famine fills only the final eighty pages of the novel. Clearly, the writer deems that the Irish famine narrative begins much earlier that the 1840s. To further explore this line of thinking, it is necessary to examine the context of events preceding An Gorta Mór.

Representations of poverty

The scene that shows Dualta enjoying a piece of bread is like a stone being thrown into a still pond and causing circular ripples, as it initiates the dispersal of various ideas around the novel's main theme. The passages describing food inevitably bring to our attention the state of the housing conditions, setting in motion more contrasts. The houses in Fáirche look poor — most of them are 'low and thatched, huddling close to each other for consolation' (*SP*: 7). Uncle Marcus' house is 'one-roomed', with the floor from 'the rock of the hillside [...] chipped and levelled and worn smooth by the passage of feet for many years', and with the chimney 'of wickerwork plastered over with mud' (*SP*: 16). Many more images of particularly bleak places are presented closer to the part of the novel that deals with the beginning of the Great Famine. For instance, however hard it might be to imagine dwellings worse than Paidi's house that 'had no chimney, just a hole in the thatch through which smoke came' (*SP*: 29), Macken shows us even poorer places, where people live in inhumane conditions:

> The houses were thrown at one another. The dirt ways between were muddy and smelled vilely with pigs and the dirt of dogs and the leavings of humans. Most of the houses wanted re-thatching. They were green with moss and decay, and the walls were stained green. Few of them had chimneys. (*SP*: 252)

The presentation of poverty of Irish households receives great attention and space in the novel, and the portrayals of the landlords' estates constitute a striking contrast to the ones, in which the tenants live. The description of the outside view of Wilcocks' house gives a picture that even the nearby stables are better than his tenants' accommodation: 'The house was as broad

as it was long. At the back there was a great cobblestoned yard closed in on all sides by two-storey slated stables and carriage houses.' (*SP*: 69) What sharpens further the distinction between the two social classes is the detailed presentation of the opulent interior of the rooms in Wilcocks' house. The 'huge kitchen' with its 'great copper pots and pans', 'flagged floor', a big table and 'enormous kitchen cupboards groaning with their weight of delf and jugs and plates and mugs', and 'a joint of meat' (*ibid.*) makes uncle Markus' possessions — 'a wooden box pegged to the wall that held a few crocks, a few plates' (*SP*: 16), and two bags of straw that serve as beds, look even more beggarly.

The detailed portrayal of living conditions is indicative of Macken's determination to create a believable story so that the reader will relate with the characters. The accurate presentation of physical objects and mention of actual events and historical facts endow the novel's characters, and their exploits, with greater credibility. This brings to mind Charles Orser's view on the expressive power of fiction. Orser explores the pre-famine and famine era in Ireland from an archaeological point of view, and highlights that 'writers of fiction were generally more expressive in their descriptions of the cottiers' homes than most serious chroniclers. As a result, early nineteenth-century novels provide some of the most memorable images of the material conditions of cottier life'.[26] Even though Macken wrote *The Silent People* in the 1960s, his work reveals a profound knowledge of the ethnographical, cultural and historical context of the time described in his novel. It indicates his desire to use that knowledge to create a truthful account of a tragic period in Irish history. This allows us to consider the necessity to memorialize collective traumas. Leerssen explains the importance of what he terms 'remembrancing':

> The importance of remembrancing […] means that the past, whenever it is contemplated in all its injustice and brutality, inspires fresh generations with renewed rancour and indignation, and that the improvements of the present are at best but fragile ways of glossing over the deep-seated traumas, constantly threatened by the continuing legacy of remembered hostility and violence.[27]

Macken shows in his novel that remembrance of injustice and brutality are crucial in the formation of the images of the Self and the Other, and in the reinforcement of the perceptions of national characters.

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[26] Charles E. Jr. Orser, 'Of Dishes and Drains: An Archaeological Perspective on Irish Rural Life in the Famine Era', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), pp. 120-135, p. 122.
[27] Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, 1996, p. 180.

The auto-image

As we have seen, scarcity and physical privation versus affluence, provided by the descriptions of food and dwelling, draw a distinction between the two contrasting images — 'us' and 'them'. The poor Irish constitute the Self, while the wealthy landlords, either English or Irish, are identified as the Other. The polarity between these images is made prominent by means of certain elements that convey cultural dissimilarity, and language is one of them. Perhaps because the novel is written in English, the reader may initially be unaware that its characters speak in Irish. An episode at the fair, showing Dualta and Sorcha witnessing a pedlar's efforts to sell a coat, ably indicates the characters' use of their native language. While touting customers to buy the coat, the pedlar 'suddenly shouted in English' (*SP*: 9). The word 'suddenly' is interesting to note, as it succeeds in achieving two functions. It conveys Dualta and Sorcha's surprise, and at the same time, it also surprises the reader with the unexpected discovery of their use of Irish. The fact that the characters speak Irish is confirmed further in the quotation: 'most people didn't understand the English, but the pedlar mimicked all the virtues of the coat.' (*SP*: 9) By balancing the reader's and the characters' perceptions, a closer connection between the text and the reader is secured. Dualta and Sorcha's reaction to the pedlar — their laughter, should also be noted. It is unclear what exactly the young people find amusing: the sound of the English language or the pedlar's entertaining gestures and movements that accompany his calling attention to the coat, or perhaps both. It is obvious, though, that the Otherness of the pedlar generates neither incivility nor animosity.

Importantly, the episode highlights that at the time described in the novel, Irish, and not English, is spoken by the majority of the Irish population, as suggested by the expression 'most people'. It is interesting to juxtapose this detail with another mention of language referred to later in the novel. The local landlord Mr. Bradish urges his tenants to vote for the English Protestant candidate but not for O Connell in the forthcoming election: 'Some of the people who knew no English were saying, "What did he say? What was the letter about?"' (*SP*: 196) The word 'some' is an indication of the spread of English among the Irish population. This detail links the novel's fictitious presentation of the events to real facts. Readers who are familiar with Ireland's history will mark the historical truth reflected in *The Silent People*, and those, who are not, might consider the reason for language change. The statistics is significant:

> By the end of the 18th Century, less than 50% of the population was monolingual Irish-speaking and that sector consisted primarily of the rural poor. This sector was decimated by the Great Famine of 1845 — 1850 and by subsequent emigration. By the

end of the 19th Century, monolingual Irish speakers consisted of only 1% of the population.[28]

This suggestive method of directing the reader's attention towards the issue of the Irish language interchanges with the novel's descriptive images. One of the characters that represent the auto-image, and a testament to the plight of Irish culture, is a local poet from the Valley of the Flowers, Flan McCarthy, an idiosyncratic personage:

> His hair was wild and he wore a beard which was turning white although his hair was still fairly dark. His clothes were not good. They were badly patched, and his pockets sagged with books, and from all of him pieces of manuscript seemed to be peering in a hopeless jumble. His stockings were falling down on his legs, and his shoes could do with being replaced. [...] He had a big nose and deep blue eyes with a piercing look, perhaps because he was short-sighted, or perhaps because he was used to being alone and looking into the middle distance. (*SP*: 140)

The figure of the poet is a perfect example of Macken's utilization of a stock character, for such a portrayal of Flan's characteristics — slovenly in appearance and habits, and a somewhat abstracted bard could fit any poet, regardless of their nationality. At the same time, both Flan's looks and his behaviour correspond to Leerssen's description of the stereotypical Irishman: 'non-rational, dismissive of practical expediency and reason, driven by dreams, visions, myths and feelings.' [29] Hence, relying on a common literary and social stereotype, Macken appropriates it for the novel's context and equips the character with attributes of the auto-image: the poet has a distinctly Irish-sounding name, he writes his verses in the Irish language, and lives in harsh conditions. Indeed, when Dualta sees Flan's house, he marks that it is 'a hard place for a poet': its thatch 'was aged and its colour blended with the surroundings, the green parts of it being like lichen', the door was 'unpainted and sagged', and 'the windows had no frames' (*SP*: 139). Flan, however, is more concerned with his creative pains and works, and Dualta characterizes these aspects with admiration and joy: 'They were words in Irish, a succession of adjectives. They described brightness. The writing was firm and clear and beautifully proportioned.' (*ibid*.) Poetry is clearly important in *The Silent People*. It was noted earlier in the analysis that the novel is introduced by a poem. Interestingly, its author is Flan McCarthy. This detail implies that the poet is a real figure, thus achieving verisimilitude in the story.

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[28] An Coimisinéir Teanga, <https://www.coimisineir.ie/faoin-teanga?lang=EN>.
[29] Leerssen, 'Irish' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 193.

There are more characters that have a penchant for poetry. For example, Dualta's ward Colman Daxon 'makes' songs (*SP*: 198). He sings one of them at the Clare election, and it is commended by Father Finucane. Daniel O Connell cites Byron during his speech at the election, and, at the same time, Flan's poem that had made appearance in the prologue is presented again to emphasize the importance of the moment for the Irish nation. Moreover, Flan delivers his song at Una and Dualta's wedding, and there are more episodes that use poems. The introduction of poetry at the most important moments of the narrative suggests that it is appreciated and understood by its characters — common people, who Dualta is striving to resemble and associate with. The fact that Irish cottiers are attuned to poetry presents this trait as a positive element of the auto-image, which is reinforced by Dualta's wish to 'become part of the people' (*SP*: 116), reiterated throughout the novel.

The idea of the poetic giftedness of Irish common people is strengthened by the presentation of another character, Carrol O Connor, a hard-working and even-tempered farmer from the Valley of the Flowers. Even though Carrol is far from being a bard or a poet, he describes himself in rather a poetic way: as 'a storage vessel used to pass on the beautiful native culture by word of mouth in an unbroken line that stretched back to the mists of time.' (*SP*: 152) Linking a common farmer to such poetic word pictures triggers the thought that the natural inclination to be poetic is typical of the Irish. There is a sense that the poetic spirit connects Ireland's past and present, and that the character of Flan McCarthy summons up the images of Ireland's early settlers, who took poets along, as they sailed 'across seas to a strange and hidden land', with a belief that the songs of bards were magical and that they would 'provide protection from the unfriendly spirits of the universe'.[30] Flan, then, can be seen as a protector of the Irish cultural heritage. But at the same time, his poetry carries the meaning that Ireland and Irishness need to be protected. The purpose of the novel's emphasis on the poetic element, therefore, is to enhance the favourable perception of the auto-image, draw attention to the position of Irish culture and highlight the damaging consequences of colonial oppression.

Cultural circumstances

The poetic motif leads us to reflect upon the great talents that the Irish land produces. We can think of the eighteenth-century popular poets and playwrights Oliver Goldsmith, Richard

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[30] Amy Gutman, 'Background Books: The Irish', *The Wilson Quarterly (1976-)*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring, 1985), pp. 94-97, p. 94.

Sheridan and William Congreve. These authors of Irish descent worked in the English language and their works became the standard of English literature. Henry Craik relevantly remarks on the impact of English upon Irish culture: 'Was there ever an Irish man of genius who did not get himself turned into an Englishman as fast as he could?'[31] Pondering over Goldsmith's, Sheridan's and Congreve's verse, written 'primarily for sophisticated London audiences',[32] and the context in which they were produced, we may compare them to Flan McCarthy from the Valley of the Flowers, and his poetry in Gaelic. It appears that the image of Flan's indigent life in his dilapidated hut brings out the miseries of the pre-famine and famine years, and, on a larger level, the destructive impact of British colonial rule on Irish culture. It might be expected that in this case, the matter of languages, and the issue of culture in general, would be straightforward — the language of the oppressor deserving to be depicted in a negative manner, while the language of the oppressed should be held in high esteem. Nonetheless, their function is highly complex, and points to a notable ambiguity of the auto- and hetero-images. In *The Silent People*, the English language does not distinguish the Self from the Other. This is in stark contrast to the Ukrainian-speaking Self versus the Russian-speaking Other in *Maria*. Even though Irish is indeed shown as the native language of the Irish people, English is not perceived with hostility and does not generate unpleasant connotations as in the context of Samchuk's novel, in which the use of the Russian language evinces a strong connection with Otherness, and denotes cruelty, destruction, torture and death. A difference in the presentation of languages and their role in image construction in famine fiction would be an interesting topic for the future research of Irish and Ukrainian literary texts.

Macken's appraisal of enlightened thought, of a sound judgement and his conviction of the importance of education, where knowledge is a universal advantage that can be achieved by means of any language, permeates the narrative. An understanding that cultures should not be prejudiced is provided by the convergence of two elements — languages and knowledge. This constitutes a strong thematic idea, whose importance is evident from the characters' passion for learning and their social positions. Uncle Marcus is a teacher, Dualta is keen on reading and learning, Una receives a good education and becomes a teacher in the Valley of the Flowers, Wilcocks is well-read and has a large library, Father Finucane and Daniel O Connell are well-educated people, fluent in Irish and English, who value knowledge. Notably, while fleeing Fáirche, Dualta brings with him two books on his journey, one is a copy of

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[31] Craik quoted by Declan Kiberd in *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1998), p. 33.
[32] Gutman, p. 94.

Goldsmith's *History of England, Rome and Greece*[33] and the other is 'about the travels of Gulliver' (*SP*: 31). Apart from indicating the protagonist's interest in learning and his ability to use English, the authors of these books are also worth considering. Both are written in English by Anglo-Irish authors, who were born in Ireland to English parents. This points to the deep entrenchment of the English language in Irish culture prior to the Great Famine due to Britain's long-lasting domination. The entanglement of national belonging, ascendancy, languages, and religion contributes to the formation of the complex construct of hybrid identity. This issue will be touched upon later in our analysis, while discussing Una's wish to 'become' Irish.

Furthermore, those characters, who are not schooled, regard knowledge with respect and awe. For instance, the poor cottier Máirtín Joyce thinks that it is 'a wonderful thing, powerful' (*SP*: 31), and philosophically remarks that 'The gift of the talk might be better than a charge from a gun' (*SP*: 34). As a result, a desire to learn and an ability to see its benefits can be seen as indicative of the Irish, and hence, the auto-image is perceived in even more positive terms. The presentation of the characters' appreciation for education corresponds with Gutman's underlining of the power of words in her review of Irish literary flair: 'Ireland's most enduring victories have been won not by the sword, but by the pen.'[34] Macken's intention to emphasize the importance of knowledge is also reflected in the protagonist's name, whose most famous bearer was the seventeenth-century Irish historian Dubaltach Mac Fir Bisigh, regarded as 'the last of Gaelic scholars'.[35] Perhaps, an indication of a link between the novel's character who gravitates towards learning, and the real historical figure is expressed in Dualta's humorous reply to O Connell's question of who they are, when Dualta and Cuan meet the prominent Irishman in the mountains: 'We are scholars', said Dualta, 'travelling for our health.' (*SP*: 119)

Yet, it is impossible to overlook the ambivalent position with respect to the issue of language and knowledge in *The Silent People*. On the one hand, the novel demonstrates that the Irish language is being usurped by English, and that Irish children are inveigled into abandoning their native language. On the other hand, it is regarded as culturally superior and reflects the characters' consideration of the practical benefit of having to learn English. The pupils are taught 'the unfamiliar English words' so that one day the English language could help them change their lives:

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[33] Oliver Goldsmith, *The History of England* (1771), *The Roman History* (1769), *Grecian History* (1774).
[34] Gutman, p. 94.
[35] Peg Coghlan, *Irish Names for Children* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), p. 29.

> they all longed to learn English, feeling that it would put them on a better footing, or at the back of their minds the knowledge that some day if things were really bad they would have to emigrate and join the growing band of their race who were scattering all over the world. (*SP*: 159)

Change of language thus becomes a necessity and a requirement for a geographical move. However, apparent despair emanates from this piece of the text. It infiltrates the writer's realization of the mass exodus of the Irish from their land, prompting it to be one of the most traumatic experiences that the nation has faced. And at the same time, there is a clearly positive quality in the novel's treatment of education, even if provided through the medium of English. This is specifically shown by Dualta's attitude to books. On a night when he is supposed to open Wilcocks' house to Cuan's rebels, he is concerned about the library: 'All would be gone, consumed in fire. He didn't think it was fair. Knowledge should not be destroyed. That was vandalism.' (*SP*: 98) The fact that Dualta, a native Irish speaker, enjoys reading in English does not attenuate the positive nature of the auto-image that he represents. Even the fact that his English skills improve while he is working for Wilcocks — 'lots of Irish intonations are gone out of it' (*SP*: 85) — does not bear a negative implication. It appears, then, that the language is not a prerequisite for the characters' sense of identity. However, Una's determination to learn the Irish language when she decides to 'become' Irish signals that language does matter in forging identity. An understanding of the ambiguity of the novel's images is strengthened as the story unfolds, and its characters are endowed with facets that convey both lofty and imperfect qualities. Wit and sense of humour, religiosity, solidarity, and patriotism are some of the most pronounced attributes that embody the auto-image.

The expression of patriotism

Leerssen reflects that in 'a loose sense', patriotism is 'the presence of patriotic feeling, love of the fatherland',[36] pointing out that 'the patriot's "love of the fatherland" is directed […] towards his fellow-citizens'.[37] In *The Silent People*, it is one of the traits that clearly separates the auto- from the hetero-image for the simple reason that it is present in the portrayal of the former, and absent in the description of the latter. It would be misleading, though, to suggest that the presence of the trait *per se* allows for an unequivocal association with the auto-image. As a matter of fact, patriotic feeling deepens an understanding of a division within it and

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[36] Leerssen, 'Patriotism' in Leerssen and Beller, p. 393.
[37] *Ibid*, p. 394.

constitutes its core contradiction. The novel shows that interpretation of patriotism, especially when politically and ideologically charged, can take different forms.

There is an episode that demonstrates that the protagonist is uncomfortable with his patriotism. Dualta is embroiled in self-reproach when 'his loyalties are torn',[38] as he warns Wilcocks of the raid on his house. On the one hand, Dualta questions his loyalty and belonging to the group of rebels, led by Cuan McCarthy: 'Who am I betraying?' and 'What will they think of me?' (*SP*: 103) On the other hand, he is fond of Wilcocks and in love with his daughter, and he does not wish to bring them any harm. Wilcocks' thoughts on Dualta illuminate and interpret Dualta's position well: 'He was a traitor but he was not all bad.' (*SP*: 113) Dualta's anguish reveals him to be an upright and kind-hearted person, and also points to the ambiguity of such notions as loyalty and patriotism in that they appear relative to one's position. Interestingly, Wilcocks considers Dualta a good person, and Cuan does not condemn him either, for these diametrically opposed characters are aware of Dualta's fairness. However, the best examples of the true extent and nature of the novel's representation of patriotism and its polarity are provided by its two most notable Irish independence fighters, Daniel O Connell and Cuan. The first meeting of Dualta and Cuan with Daniel O Connell takes place in the mountains during O Connell's hare-hunt. The scene is interesting due to its presentation of a stereotypical perception of the Irish by the Irish. Having recognized the famous person, whose images he saw in newspapers and magazines, Dualta notes that O Connell looks 'as curious as a Kerryman' (*SP*: 119). On learning that Dualta is 'a Galwayman [...] and a Connachtman', O Connell teases him with an Irish proverb: 'Where did you meet a Connachtman with learning?' Immediately, Dualta retorts with: 'or a Munsterman with honesty?' (*ibid.*) The characters' cheerful banter suggests that they develop an amicable relationship from the start, while the allusions to regional identities indicate a lack of uniformity of the auto-image. This is strengthened by Cuan's hostility towards the Irish hero of the moment, O Connell: 'He was looking at O Connell with a blank face.' (*SP*: 120) Cuan's tendency to behave in a serious way in his dealings with most people is noticeable throughout the novel. Yet, in this situation, his verbal outburst arises from his repudiation of O Connell's political position. Cuan's debate with O Connell reveals the difference in their perception of patriotism, even though both of them are Irish freedom fighters. Cuan's opposition to O Connell lies in his dismissal of the Leader's call for and practice of nonviolent methods of struggle against the English, as it contradicts his own vision of gaining independence. Cuan's tone and rhetoric make it clear that

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[38] Ultan Macken, *Walter Macken: Dreams on Paper* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2009), p. 381.

he disapproves of O Connell. This becomes abundantly clear from Cuan's expression of his resentment regarding O Connell's affluence — the Leader is 'getting a thousand pounds a week from the Catholic Rent' (*SP*: 121). Perhaps, the maddening situation with his lover, Annie, with whom Cuan was co-conspirator against the English landlords, solidified his notion of patriotism. Cuan realizes that Annie's interest in building up 'a creditable number of acres in her own name, which one by one would revert to her' (*SP*: 110) rather than in patriotism meant that she used his patriotic sentiment for her own gain. Annie's improbity added to a stereotypical image of an Irish freedom fighter, pictured in his imagination, that one should be poor, so unlike O Connell. Therefore, Cuan regards O Connell's attempts to persuade him of the necessity of moderation in patriotism — for 'unreasonable patriotism will always lead to violence' (*SP*: 123), as flawed and futile. Cuan's loathing of the English at the end of their conversation, 'Nothing has ever come from them except from the point of the pike and the barrel of the gun. Nothing ever will.' (*SP*: 124), and his persisting negative perception of O Connell demonstrate how difficult it is to change people's firmly held beliefs, confirming the rigid nature of stereotypes. Their unchangeable quality is stressed by Aronson: 'once formed, stereotypes are resistant to change on the basis of new information'.[39] Yet, in time, Cuan will change his mind about violent methods of resistance.

Notwithstanding that both Cuan and O Connell represent the auto-image of the Irish, it can be seen that they differ entirely, and generate both support and distrust. Dualta voices people's disparate attitudes towards O Connell well:

> You thought he was an honest man and a sincere patriot and a truly pious Catholic, or you thought he was a deceiver, using public pennies for his own ends, a demagogue, battering on emotions of a volatile and uneducated people, an impious man using God for his own ends. (*SP*: 121-2)

These opposite images reflect the context of early-nineteenth-century Ireland, and are symbolic of people's divided views on the methods of struggle for independence. Due to the fact that Daniel O Connell was a real figure, and because neither Cuan nor O Connell is presented as an entirely positive or fully negative figure, Macken's story gains more credibility. Moreover, perhaps these two opposite images have a special purpose. By comparing Cuan's forceful ways to O Connell's non-violent methods of struggle, readers are invited to look at Ireland's striving for independence with their own critical eye. Following Eschenburg's insights on the elements that 'make it possible for stereotypes to be used in order to liberate or challenge, rather than

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[39] Aronson quoted by Beller, 'Stereotype' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 429.

restrict, readers' reactions',[40] the presentation of the difference between the two approaches to gaining independence may have a liberating effect in *The Silent People* and enable readers to form their own view on this matter.

Reflecting on the term 'point of view' or 'viewpoint', meaning 'a particular attitude or way of considering a matter' and 'a position from which something is observed',[41] Beller reminds us that it has developed in relation to the painter's perspective in Renaissance painting, and has become an all-pervasive metaphor relevant for the study of intercultural representations. Beller explains that the 'perspectival situatedness' of this term relates to the perspective of a narrator or a character, or 'viewing angle'[42] in general literary usage. Interestingly, in *The Silent People*, from the characters' antithetical visions of an independent Ireland, the author's own attitude to this very issue becomes apparent. Macken's viewing angle is perceptible from the position Dualta takes — he distances himself from Cuan shortly after the meeting with O Connell. Macken's focus on peaceful methods of gaining independence is strengthened by the episode that shows Dualta's last meeting with O Connell, when the Leader is on his deathbed. The famine is at its most destructive, and the protagonist is frustrated by O Connell's weakness and his inability to stave off the famine; yet, there is no disappointment with his legacy:

> He was sorry he had come. There was no hope. Now the people were really on their own. The voice was silent. It was weak and dying, it was ten, twenty, years too old, and the black horseman could ride unreined. (*SP*: 286)

The imagery of despair rather endorces O Connell's greatness and the righteousness of his way of fighting for Irish people's rights. This endorsement of 'the Liberator' is validated by the fact that his figure receives more space and attention in the novel than Cuan's, and because Cuan himself eventually arrives at an understanding of the fallibility of his own position.

Dualta's and Cuan's contrasting outlooks on patriotism lead to the conflict within the auto-image in the episode when the latter is exhorting the country people to resist paying the hanging gales, and the former condemns the use of violent actions. Cuan's emotional outburst — his renouncing of friendship with Dualta, brings to the surface what has been palpable from the onset of their acquaintance — their incompatibility due to their choice of political tactics. When, as a result of confrontation between the peasants and the debt collectors, one of the local farmers, Moran McCleary, is shot, his death becomes a turning point for Cuan, when he feels

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[40] Eschenburg quoted in *ibid.*, p. 432.
[41] Wierlacher & Stötzel quoted by Beller, 'Perspective, Point of View' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 395.
[42] *Ibid*.

remorse and wishes to disengage from violent methods. Dualta's judgement of Cuan's 'patriotism' has a momentous effect on him: 'You will always bring death. Only death to other people. That is what the great patriots do. They are like the generals. They are always safe behind the battles while they incite the innocent to die.' (*SP*: 237)

This part of the novel is worthy of attention, for it clearly demonstrates the process of layering within the auto-image. But even though the image of a true patriot is not uniform in *The Silent People*, there is a component that can be considered a key factor for the construction of the novel's auto-image — the characters' Catholic identity, which will be discussed in the following part. As a matter of fact, it contributes to Cuan's eventual acceptance of O Connell, and is detectable from his reaction to the priest's call to vote for 'the Catholic candidate' in the church (*SP*: 194). The religiosity of the Irish permeates the novel, becoming the most distinctive feature separating the Self from the Other. It seems worth starting the discussion the role religion plays in the creation of the positive auto-image with Una Wilcocks' conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism, as it very effectively illustrates the importance that faith holds in Irish society at the time.

Questions of religion

Una can be rightly regarded as a transitional character in *The Silent People* due to her move from an Anglo-Irish background to the Irish social and cultural domain. Its ambiguity is highlighted in Julian Moynahan's explanation of attributes that constitute Anglo-Irish identity: 'the doubled or split consciousness of a unique situation' that entails 'a link with, yet removal from, English origins and English society' and 'a closeness to, and yet a removal or isolation from, the native Irish community'.[43] Even though it is not stated clearly that Una's father, George Wilcocks, is English, his belonging to the class of wealthy landlords and his Protestant faith presuppose his English descent. His name also suggests his English roots. As Una's mother was Irish, her transition can be deemed to be a result of her hybrid identity. Una's conversion to the Catholic faith and her determination to 'become' Irish notably strengthens the positive representation of Catholicism and Irishness and fulfils the role of the catalyst of the English perception of the Irish. Una's hybridity is thus an important factor that sheds light on the ambivalence of image construction.

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[43] Julian Moynahan, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in A Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.13.

Una's announcement of her change of religious beliefs immediately creates a distance between the daughter and father, revealing the extent and depth of prejudice against Irish Catholicism. The negative clichéd schemata regarding Irish Catholics, evident from Wilcocks' perception of their faith as 'that superstition' (*SP*: 88), are all the more puzzling given that Una's mother, Kathleen, was an Irish Catholic, who renounced her faith in order to marry Wilcocks. Although carrying a different meaning, the situation in which Kathleen was cast aside by her Irish family years ago and Una now rejected by her father, shows the mechanisms of construction of the Other in terms of religious beliefs.

Una's and Kathleen's Otherness exposes the existence of mutually prejudiced attitudes between Protestants and Catholics, and England and Ireland, long before An Gorta Mór, indicating their continuity through successive generations. An understanding of Una's hybrid identity makes the issue of stereotyping even more complex. It shows that negative perceptions work both ways and are not applied to the hetero-image solely, as we shall see this later when discussing the character Mrs Bradish. Wilcocks' stance clearly shows that Protestant-Catholic antagonisms stem from power imbalance. His question 'What do you think has made us what we are?' (*SP*: 90) is an expression of superiority of his class and possibly nation, over Una's 'step into the gutter' (*ibid*.), and an indication that his faith is the most suitable for his position in society. Wilcocks' rhetoric is not ungrounded, for Una's 'perverted' (*ibid*.) decision to abandon the privileged class, religion, and lifestyle leads to prolonged hardship and misery. It also puts an accent on authenticity reminding us of the Anti-Catholic Penal Laws that had a major negative impact on Irish society and plunged Ireland 'into deeper poverty for years to come'.[44] In this way, by showing a connection between cultural and religious belonging and economic well-being, Catholic Ireland's unfair position is confirmed.

The conversation between the father and daughter demonstrates how stereotypes are structured around and propelled by the context, in which the characters live. Equally important, it shows how stereotypes also participate in creating this context. This observation is in line with Gerndt's pinpoint explanation: 'Fundamentally, stereotypes are fictions; but their cultural study has found that, while stereotypes distort reality, they also create problematic realities of their own'.[45] The reality depicted in *The Silent People* is clearly complicated by the characters' deeply-entrenched stereotypical beliefs. Here, we may consider not only Una and Wilcocks,

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[44] *Anti-Catholic Penal Laws In Ireland*, https://www.yourirish.com/history/17th-century/introduction-of-anti-catholic-penal-laws.

[45] Gerndt quoted by Beller, 'Stereotype' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 430.

but also Cuan, Mrs Bradish and other characters, whose behaviour patterns perpetuate prejudice and stereotypes.

Wilcocks' rage at his daughter's decision brings to the surface a complex interconnection between religion, politics, ideology and power. These issues are so tightly knit and interspersed with preconceived ideas that it is difficult to disentangle facts from untruths. This is suggested, for instance, by Wilcocks' immediate connection between religion and politics. To Wilcocks, being a Catholic means to side with 'this O Connell, the leader of the Catholics, vulgar, foul-mouthed and unscrupulous, backed up by those ignorant power-mad priests.' (*SP*: 89-90) While Kathleen 'was a rotten branch on the family tree' (*SP*: 88) in the eyes of her Irish family due to her conversion to Protestantism, Una becomes the Other for her father because she joins the Catholic Church: 'a religion of superstition and idolatry' (*SP*: 89), which, in Wilcocks's opinion, has acquired a politicized dimension. O Connell's campaign for Catholic Emancipation, which was probably the most divisive issue in British domestic politics in the first part of the nineteenth century, shows that Wilcocks' view is not ungrounded. This confirms the importance of the issue of power in all aspects of social systems.

The story of Una's mother and the scene of Una's dissension with Wilcocks demonstrate the difficulty in changing or removing peoples' beliefs. They can be suppressed, but tenaciously remain intact unless one consciously embraces a change, like Una. The young girl's open-mindedness, understanding and non-judgmental attitude towards other people are to a certain extent shaped by education that also leads to her confidence in making the change. She admits to Wilcocks that the decision was influenced by her encounters with 'many people', who became 'milestones on the road back to the religion' of her mother, during the years of study 'in Paris, in London, in Dublin' (*SP*: 89). A point can be made that the possibility of a belief change is determined by people's epistemic state.[46] However, it does not provide extensive explanation in terms of Wilcocks' own prejudiced outlooks, considering that Una is his daughter, and he is also a well-educated and intelligent person. With regret, Una remarks about her father that 'on many things his mind was closed' (*SP*: 86). The conflict between the characters demonstrates, therefore, that the greatest obstacle in dealing with stereotypes and prejudice is that there is no clear-cut pattern of their emergence, or specific methods for their riddance. Deleuze's explanation of the mechanisms of clichés arising from his exchange with Bergson, which although related to the discussion of cinematographic images, also proves

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[46] This point is touched upon by Eleonora Cresto, who examines 'the process of acquiring new beliefs and getting rid of old ones' in 'A Model for Structural Changes of Belief', *Studia Logica: An International Journal for Symbolic Logic*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Apr., 2008), pp. 431-451, p. 431.

relevant for literary ones: 'As Bergson says, we do not perceive the thing or the image in its entirety, we always perceive less of it, we perceive only what we are interested in perceiving. [...] We therefore normally perceive only clichés'.[47] This captures Wilcocks' unfair attitude towards Una's change, as he did not mind his wife's conversion to Protestantism. His perception of the Irish and issues connected with Irishness is based on deeply-rooted negative stereotypes that are culturally, politically and socially sustained by specificities of contemporary discourse.

Wilcocks' prejudice to Irish Catholicism is in stark contrast with his high regard in relation to his own Protestant faith. His denigration of Catholics feeds on his desire to look 'better' than them, thus allowing him to value the Self more than the Other. This perspective echoes Fein and Spencer's argument that 'prejudice often serves a self-affirming function for individuals'.[48] But if Wilcocks feels the need for self-affirmation, then, it can be suggested that his view of the Irish as enemies is a signal that his self-image is threatened:

> Do you realise how they hate us and our holy religion? Do you realise the terror they have brought again and again on this land in order to eradicate it? Have you thought of the thousands of martyrs who have died for the Protestant faith? (*SP*: 90)

His fear of the Irish may be caused by the fact that Protestants are viewed and treated as oppressors. Una provides a good explanation of Wilcocks' fear to Dualta, when the latter sees a caricature of the Irish in the English magazine in Wilcocks' library: 'You ridicule what you fear […] in order by laughing at it to make it appear innocuous.' (*SP*: 75) Her further remark 'you are many, we are few' not only emphasizes the division into 'us' and 'them', but also reveals Una's awareness of the unjust relations between the wealthy class of landlords and the poor Irish cottiers: 'There are a few thousand people who own the whole country surrounded on all sides by millions and millions of people who do not wish them well.' (*ibid*.) The ironic undertone of the 'word 'few' gives a stronger meaning to the oppressive nature of the ruling elite owning what rightly belongs to the majority. Perhaps, the depth of Wilcocks' prejudicial convictions is better understood if the extent of time during which 'Protestants and Catholics defined themselves through their difference from one another'[49] long before the time of Una's exchange with her father is borne in mind. Interestingly, the mention of the terror 'brought' by

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[47] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Caleta, p. 20.

[48] Steven Fein and Steven J. Spencer in *Stereotypes and Prejudice: Essential Readings* ed. by Charles Stangor (Publisher: Psychology Press; Pub place: Hove, Philadelphia, PA, 2000), p. 173.

[49] Áine McGillicuddy, *Rene Schickele and Alsace. Cultural Identity between the Borders* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2011), p. 10.

the Irish, and their purported ability to destroy the land achieves the reverse effect in the novel, and the Protestants are perceived by readers as the Other and a threat to Ireland and its people.

Returning to Deleuze's views on images, it is useful to look at his clarification of their possible change in order to understand the reason for Una's difference from her father. Deleuze makes it clear that

> if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break, then a different type of image can appear; a pure optical-sound image, the whole image without metaphor, brings out the thing in itself, literally, in its excess or horror or beauty, in its radical or unjustifiable character, because it no longer has to be 'justified', for better or for worse ....[50]

Una's perceptions of the Irish and the English appear to have been shaped by education, and by her feelings for Dualta. Appropriating cinematic discourse to our literary needs, it can be concluded that because Una is devoid of prejudicial attitude to the Irish, she can see their virtues. Una's cognizance of the Irish is decidedly strengthened by her close attachment to her late mother, who taught her to pray in 'the Catholic way' (*SP*: 89). Therefore, her transition to Irishness can be viewed as an enactment of love and loyalty to Kathleen and her Motherland. Being a product of a blending of two cultures, two religions and two identities, Una can now make her own choices, and opts for her Irish identity as 'a way of being in the world.'[51] Una's qualities strikingly remind us of those from the description of the Edgeworth family, one of whom, Maria Edgeworth, is regarded as 'the true begetter of the Anglo-Irish literary line':[52] 'they knew who they were, nursed no inferiority feelings toward the English gentry, and were convinced that by education and application one might become almost anything within reason.'[53] Having given up the comfortable, privileged life in her father's estate, Una takes her late mother's maiden name and settles in the Village of the Flowers as Miss MacMahon to become a school teacher. She wins the hearts of the local dwellers due to her kindness, decency, perseverance, and loving and caring attitude towards the pupils. These positive traits, used for the creation of an irreproachable auto-image, boost the rhetoric of the Irish national character, and make Una an exemplary character. At the same time, the complex nature of her hybrid identity is indicated by the feeling as if 'she was wandering in the twilight between two worlds' (*SP*: 211). Una's reflection that 'the life of a convert is hard anyhow, abandoned by those you

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[50] Deleuze, p. 20.
[51] Kiberd, p. 164.
[52] Julian Moynahan, 'Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849): Origination and a Checklist' in Julian Moynahan, *Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press1994), pp. 12-42, p. 12.
[53] *Ibid*., p. 17.

have left and ignored by the ones you have joined' (*SP*: 156) reveals her sense of isolation and the extent to which she misses her father. It also suggests that the process of identity hybridization may never wholly be completed but instead is continually evolving.

Apart from her virtuous qualities and righteous deeds, there is another detail that allows Una to stand out from the rest of the characters — her resemblance to the Christian Mother of God. Having miraculously survived a deadly fever, Una gives birth to her long-awaited son at the height of the famine — 'she got him at a peculiar time' (*SP*: 256) the text reads, as if obeying the spirit of prophecy, uttered by a doctor, whom Dualta begs to help his ill wife. The doctor dismisses Dualta with a remark 'What you need is a miracle.' (*SP*: 306), and miracle is alluded to at the moment of the baby's birth: 'And it was a son. Was it any wonder the sun shone?' (*SP*: 310) The sunlight can be thought of as a sign from Heaven, which manifests Una's connection with the Divine, reaffirming, according to Christian belief, that all is in God's hands. This explicit religious connotation is strengthened by Una's name that means 'lamb' in Irish.[54] The reader's attention is thus drawn to the theme of religion, as in *Maria*, to show that it is given centre place. The parallel between the female character and a Divine Mother adds a godly dimension to the narrative and invokes considerations on the sacredness of life. The presentation of the state-induced famine tarnishes the hetero-image, while the Irish acquire a sacrificial and heroic image as a result of the sharp contrast between a birth bringing hope and famine spreading death.

Una's innate goodness creates the impression that Irish spirituality and faithfulness to the Catholic Church are embedded traits of the Irish national character. The oft-used phrases, such as 'With the help of God' (*SP*: 48), 'God is good.' (*SP*: 251), 'God Bless you' (*SP*: 252, 254, 256), 'God reward you.' (*SP*: 254, 255), 'If God is good.' (*SP*: 256), 'God bless all here!' (*SP*: 270), and many more phrases that mention the name of God and are evocative of the representations of Ukrainian peasants from *Maria*, are deployed in *The Silent People* to emphasize that religion is deeply entrenched in Irish society. This sense is reinforced by the most clear-cut example of the unity of Irishness and Catholicism — the figure of Father Finucane, presented in an exclusively positive light and as a source of strength for his parishioners. The priest's faith is so unflinching that it seems to aid the survival of the nation through the famine, made noticeable in the scene in which he prays fervently for Una's recovery. Yet, religion does not take a form of an idealised presentation of the Irish. In response to Dualta's doubting outcry 'Why He permitted it all?' (*SP*: 336), Father Finucane honestly

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[54] *Irish Wishes. Girl Names of Irish & Celtic Descent*, <http://irishwishes.com/girl-names/#.Vu54l3rSheA>.

admits that he cannot explain the purpose of the famine. Nevertheless, he emphasizes the importance of prayer, and justifies it by his encounter with the priest 'from the next parish' in the wood, where he went to pray in distress and saw the other priest praying, too. The scene of Father Finucane's emotional plea to God 'Why? And spare us! And give me the strength. Give me means!' (*SP*: 337) suggests that faith can bring hope, leading to the discovery of more elements that build up a favourable perception of the Irish national character. Because it is shown that Father Finucane is not isolated in his anxieties, as well as in his conviction that hope is needed in the most desperate situations, there emerges an important message provided by means of faith — the characters' spirit of solidarity. Just as the priests are united in their prayers for their parishioners, so the Irish are together in their faith, and in their wish to survive. In this way, the representation of faith in *The Silent People* calls forth some very important issues, and one of them explains what it means to be Irish. This is articulated by Father Funicane when he clarifies to Dualta what he needs to become accepted in the community in the Valley of the Flowers, and to become 'part of the people':

> You must go to wakes and weddings and funerals. You must shout God Save Ireland, and grumble about the landlords. You must shout Up Daniel O Connell, and Freedom, and watch the boys hurling in the fields and the girls dancing at the cross-roads. You must get behind the curtain they draw between the stranger and the one like themselves. You see! That way you will be able to survive and become part of them. (*SP*: 165)

This quotation overtly links politics and religion and shows their deep connection with the people's lives. Notably, in order to emphasize the distinctly Irish lifestyle, it refers to a kind of sport and an activity regarded as typically Irish.

Yet, there are also moments revealing a striking ambivalence about the characters' spirituality. Dualta's doubts in God emerge when Una gets fever, and his faith is weakened even more by the harrowing images that he sees around. He laughs, when Father Finucane suggests that they should pray for Una and her unborn baby:

> You look around and you still say this? How many have you dead now? How many people are without graves? They have been eaten by the dogs. How many more are due? They prayed. Who heard them? We were faithful. We didn't turn. We didn't jump. We didn't take soup. And we are stricken. We are being wiped out. Is this our reward? I will not pray. (*SP*: 307)

It is clear that Dualta's lack of faith is caused by the distressing circumstances, in which he finds himself. His inability to come to terms with the trauma of witnessing suffering and death, and the fear of losing his wife lead to the rejection of the core values that have guided him until

now. This validates the insight that, within a traumatic context, people's responses may develop in unforeseen ways, which can be strengthened by the observation that 'the effects of famine are highly variable and may be opposite for different individuals and groups',[55] made by Robert Dirks et al. For Dualta, a factor determining the strength of his faith is hope that he regains when Una recovers and gives birth to a son — he undertakes the 'task work' of building a road (*SP*: 311) and awaits the new harvest with hope. But the promise of survival is shattered by the new wave of blight that kills the entire crop, and by the task-work coming to an end. It is then that Dualta, driven to the brink, organizes a robbery of a ship filled with grain. This episode shows with unmistakable clarity that he acts in despair, and therefore, cannot be blamed for his unlawful behaviour. Dualta is compelled to commit the robbery in order to survive, and this places the blame onto the Other — for taking away the grain from the starving people, who grew it. The historical fact that grain was exported during the Great Famine strengthens the novel's charge on the unjust system and brings us to the part in which the image of the novel's Other should be examined.

The hetero-image

In contrast with the auto-image, the presentation of the hetero-image seems to receive less attention. This is perhaps due to a particular difficulty in discriminating between the two images, and yet, it provides a clear understanding of its Otherness. The task of distinguishing the auto- from the hetero-image would have been less challenging if the hetero-image had been clearly associated with the English, and the auto-image with the Irish. The conflict between the two characters at the beginning of *The Silent People* may initially lead us to regard the Irish characters as belonging to the auto- and the English or Anglo-Irish to the hetero-image. However, we shall see that this is not the case in the novel. In order to understand the complexity of the image construction, the scene depicting the conflict between Dualta and the Half-Sir deserves closer attention.

Dualta is hit with a whip by the Half-Sir for no apparent reason. Because the latter is rich, belongs to the class of landlords and speaks English, the association of the hetero-image with the English is easily made. Even though the Half-Sir's national belonging is not specified, he is likely to be automatically identified as English or Anglo-Irish because of the features

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[55] Robert Dirks et al, 'Social Responses During Severe Food Shortages and Famine [and Comments and Reply]', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Feb., 1980), pp. 21-44, p. 22.

characteristic of the privileged class. The contrast between the two youths is introduced by their portrayals, which also outline their personalities, bringing to the reader a negative perception of the hetero- versus a positive one of the auto-image. The depiction of the Half-Sir as a 'hard-drinking, reckless-riding, reckless-living young man' with eyes that are 'red-rimmed and bloodshot from last night's pre-fair session' (*SP*: 10) differs significantly from Dualta's description: 'Light-brown waving hair growing long, a thin sensitive nose and red lips pulled back over white teeth. An intelligent face.' (*ibid*.) The ensuing events strengthen the first negative impression of the hetero-image, and in this way, the attribution of unfavourable characteristics to the Other — the wealthy landlords, as opposed to favourable ones of the Self — the Irish poor, in general is constructed. Perhaps the notion of Dualta's wholesome appearance fills the Half-Sir with rage and makes him raise his whip: 'Suddenly a wave of distaste and frustration came over him.' (*ibid*.) The fact that the Half-Sir has a group of followers allows his aggressive image to be applied also to them, which involves the generalization principle. Their senseless cruelty is revealed in full when Dualta hits back at his wrong-doer, and the Half-Sir and his 'retinue' follow him 'roaring and shouting' (*SP*: 13). This scene invokes Beller's reference to the term 'barbarian' as the most frequent appellation used for the construction of the hetero-image.[56] The wealthy, well-dressed Half-Sir and his men are perceived by the poor, barefoot Irish as uncivilized due to their brutish behaviour. Beller's indication that the denigration of the Other as inferior 'entails the ethnocentric assumption of one's own superiority'[57] suggests that in this case, it is structured around the moral goodness of the Irish versus the cruelty of the English. This episode provides a case of generalization also regarding the Irish. Because 'the mass of people' witness the chase in silence (*SP*: 13), it shows their inferior position and an inability to act and help Dualta. The Half-Sir's thoughts convey his contempt towards the silent Irish, whom he views 'as stupid-looking as bloody bullocks' (*ibid*.), but as a matter of fact, his conduct encourages the reader to instead perceive him as the villain. The image of the Half-Sir serves thus as an example of generalization in relation to the hetero-image and participates in building an understanding of a deficiency in the English national character.

Reflecting on the characters' cruelty, one can refer to the questions that Leerssen poses while discussing people's character and moral: 'what makes them behave the way they do? From what inner disposition does this behaviour emanate?'[58] The examples of cruelty in *The*

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[56] Beller, 'Barbarian' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 266.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] Leerssen, 'Character (Moral)' in *ibid*., p. 285.

Silent People may provide us with an indication, possibly one of many. The socio-political context, in which the characters are immersed, sustains a set of relations that makes it possible for the oppressor to treat an inferior group with disdain and violence. The impunity stimulates moral corruption, which is intelligible in the case with the Half-Sir. In other words, cruel behaviour towards the inferior group is clearly authorized by the ruling elite.

It is important to remember a small detail from the scene at the fair — the pedlar's use of the English language, discussed in relation to the presentation of the auto-image at the beginning of this analysis. This detail indicates that cultural differences do not always trigger rage or unpleasant sensations. In fact, Dualta's conflict with the Half-Sir convinces us that negative perceptions and resentment are generated by acts of cruelty. Yet, when it comes to the need to define the enemy, distinctions based on cultural factors, such as language, become the most convenient instruments for this purpose. In *The Silent People*, the representatives of the system — the wealthy landlords and their supporters, bailiffs, policemen — fulfil the role of the Other. The reader discovers that these are not necessarily English.

A significant issue arises from the novel's presentation of images: the complexity of image construction and relations between the Self and the Other suggests the possibility of their reciprocal amicability. There are numerous indications that the Other can be likeable. Dualta falls in love with Una and comes to appreciate Wilcocks by living under his roof. He acknowledges that it is 'a dangerous thing to permit yourself to begin to like them', reminding himself that 'these people were his enemies' (*SP*: 83). When Una leaves, Dualta feels sorry for Wilcocks, and 'could see the hurt behind his anger' (*SP*: 91). Wilcocks is also fond of Dualta. He knows he will miss Dualta 'as a person' and 'not as a favourite gundog' (*SP*: 113) when Dualta has to escape after the unsuccessful raid on the house. The relationship between these two characters representing opposing groups of images shows that Wilcocks' prejudicial attitude towards Dualta has clearly subsided. This signals that one's mindset is not irreversibly fixed, and that prejudice can be eliminated. It is relevant to mention in this regard the figure of the English Captain, who 'lets' Dualta 'rob' the grain. Discouraged, Dualta is not sure whether to consider the Captain 'a Christian or a deceiver' (*SP*: 322). Readers are in a more advantageous position, as they get a clear picture of the Captain, whose thoughts and views, expressed in his conversation with his mates, are revealed to them by the narrator. Unlike Dualta, readers are aware of the Captain's empathy towards the staving Irish, which probably results from his wife's Irish origin. In addition, the indication that the Other is not necessarily negative is provided on several occasions by the mention of the Quakers' help during the famine: 'Quakers are coming, they say. They are good people.' (*SP*: 278) Also, there is the

figure of a policeman, who is described as 'one of the new police' (*SP*: 44). Even though he represents the system, he is Irish — he 'broke into fluent Irish' (*ibid*.) while promising Dualta and his friends protection from intimidation. Moreover, the mention that 'Many people in England are pouring their pennies into a Famine Fund' (*SP*: 277) signals that the novel does not draw a totally negative attitude towards the Other, and that a distinction between the Self and the Other can be blurred at times. From the examination of the novel's images it becomes clear that the main factor dividing the auto- and hetero-images is cruelty. It leads to violence, thoughts of revenge, and feeds prejudice. Therefore, in order to draw a fuller picture of the hetero-image in *The Silent People*, the attribute of cruelty should be discussed.

Manifestations of cruelty

The conflict between the auto- and hetero-images that is drawn from the outset by dint of the confrontation between Dualta and the landlord's son is not a one-off occurrence. It introduces a whole range of situations revealing the oppression of the Irish and its long history. This is encapsulated in the novel's structure — before readers reach the issues of the presentation of the famine years, *The Silent People* provides many examples of uneven relations between rich landlords and poor cottiers, a poverty-stricken country and her people. The cases of cruel treatment of the Irish form the perception that the injustice is brought about by the English. The most dramatic scene of cruelty, and an indication of England's accountability for it, is the execution of two Irish men. Cuan brings Dualta to look at a hanging, for the latter is 'jibbing' at going to Wilcocks (*SP*: 62). Cuan's thoughts on a raid on Wilcocks' house show that he knows well how to stir a desire for vengeance: 'Out of persecution would come bitterness, a lust for revenge.' (*SP*: 108) The men, who were to be hanged, supposedly shot the bailiff. One of them turns out to be Dualta's friend Paidi, whose family had helped Dualta escape from the Half-Sir. Paidi's death is particularly emotional because it is undeserved. Cuan has the information that proves Paidi's innocence: he spoke with the people, who knew for certain that the young man was caught when 'coming home from courting a girl' (*SP*: 65), and that he simply 'happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time' (*SP*: 64). This incident is an example of the blatant injustice towards the Irish, and another indication of their vulnerability. Dualta is perplexed at why those who knew that Paidi was innocent did not 'come forward and say so' (*SP*: 67), but Cuan voices what every Irish person, gathered in the crowd to see the execution, realizes: 'They would have hanged too,' said Cuan. 'They wouldn't have saved Paidi. Just five dead instead of two.' (*ibid*.)

Depictions of unjust treatment prompt the view that it inevitably generates hatred, and, in time, will consolidate the oppressed in their wish for revenge. Una is firmly convinced that 'violence only breeds violence' (*SP*: 229). Indeed, soon after Paidi's execution Dualta joins Cuan and his men. That cruelty leads to conflict and confrontation is clear from the presentation of O Connell's achievement of tremendous success in uniting the nation against British rule. The novel's events demonstrate that the development of the Irish nationalist movement is fuelled by injustice, particularly felt at the time of An Gorta Mór. Kinealy points out that 'For some historians, the Famine had come to represent a simple nationalist narrative of Irish history, which at its core was anti-British',[59] and Christopher Morash notes that a nationalist movement was 'a liberation movement compelled to participate in the discourse of progress.'[60] These views are shared by Danny Morrison, who sees Macken's trilogy *Seek the Fair Land*, *The Silent People* and *The Scorching Wind* as 'commonly taken as eulogizing the cause of Irish nationalism.'[61] Morrison clarifies that the trilogy was 'tacitly appropriated, post-'69, into the republican canon as a populist text reflecting the continuity of struggle against the traditional *outside* enemy'.[62] This enemy is recognizable in *The Silent People*, chiefly due to the scenes of injustice and cruelty committed by the Other.

The central figures characterized by callousness, a trait, which leads to cruelty, are the rent collectors, Glasby, Cringe and Clarke, whose portrayals are reflective of the negative part they play in the novel. Cringe is depicted as a 'bitter', 'small', 'wizened', 'pint-sized tyrant', for whom 'nobody had a good word' (*SP*: 176), and Clarke deserves special attention, as his role as a landlord's agent brings to the fore the utterly corruptive nature of the Other. Clarke manages the affairs of the absentee landlord Tewson, whom Dualta describes as 'all-powerful' and 'the sort of nemesis hanging over the valley' (*SP*: 174). Clarke's unbending attitude towards tenants, at gale days in particular, is known to all in the Valley of the Flowers. Importantly, the characters with traditional Irish names have a decidedly positive association, for example, Una, Flan, Paidi, Máirtín, and even Cuan, who turns out to be not entirely bad. At the same time, the surname Clarke is widespread both in England and in Ireland; Glasby is one of 'the many variant Anglicized forms of the Scottish and Irish name more familiar as Gilespie';[63] and the nature of the character named Cringe is encapsulated in the meaning of his

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[59] Christine Kinealy, *Apparitions of Death and Disease. The Great Hunger in Ireland* (Connecticut: Quinnipiac University Press, 2015), p. 5.

[60] Christopher Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 57.

[61] Danny Morrison, 'Loyal Provincialist', *Fortnight*, No. 340 (Jun., 1995), pp. 32-33, p. 33.

[62] *Ibid*.

[63] *The Internet Surname Database*, <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Glasby>.

surname that makes it difficult to know the origin of its bearers. Notably, the captain who empathizes with the hungry Irish is simply named the English Captain. Clearly, the characters' names signal the fluidity of the demarcation line between the images, and that auto- and hetero-images are not constructed strictly on a national basis.

The corruptness of the landlord system is highlighted in the scene when all tenants, arriving to Clarke's house to pay their rent, have to go through three rooms and hand over 'compliments', in other words, bribes, to Clarke's relations: his brother and his wife, before they finally deal with the agent himself. Bitter irony is deployed to express the condemnation of the 'ceremony':

> So apart from rent of land, rent of house, tithe tax, cess tax, turbary rent, you had also worry about the 'compliments' to the agent's relations. It's part of life, he [George Shields] told himself. There is nothing dishonest about it. People are normally generous. They like out of pure generosity to compliment people. (*SP*: 177)

In addition, Dualta's ironic observation of Clarke's disreputable demeanour emphasizes the unjust system:

> If money runs low he [Sir Vincent Tewson] pays a visit to spur Clarke to greater effort. Clarke rarely fails him. Clarke is a just man, you see. He is a good Catholic who works hard for his master as is enjoyed in the Gospels. How can he be faulted for doing his duty according to the will of God? (*SP*: 127)

From these descriptions of Clarke, a certain detail becomes distinct that does not entirely fit in the previously outlined image of the Anglo-Irish Other — he is Irish, and a Catholic. Yet, Clarke's cruel and corrupt nature is more in line with the depictions of the Other. To emphasize that he is the Other's appointee, it is revealed that he is 'constantly being pressed from the agent in Dublin who was pressed by Tewson in London' (*SP*: 180), and that he does his best to satisfy his boss: 'Sir Vincent will be pleased with me' (*SP*: 327). Clarke's biased thoughts on the famine further pinpoint his belonging to the ruling group. He holds the view that the famine 'had been a help' and that 'When it was all over, it would be a tranquil country. It would have been cleansed of the parasites.' (*SP*: 328) Interestingly, Clarke's disapproving imputation of the Irish as parasites instead points to the exploitative nature of the ruling elite, whose well-being depends on the work of the Irish. The fact that the concept of the parasitic nature can be applied reciprocally, both by the Anglo-Irish in relation to the Irish, and by the Irish to the Anglo-Irish, depending on the position of the spected and the spectant, confirms the subjectivity of perceptions and hence, of image formation.

There are some other characters, too, whose belonging to the group of the spected or the spectant is problematic. For instance, Mr and Mrs Bradish divorce themselves from the poor Irish country people due to their affluence and high social status, notwithstanding the fact that they are Irish and belong to the Catholic Church. Mrs Bradish clearly categorizes Una as the Other: 'That girl has changed a lot. The first time I saw her I said, there's a lady, if I ever saw one. Now she's beginning to look like a dairymaid.' (*SP*: 170) With contempt, she adds that Una 'must have had common blood in her all the time.' (*SP*: 171) The well-off lady does not see any need for the poor Irish children to be educated: 'Will they need arithmetic to feed the pigs; grammar to fork the hay; spelling to manure the potato ridges?' (*SP*: 169) Mrs Bradish's portrayal of the crudeness of the poor Irish evinces her own lack of moral refinement and reveals her true self.

There are more characters, whose identity cannot be clearly connected to one group or the other. Technically, they belong to the auto-image, but in fact, they function in the novel as the Other. For example, the above-mentioned Annie, Cuan's mistress, is an Irish Catholic, whose actions may appear patriotic; however, the reader learns that she takes advantage of poorer tenants to amass acres of land for profit. Another character, a poor cottier Mogue, sells his daughter, in Dualta's wording, 'for the price of a glass of whiskey' (*SP*: 254). These characters are entirely different, and while Annie's true demeanour is hidden from people, Mogue's emanates wretchedness even from his appearance: 'his eyes were red-rimmed, from smoke, and the whites bloodshot from drink', 'He was a most unprepossessing man' (*SP*: 253), 'His breath was foetid', 'His clothes smelled' (*SP*: 254). These personages suggest that the construction of the auto- and hetero-images has its purposes. In this case, it is shown that belonging to the auto-image is not automatically positive, which indicates that Macken aims to be fair and factual in order to achieve credibility.

The ambiguity in these characters demonstrates the difficulty of presenting a clear-cut division between the auto- and hetero-images, highlighting their ability to be fluid and changeable. According to Leerssen, these processes are driven by 'a complex combination of cultural taste and political circumstance' that leads to the situation when certain images become revalorized 'over time' and 'spawn their very opposite *counter-images*'.[64] The process when images of a national character incorporate antipodal features is known as layering:

> in most cases, the image of a given nation will include a compound layering of different, contradictory counter-images, with (in any given textual expression) some aspects

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[64] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 343.

activated and dominant, but the remaining counterparts all latently, tacitly, subliminally present.[65]

In *The Silent People*, layering can be seen both within the auto- and hetero-images. The distance established between the Self and the Other is a factor in the 'othering' process, and mechanisms that cause layering of the images are never solid. In contrast to Clarke, Annie, Mogue and Mrs Bradish, the Captain from the English ship filled 'with Irish grain' (*SP*: 321) is granted only one attribute of Otherness — he is English, but he is devoid of the most prominent one — cruelty. Instead, he expresses empathy towards the famished robbers of the grain. Precisely these two features — cruelty and empathy, are meaningful when discerning the Self from the Other. In the case of the Captain, one of the factors leading to a sympathetic attitude towards the starving is the fact that his wife is Irish, 'from around those parts somewhere' (*SP*: 323). Yet, this does not apply to Wilcocks, even though he, too, had an Irish wife. Wilcocks is strenuously opposed to changing his beliefs, for his social status and pride are of greater importance.

The position of the characters that treat the oppressed with callousness, cruelty and contempt, is conditioned by the socio-economic and political context, and it grows into a mere concern to preserve their affluence and dominant position in society. This highlights the important impact of power relations on the formation of the auto- and hetero-images.[66] It also shows the difficulty in predicting any transformations within the auto- or hetero-images due to the complex intersection of social, political, ideological factors. Moreover, they are influenced by people's personal inclinations and predilections, and their psychological peculiarities, which contribute to the formative processes within images.

An examination of layering within the auto- and hetero-images cannot be complete without discussing the characters that seemingly belong to the auto-image yet whose conduct displays contradictory traits. Such examples abound in the novel. For instance, one of the Fáirche dwellers, Farley, discloses Dualta's name to the Half-Sir when Dualta is on the run (*SP*: 13). He is loyal to the novel's Other, and Uncle Marcus wittily sums him up with the remark: 'Even Eden had serpents' (*SP*: 21). Another example is provided by the scene when the Revenue Lieutenant arrives in the Valley of the Flowers to catch the illegal whiskey distiller Daxon. Macken's choice of words in the following quotation highlights the ability of the

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[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 343-4.

[66] See Leerssen's explanation of the processes within the auto- and hetero-images determined by power relations in *ibid.*, p. 343.

images to transfer between groups. The Lieutenant hires 'seven men from the other side' for help, whom he characterizes as his 'guides' in an utterly negative manner:

> He knew their kind. Hired for a shilling a day, they were the out-of-works, the misfits, the drunkards, whose assets were physical strength and a certain savage courage. […] They were available for any unpleasant job that was available. (*SP*: 148)

The question then arises whether these morally unprincipled men should be regarded as representatives of the auto- or hetero-image. The ambivalence of these characters suggests that generalizing a people, or a group of people, is largely fallible. However, the subjectivity of this view should also be taken into consideration, and the dependence of images on their position of the spected or the spectant must be borne in mind.

The division into 'us' and 'them' within the auto-image is provided by the episode that presents an election in a town, at a time when Dualta is travelling with Paidi and his friends in search for jobs. On their way, they encounter a crowd of 'the forty-shilling freeholders' (*SP*: 39) going to vote. Paidi starts calling sheep 'M-a-a-a's' (*ibid.*), and other town dwellers — 'many drunken men', join in and shout: 'Go home, ye cowards! Ye traitors! Ye dirty vote sellers!' (*SP*: 40) Even though the voters are perceived as renegades by the rest of Irish, in the next moment, one of Paidi's travel companions, Fursa, agrees to safeguard the freeholders in exchange for food and drink. This detail is explicit of people's wish to survive in destitute situations. Those in power know, it and take advantage of their vulnerability to achieve their own ends. Another episode, in which the dwellers of the Valley of the Flowers get involved in a brawl for no obvious reason, merely out of the 'illiterate desire for senseless violence' (*SP*: 182), shows the unpredictability of human nature, and indicates that the line between positive and negative perception is blurred.

Important considerations emerge from numerous episodes revealing of contradictory layers within the novel's images. One of them is whether people can be blamed for giving up their principles for food, drink, or comfort. Uncle Marcus understandingly advises Dualta not to find fault with people, as 'They are holding on to life.' (*SP*: 20) Dualta knows well how comfortable life can be. While in Wilcocks' mansion, he felt the subtle 'temptation of the big house', with its 'regular food, salt mutton and beef at frequent intervals a soft bed to lie on, like living in a well stocked fort' (*SP*: 107). Underlying each individual decision is the need to accommodate to the context in which the characters find themselves, for different reasons. In various situations, some commit themselves to ill-disposed actions in order to survive, while others try and secure a more comfortable lifestyle. There are also those who cannot come to

terms with injustice, and devote their lives to struggle against oppression. The contrasting ways in which the characters are constructed in the novel prove that their conduct largely depends on the system, which dictates social relations.

Humour in the context of famine

The theme of famine may not be the most likely choice to draw upon humour, yet, it is one of the most notable elements peppered throughout *The Silent People*. In the novel's opening, Dualta is bantering with Sorcha at the fair, and, despite the fact that he is poor, has no shoes, and can hardly afford to buy a piece of bread, his cheerful personality gains the reader's approval. Later, when Dualta is travelling with Paidi and a group of young lads, they joke and laugh 'hilariously' (*SP*: 36) regardless of the difficulties that come their way. The exploitation of humour allows serious things to be said in a joking manner and makes criticism and nagging sound inoffensive. This makes the relations between the characters more natural, lending thus credence to the novel. One such example is shown in the scene, in which O Connell wins the election: 'For good or ill, it proclaimed the reign of the Liberator, a demagogue, a thief, a scoundrel, a saint, a hypocrite, according to your impressions.' (*SP*: 218) The direct characterization of O Connell is enlivened with other characters' jocular remarks, creating a sense that he is a real-life figure and not an invented literary hero. Moreover, the ironic undertone of the unflattering epithets describing the politician encourages the reader's understanding of his virtues rather than vices.

Humour allows the characters representing the auto-image to express unpleasant opinions without fear of offending one another. In the argument between Dualta and Flan McCarthy, Flan uses a plethora of unpleasant expressions in response to Dualta's criticism of his verse: 'Commonplace clodhopper, earth-grubber, Galway ignoramus', and even worse — 'cabbage-head, turnip-top, bog-heart, muck-souled barbarian (*SP*: 142). Yet, Flan's register is not perceived by Dualta as an insult, which can be seen from his response: the young man bursts into laughter. This is in stark contrast with Dualta's reaction to 'a funny drawing' (*SP*: 73) in the magazine that he finds on the table in Wilcocks' library. The drawing that is supposed to be laughable presents the Irish, men, women and children, in a denigrating fashion:

> It was an Irish drawing, the man in the middle waving a shillelagh, a man in tattered clothes with the face of an ape, a small pug nose, red faced. Other people reeling drunk, waving kegs. All of them had apelike faces. The women had apelike faces. So had the

children. The women were ugly, with dirty clothes, streeling hair. The children looked
like the demons carved on old churches […] Not one of them had a redeeming feature.'
(*SP*: 73)

The caricature arouses Dualta's anger: his 'blood rose in his face', his hand 'clenched into a
white fist', 'the muscles bunched at the side of his jaw', and 'his nostrils flaring' (*ibid.*). An
important detail about the drawing — the mention that it was published in an English magazine,
suggests considering leading British magazines of the time, noted for their unfavourable
portrayal of the Irish.[67] This analogy sharpens the distinction between the Self and the Other,
by creating a sense of community and building solidarity through in-group inclusion and out-
group exclusion.[68] Moreover, it endorses the reader's critical attitude toward the discriminatory
colonial setting that presents the Irish in an unfair, prejudiced manner. In this way, it justifies
their inequitable treatment. Mentioning Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal* in his analysis of a
kinship between satire and moral philosophy, Nickolas Diehl expresses a point that parallels
this view: 'The analogy is […] central in guiding the reader to adopt a critical attitude toward
the cruel discourse regarding the Irish in the actual world.'[69]

Clearly, humour in *The Silent People* is presented in different forms, and aspects that
appear amusing for some characters, are not enjoyed by others. Sev'er and Ungar's research
on humour sheds light on the mechanisms of jokes. Having employed a power-based approach
to examine the influence of situational factors on the degree on acceptability of gender-based
humour, the sociologists explain that

> jokes are not "events" that are funny — or harmful — as such. Rather, joking entails a
> dynamic process where the characteristics of the joke teller and the audience interact
> with the embedded meaning of the joke. It is the interactions among these factors that
> determine whether efforts to be funny are acceptable or not.[70]

Although the presentation of humour in *The Silent People* is not based on gender, Sev'er and
Ungar's observation illuminates the contrast between Dualta's reaction to the caricature and
Flan's invective. In the context of pre-famine Ireland, humour is determined, to a certain

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[67] See the discussion of the Irish image in the *Introduction* to this thesis, pp. 25-32.

[68] Alena Minchenia, Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Yuliya Yurchuk, 'Humour as Mode of Hegemonic Control:
Comic Representations of Belarusian and Ukrainian Leaders in Official Russian Media', Chapter 9, pp. 211-231,
p. 226 in *Cultural and Political Imaginaries in Putin's Russia* by Niklas Bernsand and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa
(Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2019).

[69] Nickolas Diehl 'Satire, Analogy and Moral Philosophy', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 71,
No. 4 (Fall 2013), pp. 311-321, p. 315.

[70] Aysan Sev'er and Sheldon Ungar, 'No Laughing Matter: Boundaries of Gender-Based Humour in the
Classroom', *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan. - Feb., 1997), p. 87.

degree, by the power relations between the dominant and dominated, the wealthy and the needy. Dualta views the caricature from the perspective of his people that are being overtly denigrated and derided and perceives it as a stinging insult. Flan's verbal assault is not perceived by Dualta seriously because they are on equal terms. It can be suggested, therefore, that in cases of relations based on inferior-superior basis, jokes are better understood by representatives of the same group. This interpretation of the function of humour in famine fiction corresponds to Alena Minchenia et al's considerations in their analysis of humour as a mode of hegemonic control: 'The recurrent patterns of joking (who is laughing and whom and why) reflect and create power structures.'[71]

In *The Silent People*, the protagonist's use of a joke continues even in moments of hardship, at times acquiring a form of self-mockery. Dualta takes up 'task-work' building a road when the famine strikes, but still exchanges jolly remarks with his friend Colman, when they are 'almost at the end of their own resources' (*SP*: 311). Digging and chopping at the gravel pit near the mountain, they are making fun of Dualta's refusal to join the Engineer for lunch, notwithstanding his being hungry:

> 'There is little left to us except pride', said Dualta.
> 'I would exchange that for four ounces of mutton', said Colman.
> They laughed and spat on their hands and dug gravel. (*SP*: 314)

The deftly inserted jokes and witticisms, and the characters' self-directed humour not only show the characters' sharpness of mind, but also their capacity to laugh in time of hardship, which is revealing of their inner strength. An example of their ability to joke when in dire straits is found on the last pages of *The Silent People* that show as the two couples, Dualta and Una and Colman and Finola, having made their decision to leave the country in order to survive. Making their way to take a boat to emigrate to America, they sit on the grass by the road to get some rest and start joking and laughing. Laughter here appears to acquire a broadened meaning. On the one hand, it can be viewed as an expression of hope for survival, brought about by the possibility of emigration. On the other hand, it presents another brief respite in years of despair and misery: 'It was a relief to laugh.' (*SP*: 338)

In Macken's novel, the portrayal of the cheerful and light-hearted auto-image is in opposition to depiction of the hetero-image. *The Silent People* is, indeed, devoid of descriptions of landlords' good humour, jokes and laughter. The exception, perhaps, is the episode, in which Margaret Brandish, the daughter of the Catholic landlord, jests with her father on hearing a

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[71] Alena Minchenia, Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Yuliya Yurchuk, p. 211.

poem by Byron, recited by O Connell. Speaking about Catholic landlords, O Connell cites Byron's words on 'the new race of inborn slaves', which Margaret ironically directs to her father: 'It's a good job you have no sons, Father,' said Margaret, 'or they would be inborn slaves too.' (*SP*: 205-206) It should be observed that Margaret's joke emphasizes the dull nature of the rich landlords rather than their sense of humour. Adding the element of humour to the construction the auto-image, Macken confirms that his prime concern is to offer a favourable portrayal of the Self. Different forms of humour displayed in the novel show that this quality may serve as a functional tool for image formation in famine fiction.

The concept of silence

The role of humour is more pointed when considered in comparison with the scenes describing the Great Famine. In contrast to the characters' optimism, laughter and jokes, witty remarks and flippant comments throughout the novel, the silence of the emaciated people and the stillness of the hollow fields in the final part are eloquent in their own way and ultimately distressing. This juxtaposition triggers the thought that laughter is specific to humanity, as is language, and their lack signifies foreboding. One of the first disquieting images triggered by the hunger awaits Dualta on his way to Darrynane, where he travels to see O Connell, to make him 'talk louder' about Ireland's famine and 'go to the place where his voice will reverberate' (*SP*: 277). Long before the famine, he took the same road to the Clare Election. The once busy road is now immersed in an eerie silence:

> Think of the bands and the banners and the songs and the great jollity and the cooking fires. It was a terrible contrast. [...] Now there was only the silence of shuffling bare feet on the frost-bitten road. Feet raw and thin, dirty and red with the burn of the frost, and they were without greeting. (*SP*: 279)

Dualta is traumatized by such 'a terrible contrast', and readers' attention is drawn to his feelings — a lament for a once vibrant life and its people, by the lack of punctuation in the first sentence of the quotation. The balance between the protagonist's perception of the traumatic event and the reader's emotional response to it is thus achieved. Placed within a soundless space, the harrowing images of hungry people work to heighten empathy in the reader. The images of 'walking skeletons' (*SP*: 279), 'unburied bodies' (*SP*: 281), people searching for food in the fields eating 'raw turnips' (*SP*: 280) powerfully represent trauma caused by the famine.

Dualta sees people on the road, on their way to the towns or poorhouses hoping to find food. Their fragile nature is expressed also on a semantic level: their movement is described

by means of the verbs 'moved' and 'shuffling' (*SP*: 279), but not by the verb 'go' or 'walk', which are probably the most common verbs of motion. The sense of weakness is further heightened by the images of men 'carrying old women' and 'wheeling their thin children in turf barrows' (*ibid*). Images of the emaciated Irish are then prolonged *ad infinitum* by means of silence that acquires a monstrous dimension, and which Dualta fears to interrupt:

> He galloped the pony, and then he stopped galloping him, because it seemed to him that he was disturbing the silence. He longed with his whole heart for this thin stream of shuffling people to be ended. But it was never-ending. (*ibid.*)

In order to sharpen the miserable sensations associated with famine, the faculty of smell is also deployed. One of the men whom Dualta meets on the road has 'no weight' and his breath 'on Dualta's cheek smelt of the smell he knew so well, the smell of the shrinking stomach' (*SP*: 280). That Dualta is well acquainted with such signs of death indicates their prevalence, which, along with the word 'never-ending', emphasizes the scale of the famine. Its magnitude is heightened in the ensuing depictions of people and places. Through a combination of the visual and acoustic elements, the most dreadful pictures representing famine are laid before readers' eyes: coffins with 'a bottom on a hinge' (*ibid.*) so that they could be used again, 'deserted villages', 'a man who had died crawling towards the graveyard' (*SP*: 281), a big amount of 'disturbed earth' in the graveyard (*SP*: 291) among others.

As hunger strengthens its grip, the concept of silence heightens the protagonist's visual experience, showing how emotionally shattering soundlessness can be. References to silence introduce pitiful images and sensations — weakness, fear, despair, death and funerals. In the following passage, the stark complicity of death and silence presents the visual evidence of the famine — corpses, intensified by the lack of the once familiar sounds of the village:

> While Dualta rode the long road home, he was impressed by the great silence. No dogs barked. People did not eat their dogs. They drowned them. They had to do this, because in their hunger dogs became vicious, or they started to eat unburied corpses. The two sounds you would always associate with the land, the bark of the dog and the crow of the cock, were no longer to be heard. He would always remember the silence. (*SP*: 286- 287)

The unburied dead, the riddance of dogs and the lack of cock-crowing denote the menacing disruption of the very nature of the village and its inhabitants' existence. Furthermore, the scale of Ireland's tragedy is magnified by images of those who have to emigrate in order to survive — another tragic aspect of the famine. Silence muffles up the stream of people heading to the boats to leave the country:

> They came on more people as they came to the town. They were all silent people. They carried baskets and babies. They were like the snails carrying their possessions on their backs. (*SP*: 339)

Silence ultimately means death, and their immediacy produces an especially disquieting effect, bringing the expression of pain and dejection to its highest point, especially in the parts dealing with famine victims. The scene discovered by Dualta in Mogue's cottage, where all the family members are dead, is particularly harrowing:

> The two children and the father were on the straw. The children were heads and points. Their limbs and faces were black, their lips drawn back from teeth which were white. The father was naked from the waist, his body a mass of purple marks. The woman was lying on her face near the cold fire. She had her hand stretched out to the pot. [...] Her face was yellow and purple. (*SP*: 272)

The passages describing death and desolation are all the more horryfying, for they are presented with such realism, which suggests that Robert Smart is right in his accentuation of the importance of the Gothic form in the representation of the Great Famine. Smart explains that 'the Gothic became the only narrative mode that could truly capture the realities of the Famine's destruction',[72] and that the reliance on a Gothic lexicon and imagery allows 'writers to name the unnameable'.[73] The language in *The Silent People* is deployed in combination with silence. The symbiosis of words and their absence produces a magnified effect and becomes the novel's most powerful technique. Perhaps, the closeness of Smart's ideas on the Gothic nature of the representation of the Famine and Macken's utilization of the concept of silence allows for the delivery of the Gothic silence. This technique is not new in art. Exploring various dimensions of the Gothic, Maria Beville brings attention to a close link between the Gothic silence and the Gothic nature of the visual language in McQueen's film *Hunger*. Even though the film features the 1981 Irish hunger strike, which is a different type of hunger than the 1840s An Gorta Mór, it allows us to see that trauma and silence can be associated together in order to produce the desirable effect in art. Beville believes that the Gothic 'can be seen as bearing a continued relevance to twentieth- and twenty-first century representations of unspeakable national traumas in Ireland'.[74] Hence, silence serves to heighten the trauma of the Famine. Susan Sonntag's views on uses of silence in art are particularly relevant to the function of the

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[72] Robert Smart, *Black Roads. The Famine in Irish Literature* (Ireland's Great Hunger Museum, Hamden, Ct: Quinnipiac University Press, 2015), p. 8.

[73] *Ibid*., p.12.

[74] Maria Beville in Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Maria Beville, eds., *The Gothic and the Everyday. Living Gothic* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 59.

concept of silence in Macken's work. Sonntag indicates that silence may certify 'the completion of thought', provide 'time for the continuing or exploring of thought', or furnish speech 'to attain its maximum integrity of seriousness' when 'words weigh more' and 'become almost palpable'.[75] These points appear to accomplish the task set in *The Silent People*. While the expression of Ireland's tragedy is relocated from words to silence, the perception of her trauma increases, and acquires an almost 'physical presence in a given space'.[76]

The shift from myriad lively sounds to silence in *The Silent People* can considerably stimulate emphatic sensations in readers, which is worth noting. Psychologists David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano highlight the potential of literary fiction to increase 'the ability to detect and understand other people's emotions'.[77] They maintain that in literary fiction, 'the incompleteness of the characters' turns the reader into the writer, because the reader's mind is 'trying to understand the minds of others', and in the process, the 'ability to understand others' emotions' is sharpened.[78] Kidd explains that because 'the same psychological processes are used to navigate fiction and real relationships', the reader naturally transfers 'the experience of reading into real-world situations', and in this way, fiction becomes 'a social experience' and not its 'simulator'. Kidd and Castano's findings are complemented by Philip Davies, who maintains that novels give us 'a view of an inner world that's not on show', and that we learn from novels 'not to judge'.[79] Davies argues that empathy occurs in the spaces emerging between characters, and not in the reader's assessment of the characters relationship. Notwithstanding the psychologists' opposing views, the fact that an empathic element is involved in the reading of literary fiction cannot be denied.

Conclusion

Based on such important historical events as the Holodomor and An Gorta Mór, the novels *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* and *The Silent People* create powerful images of the most tragic periods in the history of Ukraine and Ireland. The imagological analyses of these two works of famine fiction show that one of the main aesthetic techniques deployed by the texts of the novels for the literary expression of Ukraine's and Ireland's national traumas is the rhetoric of national character. To address the role of the images of national characters and how they apply

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[67] Susan Sonntag, *The Aesthetics of Silence*, §XI, <http://opasquet.fr/dl/texts/Sontag_Aesthetics_of_Silence_2006.pdf>.
[76] *Ibid*.
[77] Liz Bury, 'Reading literary fiction improves empathy, study finds', *The Guardian*, Tuesday 18 October 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/oct/08/literary-fiction-improves-empathy-study>.
[78] *Ibid*.
[79] *Ibid*.

to the expression of trauma, the analyses were underpinned by the theoretical framework developed by Birgit Neumann for a discussion of cultural and historical imagology. Four distinct features, outlined by Neumann, are discernible in these novels. First, both works adopt a specific stance: sympathetic towards the auto-image and a disapproving, and at times ironic one, to the hetero-image. Second, in both texts, the use of semanticization of space deepens the distinction between the Self and the Other. Third, the novels' character constellations are constructed in terms of a rhetoric of 'us' and 'them'; and fourth, both novels build their plots on dramatic and tragic patterns. The combination of these features mobilizes the rhetoric of national character, which serves two purposes. First, it facilitates a definition of the Self against the Other, positioning the Self as victim, and the Other as perpetrator in order to emphasize the ultimately unjust relations between them. Second, as the unfair treatment of one group by another increases, displaying unimaginable cruelty during these famines, the rhetoric of national character facilitates the expression of the magnitude of Ukraine's and Ireland's traumas. Samchuk's and Macken's works demonstrate both similarities and differences in their approaches to image construction. These differences are the result of the two countries' divergent socio-political and cultural contexts, while their parallels suggest relative degrees of uniformity in construction and dissemination of national stereotypes in literature in general.

Both novels begin their famine narratives by depicting events that occurred long before their respective famines. In this way, the circumstances that contributed to the construction of images prior to the tragic developments are given special importance, confirming that the processes of formation and dissemination of images are predicated upon socio-political and cultural contexts. The retrospective tracing of Ukrainian and Irish perceptions of their respective Other shows how they are formed and explains why they become a significant part of the expression of their national traumas.

The power of the novels' construction of images lies in the writers' utilization of the technique of juxtaposition. The contrasting representations of the lifestyles of Ukrainian and Irish country people emerge as diametric opposites. In *Maria*, the characters work hard to secure their families' well-being and achieve economic stability. They buy land and farm it, build their homes and grow orchards, sell grain and buy cattle — they work for themselves, and make gains. Even though some are wealthy, while others are not, there is no sense of oppression or unjust treatment. Also, the Russians are not perceived as the Other, notwithstanding the fact that Ukraine is under Russian rule at that time. This is in contrast not only to the Irish pre-famine reality, but also brings out the disparity between the life in the Russian Empire and under the new Soviet regime. The process of 'othering' begins with the

intensification of oppression and cruelty during the 1917 revolutionary turmoil and the establishment of Bolshevik rule, brought from Russia. The perception of the Russians as the Other is complete at the onset of the man-induced famine. The contrast between a contented and safe life and its destruction allows for a definitive perception of the Other as ultimately negative. The dynamics of the literary construct of Ukraine's Other is reinforced by a cultural difference — the use of the Russian language that acquires a decidedly negative connotation. In fact, it comes to denote the Other, with idleness and use of bad language indicating in broad strokes the stereotypical Russian. In this way, clear-cut patterns of the Ukrainian auto-image and the Russian hetero-image are formed.

Contrary to Ukraine's situation, is *The Silent People*'s portrayal of the poverty-stricken conditions, in which the Irish lived long before the Great Famine. These conditions were the result of an unjust system of landlordism, established by the English in one of their colonies. Ireland's long subjection to British rule justifies the spreading of generational stereotyping of the Other, giving the role of the Other to the English. Indeed, the colonial power was responsible for the misery of the indigenous people of Ireland. The disparity between the wealthy landlords and the poor tenants who have no land or homes of their own, their discriminatory treatment, heighten this perception, even though the English identity is not always visible in the novel.

The perception that Ireland's Other is the English is challenged by the characters' hybrid identity that manifests itself in considerable ambiguity of the characters' religious belonging and language. Even though Irish is presented as the language of the Self, English is not depicted as being ultimately negative, and does not trigger resentment, unlike the language of the Other in *Maria*. Also, Protestantism does not spark animosity. This is reflective of the hybrid position of the Anglo-Irish national self-image, containing Ireland's two conflicting cultures. In *The Silent People*, cultural elements participate in image formation; however, by means of hybridity, it is shown that mutual opposition does not occur between the Irish and the English, but between the wealthy oppressors and the oppressed poor. A demarcation line between the Self and the Other on cultural grounds is not viable here, as there are absentee landlords, in England mostly, and Anglo-Irish Protestant landlords. There are wealthy Irish Catholic landlords, too, who, due to a sense of disloyalty, can be ascribed to the group of the hetero-image. All these elements reveal the impact of power relations on image formation.

The hybridity of Irish identity prompts us to consider a similar phenomenon in relation to Ukrainian identity. It appears that hybridity should have followed the Russian aggressive posture of the 1930s. However, the issue of hybridity is not perceptible in *Maria* and *Sweet*

Snow. It may be the case that the hybrid identity remained incomplete in the 1932-1933 famine times, in contrast with Irish hybridity which was well in place after many centuries of British oppression. Hybridity within Ukrainian and Irish contexts provides an interesting topic for future research because an interrelation between cultural hybridity and cultural and political nationalism in Ireland present a platform for identification and examination of analogous processes in Ukraine. In Ireland, the process of cultural hybridization made 'an "Irish" sense of national identity possible, which inspired political life from the late eighteenth century onwards, and which in the nineteenth century was to become the very cornerstone of cultural and (later) political nationalism.'[80] Perhaps the Ukrainian sense of national identity only awakened in the face of recent Russian aggression.[81] Therefore, Leerssen's insights on Irish hybridity, and his claim that the hybrid position 'illustrates an interesting possible dynamics which can take shape in cross-cultural stereotyping, the dynamics of adoption and exchange rather than mutual polarization and "othering"'[82] could be usefully applied within the modern Ukrainian context.

Both in *Maria* and in *The Silent People*, certain themes are deployed in order to create a favourable perception of the Self, while others are used to highlight an unfavourable one of the Other. It was shown in the analysis of *Maria* that the construction of its auto-image rests on the characters' appreciation of the beauty of nature and life, love of the land, the importance of hard work and religion. These themes determine the characters' belonging to the Self, a sense, which acquires the following pattern: the Ukrainian peasants are hard-working people who live a contented life in harmony with nature and God. The characters' religiosity and spirituality, encapsulated in their names, their reverent attitude to the land, and their conformity to their religious rituals particularly heighten the ultimate goodness of the Ukrainian national character making it seem idealized. The initial ideal portrayal of the dwellers of Hnyloryby is sometimes tempered by further presentation of the situations that reveal their imperfections, which makes them look as real people. The novel's depiction of the hetero-image as unscrupulous vandals, destroying churches and stopping the Ukrainians from performing religious rites, emphasizes the detrimental nature of their Otherness. Symbolic of their utmost evil is the image of the locked village church full of grain, inaccessible to the starving villagers.

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[80] Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 383.

[81] Interestingly, the word 'hybrid' is also used to determine the 2014 Russian military conflict: Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and her waging an undeclared war in Donbass — parts of Ukraine's two counties in the east are referred to as 'hybrid warfare'.

[82] Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 382.

Likewise, the rhetoric of the Irish national character in *The Silent People* is structured around the themes that allow for the construction of a favourable perception of the novel's auto-image: patriotism, devoutness, and a sense of humour. The Irish are depicted as a hard-working, intelligent and spiritual people. The patriotism of the Irish can be viewed as a trait parallel to the Ukrainians' love of their native land. However, in *The Silent People* patriotism is depicted as a key aspect in the people's struggle for independence, while *Maria* contains only some brief passages on the independence movement after the 1917 Russian socialist revolution. These passages are not developed into a strong thematic element that could be deployed for an endorsement of the auto-image. The figure of Lavrin — the most positive example of a freedom fighter in the novel, is not comparable to the images of the freedom fighters created by Macken. The absence of such an important theme in the context of exceptional oppression suggests that this is to magnify the impression of the overarching Soviet terror and to highlight Ukraine's subordinate position to Russia. The Ukrainian nation's vulnerability, then, can be thought of as the reason for the lack of the characters' jokes and humorous remarks, which makes the novel's atmosphere much more dramatic and solemn. This is in contrast with the Irish characters' cheerfulness and optimism that serve to distinguish the Self from the Other, showing both wit and emotional strength as qualities pertaining to the auto-image. Leerssen's investigation of the Irish 'national ideal' of an Enlightenment, and 'Patriot attitude' in the second half of the nineteenth century provides an understanding of 'how this optimistic Irish ideal, this national self-image, could have emerged from a history of colonial enmity, dispossession, oppression, religious intolerance and ethnic hatred'.[83] It is relevant to note in this instance the time when the novels were written. Samchuk created his characters a year after the Holodomor, at a time, when the terror of the man-made catastrophe was still all too recent, and Ukraine was in the most tenacious grip of the Soviets. The writer could not know whether Ukraine and her nation would endure Stalin's regime, and this fear sets the novel's mood. By contrast, Macken wrote his novel over a century after An Gorta Mór, in an independent Ireland that had survived the high price of death and destitution, and gained freedom.

Interestingly, in *The Silent People* there is a character reminding us of *Maria*'s protagonist. Una is a symbolic figure that links the auto-image and the Divine through her evocation of the Mother of God. Yet, the theme of religion is treated in a different way in the Irish novel. Even though the Catholics and Protestants are presented as two opposing groups,

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[83] *Ibid.*, p. 377.

and their centuries-old reciprocally negative attitudes are made explicit on several occasions, the characters' religious affiliation does not imply a clear-cut separation between the Self and the Other. The novel's presentation of language ambiguity strengthens this point, highlighting the hybrid nature of its images. It comes to be seen that hybridity restricts the construction of an essentially positive Self and an ultimately negative Other. This contrasts with the role of the Russian language in the Ukrainian novel. In *The Silent People*, the issues of religion and language bring to the surface an understanding that a division within the images is set in motion by the characters' social status. The wealthy Irish, notwithstanding their religion or language, are perceived as the Other by the poor, and vice versa. The Otherness in the novel is thus based on power relations between social classes.

The close reading of these two texts of Ukrainian and Irish famine fictions demonstrate that the auto- and hetero-images are generalizations stemming from well-known clichés. The traits that are foregrounded as typical of the Ukrainian or Irish national characters are fitting to a representation of any nation. Likewise, the attributes that are presented as characteristic of the Russians or the English could be applied to a representative of any race or ethnic group. Our analyses show that images have a striking ability to move and change within the two groups, making it impossible to draw a definitive demarcation line between them. Belonging to one or the other can be predicated by various factors, impossible to project or foresee, but they are context-dependent. The underlying message conveyed by the construction and perpetuation of images in *Maria* and *The Silent People* is that the main gauges of Otherness are injustice, violence, and cruelty. Leerssen's observation on 'the obvious tendency for images to deteriorate and to become more negative in times of political enmity and tension'[84] is relevant to the context of the famine both in Ukraine and Ireland. The rhetoric of national character in the Ukrainian and Irish novels is, therefore, deployed to express the two countries' traumas and to name those responsible for them. The novels show that the responsibility lies not on a certain nation *per se*, but on a social group that constitutes the ruling class: striving for domination, it allows for the establishment of such conditions, in which cruelty and animosity can develop.

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[84] *Ibid.*, p. 379.

Chapter III. *Sweet Snow*

'If there is a hell, *meine Herren*, then it is a perpetual famine in a perpetual winter.'[1]

The novel *Sweet Snow* is one of the most recent works of fiction in the English language to deal with the 1932-33 famine in Ukraine. Written by an American author of Ukrainian origin, Alexander J. Motyl, it was published in 2013. The novel's four main characters are American journalist and communist, Golub, German aristocrat and diplomat, Count August von Mecklenburg, cultural attaché at the Polish consulate, Zbigniew Pieracki, and a poet of Ukrainian origin from Vienna, Igor Kortschenko. Captured and imprisoned by communists in the winter of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine, the American, the German and the Pole are thrown together in a cramped cell, where they strive to survive without food. Having spent several days there, the prisoners are removed in a black van to an unknown destination. Inside the van, they discover another prisoner, the Ukrainian. As the van overturns, with the driver and guard dying in the accident, the prisoners find themselves free in Ukraine's vast snow-covered steppe. In search of villages and food, they embark on their final journey, during which the unimaginable cruelty of the Soviet regime, responsible for the large-scale starvation in 1930s Ukraine, is revealed to them and to the reader.

Similarly to *Maria*, a specific atmosphere is created in *Sweet Snow* from the outset, situating the novel clearly within famine fiction. The opening of the novel — its dedication to the author's uncles, whom he 'never knew', introduces a sense of loss, and triggers the reader's wish to find out what happened to these relatives. It can also be interpreted as the author's personal engagement with the story.

Structured around the protagonists' struggle to survive the inhuman conditions of famine-stricken Ukraine, the plot of the novel facilitates the creation of memorable images of a positive Self and a negative Other. Having no formal chapter division, the narrative's linear progression is often interrupted by digressions into the characters' recollection of episodes from their past. The technique of contrasting the characters' lives beyond and within the Soviet regime emphasizes their ordeal during the famine, thus increasing readers' sympathetic attitudes towards the oppressed and indictment of the oppressor. These two juxtaposed elements strengthen as events unfold, particularly due to the deployment of space, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Clearly, in *Sweet Snow*, as well as in the previously discussed *Maria* and

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[1] Alexander J. Motyl, *Sweet Snow* (Somerville, Massachusetts: Červená Barva Press, 2013), p. 103.

The Silent People, comparisons and contrasts are the main devices used for the construction of images of national characters and for the depiction of the tragic events provoked by famine. Along with the complex nature of his characters, Motyl uses a range of literary techniques to reveal the magnitude of the Holodomor. The passages in *Sweet Snow* are visually separated with a section break and an asterisk that signal changes in location, time, or the characters' emotions, suggesting the psychologically disruptive nature of the events. This strategy allows the reader to pause and reflect on the protagonists' tribulations as on those that constitute a bridge between the individual and collective experiences of the tragic history of the Ukrainian people. The novel's motif, with its recurring elements of ruthlessness, suffering, pain, and disgust reproduces the tragic mood that envelops Ukraine in 1933.

The auto-image

The auto-image in *Sweet Snow* differs considerably from the well-defined auto-image in *Maria* and from the hybrid auto-image in *The Silent People*. In Motyl's novel, the author's choice of characters renders it in a more complex way. A distinctive feature of this image construction is that the auto-image is represented by two groups — first, by four individual characters — the prisoners kept in 'a communist jail',[2] whose ordeal is a means through which the story of Ukraine's famine is narrated; and second, by the collective persona of Ukrainian peasants who either died or are dying in agony from hunger. Instead of constructing the image of Self upon certain positive national characterizations, as has been accomplished by Samchuk in his novel, Motyl's characters' disparate national and ethnic identities, ideological backgrounds and political affiliations challenge easy polarisations of the groups of the Self or the Other.

The four characters are inimical to one another due to the specific political contexts that have influenced relations between their countries. Therefore, each of them can be thought of as a separate construct and an auto-image. Indeed, throughout the novel, the reader's attention is repeatedly drawn to the characters' differences, which emphasize their contrasting identities and generate verbal sparring. This makes the reader wonder if they will all face the same fate. This is in contradistinction to the positively constructed images of Ukrainian peasants in *Maria* and Irish country people in *The Silent People*. In the process, some 'imputed collective psychologisms' and stereotypes, attributed to the nations represented by the characters, are involved, which shows exactly how 'the mental or discursive representation or reputation of a

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[2] Motyl, *Sweet Snow*, p.19. Henceforth, all page numbers in parentheses, placed after quotations and preceded by *SwSn*, refer to this text.

person, group, ethnicity, or "nation"' work.[3] This allows us to observe how stereotypical perceptions are exported from one person to a group of people, or a whole nation. On numerous occasions, the characters' appearance, clothes, social positions and national or cultural peculiarities are made use of. For instance, as soon as von Mecklenburg is brought into the cell, and even before he speaks, Golub pays attention to his 'jet-black Prussian moustache with upturned ends' (*SwSn*: 7). After a while, Golub openly refers to the count as a Nazi because of his clothes: 'Only Nazis wear black leather coats.' (*SwSn*: 15) For Golub, the portrait of a stereotypical German is thus sketched by means of mingling two different images that have emerged at different historical periods. The first image, of the German with an upturned moustache, developed during the Second German Empire/ Wilhelmine era, when, as Richard Scully notes, Wilhelm II seemed 'a representative', and 'the very incarnation of the "waxing vigour" of his nation'.[4] Also, the German's name with the aristocratic 'von' is reminiscent of Germany's imperial past and its nobility. This image is further dveloped in the portrayal of the German during the time of the Third Reich. Because black leather trench coats were often worn by Nazis in the 1930s, this piece of clothing became symbolic of this group. Having become stereotypical for the depiction of the German in general, both images are clear examples of the process of layering, mentioned by Leerssen.[5]

It should be observed that the symbolism of black leather is not restricted to denoting Nazis. Interestingly, in various sources, it is deployed as symbolic of communists, too. Historian and Gulag researcher Lidia Golovkova shares a factual detail, which shows how the Soviet penitentiary system made practical use of black leather:

> NKVD commandant Vasily Blokhin, Stalin's chief executioner, who carried out death sentences all over the Soviet Union, even had a special outfit for shooting people — a long leather apron, gaiters, cap and rubber boots, all to avoid getting spattered by the blood and brains of his victims.[6]

Anne E. Gorsuch's examination of the persistence of militant understandings of communism and communist culture throughout the 1920s reveals the capacity of this piece of clothing to generate a strong negative association. Gorsuch mentions a series of cartoons satirizing the communist youth, presented in one of the Komsomol journals in 1922, and points out that from 1919, the ragged dress of the *komsomolets* was abandoned for a leather jacket, shock boots and

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[3] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 342.
[4] Richard Scully, 'The Other Kaiser: Wilhelm I and British Cartoonists, 1861–1914', <http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doifinder/view/10.1057/9781137283467.0024>, p. 213.
[5] See Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, pp. 343-4.
[6] Ekaterina Loushnikova, 'Comrade Stalin's Secret Prison', *openDemocracy*, *oDR Russia and beyond*, 13 January 2015, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/ekaterina-loushnikova/comrade-stalin%e2%80%99s-secret-prison>.

a worker's cap, pistol in hand.[7] As can be seen, in the process of construction of stereotypes, the same element is utilized for the portrayal of different groups and in different periods. Yet, in both cases, the denotative, obvious meaning of the black jacket is of military nature, manifesting some form of party discipline, and suggestive of aggression. Generally, even for non-military groups, the leather jacket, and 'specifically the black leather jacket, often symbolises rebellion',[8] which is possible to connect with an aggressive demonstration of one's appearance, principles or aims, and emphasis on one's difference. In other words, signifying the universality of badness, the black leather helps 'to tell the good guys from the bad guys — the bad guys wear black jackets'.[9] In *Sweet Snow*, Golub categorizes von Mecklenburg as a 'bad guy' without any knowledge of his personality and opinions.

Von Mecklenburg, in turn, makes a snap judgement about Pieracki. In the episode that presents the Pole's arrival in the cell, von Mecklenburg takes note of his well-groomed nails 'with satisfaction', deducing that the Pole is well-educated or 'perhaps even a nobleman' (*SwSn*: 10). Indeed, Zbigniew Pieracki turns out to be a cultural attaché at the Polish consulate. At times, contrasting elements are involved in the process of image-formation, as if to highlight its subjective nature, and probably to show that people's conduct changes in specific situations. For instance, when the Pole is forcefully thrown into the cell, he produces a string of curses, and the words breaking from his lips are in contrast to his elegant clothes: 'tails, a starched white shirt, and a large bow tie' (*SwSn*: 9). The knowledge of Polish swear words allows the German to immediately identify the prisoner's nationality: '*Pan jest Polakiem*?' (*SwSn*: 9)[10] The curse is taken up by the German to start a discussion about 'the world's oldest profession', which leads him to conclude that in the end, courtesans 'are not so different in Poland' from those in Berlin and Paris (*SwSn*: 10). This is to underscore the similar experiences shared by humans despite their national differences.

Comparison and contrast are the most important techniques in *Sweet Snow*, deployed for the juxtaposition of the characters' views and affiliations, and of their lives before the famine and during communist captivity. One of many examples of the characters' stereotypical perceptions is expressed in the Pole's reflection that the Cossacks are worse than barbarians (*SwSn*: 19). Another interesting example is shown in the German's description of his experience in Ukraine during World War I, as he mentions 'the truculence of the peasantry, the perfidy of

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[7] Gorsuch, Anne E., 'NEP Be Damned! Young Militants in the 1920s and the Culture of Civil War', *The Russian Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Oct., 1997), pp. 564-580, p. 564.

[8] Linda M. Ballard, Linda M., '"These Youngsters Change All These Traditions": A Perspective on "Outlaw" Motorcycle Clubs in Ireland', *Folklore*, Vol. 108 (1997), p.p. 107-111, p. 108.

[9] John W. Conner, Review of *The Pegleg Mystery* by Hal G. Evarts, *The English Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 6 (Sep., 1972), pp. 938-939, p. 938.

[10] 'Are you a Pole?' — my translation.

the Austrians, and the unreliability of the Ukrainian nationalists' (*SwSn*: 22). All these examples echo Leerssen's point that 'a discourse that describes a given nationality, country or society relies on imputations of national character rather than on testable fact'.[11]

Despite the characters' antagonistic characterristics and perceptions of one another, the plot of *Sweet Snow* is structured around something that unites them all, even the communist at the end — their suffering from, and condemnation of the cruelty of the Soviet regime. It can be suggested that the protagonists' belonging to a group of victimized people, which generates solidarity against their common enemy, places them in the same group as the Ukrainians, whose land is being ravaged by famine. The constellation of the characters that is organised in terms of a rhetoric of 'us' and 'them' in order to dramatize cultural difference, pointed out by Neumann,[12] is reshaped: the four auto-images stand together in opposition to their common enemy — Russian communists. Hence, the prisoners can be regarded as varying aspects of the collective Self, while their oppressors constitute the Other. An important detail that aids us in determining the prisoners as the auto-image is that, despite their differences, they are all identified as the Other by the communists. It suggests that the perspective, from which Otherness is observed, can change. For the prisoners, the fundamental distinction of 'us' and 'them' is based on the nature of cruelty — the main gauge of Otherness, while for the communist captors, there is no clear conception for the identification of the Other. This is validated by their treatment of the American journalist. Before we proceed to investigate ways in which the four characters are brought together into the group of the auto-image, it is important to discuss the origins of their differences.

Readers who are familiar with European history will note that the choice of the characters: a Jew, a German, a Pole and a Ukrainian, is not without reason. They represent peoples that had troubled relations across different historical periods. Situations of conflict between Jews, Poles, Germans and Ukrainians had occurred long before the 1932-33 Famine and indeed continued afterwards. It is possible that the sequence, in which the protagonists are introduced in the novel, reflects the timeline of conflicts that had occurred between the nations they represent. One can think of highly antagonistic Jewish-Ukrainian and Polish-Ukrainian relations that led to massacres during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In 1648, there was a peasant revolt in Ukraine, during which large landowners, Polish nobles, Catholic priests and Jewish communities — these 'suffered most',[13] were attacked and annihilated. More pogroms of the Jews in Ukraine occurred in 1881 and 1905, and also, Ukraine's Jewish population 'fared

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[11] Leerssen, 'Image', p. 342.
[12] Neumann, p. 282.
[13] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine* (UK: Allen Lane, Penguin Books, 2015), p. 98.

worse' in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian revolution: 'in conditions of permanent warfare', they were attacked 'from all sides, by Reds, Whites, Ukrainian armies and warlords'.[14] Notably, the 1918 pogroms of the Jewish communities that began with the move of German and Austro-Hungarian armies into Ukraine were conducted by the retreating Bolsheviks, who justified 'their assault on the Jews as an attack on the bourgeoisie',[15] and not by the advancing Germans. Yet, young Jews joined the Red Army *en masse*.[16] As we have already seen in the analyses of the auto- and hetero-images in *Maria* and *The Silent People*, it is not unusual for members of the victimized group to join with their oppressors. This is often motivated by pragmatic reasons, as shown in Macken's novel.

In all likelihood, the events of 1918 are those referred to in *Sweet Snow*, when Golub mentions his family leaving Kiev after the pogroms (*SwSn*: 68). The detail of his becoming a communist after the Bolshevik pogroms of the Jewish communities shows the importance of the historical context for the writer's fictional re-creation of the events in order to lend them authenticity. Because many young Jewish people were active proponents of Bolshevik ideology and participated in the 1917 Russian revolution, the depiction of Golub as a communist has a generalizing effect in the novel. The association of Jews with Bolsheviks brings out a factual characteristic of the time, when 'the myth of Jewish Bolshevism' that resulted in the 'Red Scare', led to an 'anti-Communist witchhunt' in Britain and the USA in the aftermath of World War I.[17] Sharman Kadish believes that the fable of Jewish Bolshevism 'was created in Russia by counterrevolutionary and anti-Semitic forces and fed into British political life via diplomats and military advisors working with the White armies'.[18] The novel's reflection of the historical context strengthens the argument that antagonisms between groups of people and nations stem from a struggle for power. This point is also validated by the debates between the German and the Pole, prompting readers to reflect on the Ukrainian-German conflict even before the Ukrainian character, Kortschenko, is introduced. Pieracki reminds von Mecklenburg of the Germans' destructive role in Ukraine — 'this godforsaken land' was ravaged by the Germans before the Bolsheviks:

> You destroyed it during the war, Herr Graff. My father was here with Piłsudski after the Kaiser's army withdrew. The devastation was total, he said. It was bedlam. The entire country was burning and you Germans lit the fire. (*SwSn*: 33)

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[14] Plokhy, p. 222.

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] *Ibid*.

[17] David Cesarani, review of *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* by Sharman Kadish, *AJS Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1996), pp. 206-208, p. 206.

[18] Kadish quoted by Cesarani, *ibid*.

Revealing the complexity of Europe's political landscape in the 1930s, the quotation points to Poland's and Germany's involvement in it and shows Ukraine to be a victim of these more powerful states. The introduction of the Polish and Ukrainian characters, Zbigniew Pieracki and Igor Kortschenko, leads one to consider Ukraine's aggressive response to Poland's oppressive politics. Pieracki's surname appears familiar to Kortschenko, and the Pole reveals that his 'distant relative', Bronisław Pieracki, was Poland's Interior minister (*SwSn*: 111). A curious reader will discover that a Polish minister of this surname did indeed exist, and in June 1934, was assassinated by members of OUN[19] in revenge for his 'critical' role in a series of repressive measures against Ukrainian activists during the Pacification process in 1930.[20] Despite the discrepancy in the time of the assassination — in reality, it was carried out a year after the Holodomor, the mention of the minister confirms the importance of historical detail for Motyl. It can be suggested that the incorporation of the American citizen of Jewish identity, the German and the Polish characters aims to emphasize Ukraine's difficult relations with these three groups of people. In the first decades of the twentieth century Ukraine is torn between the Germans, the Poles and the Bolsheviks, which gives rise to a nationalist spirit, represented in the novel by the figure of Igor Kortschenko.

Patriotism and nationalism: ideological dilemma

The main divisive factor, generating antagonisms between the prisoners, stems from their attitudes to their own countries. Von Mecklenburg and Pieracki regard themselves as patriots, while Kortschenko is classified by them, without objection, as a nationalist. To Pieracki's remark 'But you're a Ukrainian nationalist, *mon ami*!', Kortschenko responds: 'Yes, it's true: I belong to a political movement.' (*SwSn*: 110) The Pole is proud of his sentiment for his Motherland: 'You must know that I would die for Poland. All Polish patriots would. You must know that, too.' (*SwSn*: 111) It is interesting to observe that in *Sweet Snow*, Pieracki's pride is depicted as a fixed trait that has become a byword for Polish national character. André Gerrits notes that the Polish national-characterological image as 'a rustic nation of proud petty nobles (the *szlachta*) with a passionate sense of honour but little practical sense'[21] came into being in the 18th century. Gerrits explains that this reputation was generated by the loss of Polish political independence during the partitions of Poland and their 'aftershocks',[22] which proves that

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[19] The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.
[20] Plokhy, p. 239.
[21] Gerrits & Leerssen, 'Poles' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 217.
[22] *Ibid*.

political developments lay the foundations for the emergence of features that can become part of a national character over time.

Von Mecklenburg's expression of his love for Germany is more subtle than Pieracki's proclamation of patriotism. He associates the destiny of his family — 'the grandest of families', with the fate of the entire country: 'Alas, *meine Herren*, the von Mecklenburgs are *kaputt* — like Deutschland. The war destroyed everything: our house, our crops, our barns, our lands, our animals.' (*SwSn*: 98) Deep love for his native land is felt in the 'unconcealed grief', with which the count speaks of a Germany, devastated by the war, and her 'ill-tempered *fortuna*', and in his determination to be useful to his country 'at its time of greatest need' (*ibid.*). In his innermost thoughts, von Mecklenburg continues to be devoted to Germany: 'He would keep on serving the Fatherland, as had his fathers and forefathers. That was his duty. That was his responsibility. After all, the *Vaterland* needed him.' (*SwSn*: 43) Kortschenko acknowledges the German's patriotism, reflecting that the count serves his country as 'only a man of great character and moral strength would', while concurrently condemning Germany's contemporary political system: 'even now, with Herr Hitler as your Chancellor.' (*SwSn*: 98)

Kortschenko's remarks prompt us to recognize a difference between patriotic feelings and ideology. It is a false belief, convenient to authoritarian governments, that love of a native land presupposes uncritical loyalty to a state's political system. In the Soviet Union, the inseparability of patriotism from the state's ideology, promoted and exacted by the dominant political class, led to the elimination of any opposition to the Communist Party. By labelling those who disagreed with the party line as 'enemies of people', the communists destroyed millions of lives. Although it is impossible to determine the exact numbers of victims of the Soviet regime, and data by different commentators vary widely, the estimates are nevertheless horrifying. Norman M. Naimark mentions 'some 150,000 Polish and German families — meaning roughly 500,000 people', who were deemed 'dangerous and traitorous Poles and Germans,' and who were 'arrested and deported to the special settlements' in 1932-33, where many perished in terrible conditions.[23] According to Russian historian and writer, Anton Antonov-Ovseenko, a son of a Bolshevik military leader Vladimir Antonov-Ovseyenko, executed in 1938, 7 million executions were carried out in the period between 1921 and 1953 in the USSR. Historians John Archibald Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn and Viktor N. Zemskov indicate that the documented archival data reveals the number of 799,455 executed people.[24] The formerly official newspaper of the USSR *Pravda*, February 14, 1990, presents the number

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[23] Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), p.84.
[24] J. Arch Getty, Gábor T. Rittersporn and Viktor N. Zemskov, 'Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Pre-War Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98, No.4 (Oct., 1993), p.1021.

of 786,096 executions for 'counterrevolutionary crimes' between 1930 and 1953. [25] Furthermore, Ottar G. Draugsvold notes that according to Solzhenitsyn, 'Stalin sent an estimated thirty million people to the Gulag during his reign. Most died.'[26] Alec Nove gives a rough total of 3.1 to 3.2 million famine victims 'in that grim year 1933 for the Ukraine alone',[27] a total population loss of 8.6 million in the USSR up to January 1937,[28] and total-related famine deaths in the USSR as a whole to over 7 million.[29] The fact that the census of 1937 was suppressed and it authors shot[30] confirms the Soviet government's determination to conceal such crimes. These statistics show the ruthlessness of the authoritarian state towards its own citizens and should be seen as a warning of the dangerous practice of scapegoating.

To return to the issue of the German's and the Pole's patriotic feelings as opposed to the Ukrainian's nationalism in *Sweet Snow*, the question arises of what exactly makes Pieracki's and von Mecklenburg's love of their countries different from Kortschenko's yearning for an independent Ukraine. Various interpretations of patriotism and nationalism reflect the complexity of these concepts. Thomas Blank and Peter Schmidt note that both terms 'imply an existing subjective positive identification with the nation' and can be thought of as 'specific forms of support for one's nation'.[31] In the Ukrainian, as well as in the Irish contexts, a link between a lack of freedom and nationalist feelings that fuel their 'anti-colonial nationalism'[32] is worth mentioning. David Waterman sees nationalism as a form of resistance to British colonialism.[33] In Ukraine, 'Nationalism was a form of opposition that was integral to Ukraine's resistance and embedded in the consciousness of the population more so perhaps than in the

[25] Getty, Rittersporn and Zemskov, *ibid*., note 4, p.1022.

[26] Ottar G. Draugsvold, ed., *Nobel Writers on Writing* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2000), p. 112.

[27] Alec Nove, 'How Many Victims in the 1930s?' (I), *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, (April, 1990), p. 370.

[28] *Ibid*., p.371.

[29] Alec Nove, 'How Many Victims in the 1930s?' (II), *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October, 1990), p. 813.

[30] Nove, (I), p. 369.

[31] Thomas Blank and Peter Schmidt, 'National Identity in a United Germany: Nationalism or Patriotism? An Empirical Test with Representative Data', *Political Psychology*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Special Issue: National Identity in Europe (Jun., 2003), p. 290.

[32] Giorgio Shani, 'Indigenous Modernities: Nationalism and Communalism in Colonial India', *The International Studies Association of Ritsumeikan University: Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies*, 2005. ISSN 1347-8214, Vol.4, pp. 87-112, p. 96. Also, Anthony D. Smith mentions modern nations' aspirations for independent national states in his *Theories of Nationalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), xxxi-xxxii.
In addition, on anticolonial nationalism see B. B. Majumdar, 'Anti-Colonialism from Hobson to Nehru', *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (October-December 1950), pp. 112-132 and Lloyd Kramer, 'Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Jul., 1997), pp. 525- 545 and Michel Cahen, 'Anticolonialism Nationalism: Deconstructing Synonymy, Investigating Historical Processes', Notes on the Heterogeneity of Former African Colonial Portuguese Areas. Éric MorierGenoud. Sure Road? Nations and Nationalisms in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, Brill Academlc, Publishers, Leyde (Pays-Bas), xxvi+270 p., 2012, "African Social Studies Series", 28), 978 90 04 222618. hal-00690557f.

[33] David Waterman, 'The Performance of Masculinity and Nationalism: Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* and *Juno and the Paycock*', *Etudes irlandaises*, n°23-2, Année 1998, 23-2, pp. 53-69, p. 54.

cultural and social practices witnessed elsewhere in the Soviet bloc.'[34] Wider comparisons can also be drawn in relation to other nations: Satish Saberwal highlights nationalism as a response to colonialism,[35] Giorgio Shani views it as one of the responses elicited by colonial modernity[36] and, explaining national movement as a process through which people are formed into a nation, points out that it is 'the existence of a common oppression by a common enemy and the struggle against it that provides important bonds uniting' people.[37] Considering that nationalism can emerge in response to oppression and/ or aggression, and mindful of Ukraine's attempts to attain freedom from both Polish and German rule, it is clear that Kortschenko is considered a nationalist by the representatives of the dominant powers. For the same reason, his struggle for Ukraine's liberation from Bolshevik Russia in the 1930s acquires a nationalistic dimension from the Russian perspective.

In a very similar way, 'the Polish image in Russia became deeply negative' in the nineteenth century, largely because of 'the refusal of Poles to acquiesce in their partitioned subaltern status, leading to repeated uprising'.[38] It appears, then, that Kortschenko's nationalism is a highly subjective issue. In this case, Louis Wirth's work on the thought-provoking concepts of nationalism and patriotism, published in 1936, is interesting to touch upon, as it catches the spirit of the time. Discussing types of nationalism, Wirth reminds us of Robert Michels's explanation of the motives underlying the particularistic type of nationalistic movements:

> A people that has become conscious of its national characteristics and the peculiarities of its own culture has the natural desire to conserve them in their integrity. In the maintenance of this cultural integrity of the people is to be found the only ethically legitimate form of patriotism.[39]

The quotation suggests that the line between patriotism and nationalism can be tenuous. Perhaps, these two concepts can even merge at times. Wirth's definition of nationalism as 'the social movements of nationalities striving to acquire, maintain and enhance their status in a world where they are confronted by opposition or conflict'[40] triggers the thought that if the social movement of nationalism does not depart from its original goals, it becomes comparable to patriotism. In the most recent scholarship on nationalism, an understanding of the closeness

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[34] Kulick and Apor, 'Ukraine: Milestones of Cultural Opposition', p. 187.
[35] Satish Saberwal, 'Review of *Communalism in Modern India* by Bipan Chandra, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Nov 1, 1984, 18, 2, pp. 319–321, p. 319.
[36] Giorgio Shani, 'Indigenous Modernities: Nationalism and Communalism in Colonial India', *The International Studies Association of Ritsumeikan University: Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies*, 2005, Vol.4, pp. 87-112, p. 87.
[37] *Ibid*., p. 88.
[38] Gerrits & Leerssen, 'Poles' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 217.
[39] Michels quoted by Louis Wirth in 'Types of Nationalism', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (May, 1936), p. 730.
[40] Louis Wirth, 'Types of Nationalism', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (May, 1936), p.723.

of these two concepts is strengthened by Charles Taylor's ideas: 'nationalism can provide the fuel for patriotism', 'If we think of patriotism as a strong citizen identification, then nationalism is one basis for patriotism, but not the only one',[41] and 'nationalisms differ […] in regard to what they want to take over',[42] for example. Keeping in mind Pieracki's insistence on Kortschenko's nationalism, it is useful to address the nature of Polish patriotism, gleaned from Wirth's assessment of nationalistic movements in Europe. Wirth refers to Jacob Rappaport's reflections on the displacement of Polish 'mystical and romantic nationalism' by 'a sober and prosaic variety', and his mention of Roman Dmowski, 'the prophet of the new nationalism', who 'preached and is still preaching the gruffest and most uncompromising nationalism'.[43] While to Rappaport, Dmowski is clearly a nationalist, Poles regard him as one of Poland's greatest patriots, whose name has been given to schools and streets in the country. Dmowski's attitude to other nations' liberation movements, explained by Rappaport, is telling:

> Even when Poland was still under Russian and Prussian rule fighting for its national existence, he denounced the nationalistic tendencies of the Lithuanians and the Ruthenians[44] as presumptuous, and labelled the Jewish strivings for emancipation a disintegrating movement. He disavows the romantic patriotism and displaces it with the modern patriotism, or strictly speaking nationalism, whose object it is not to acquire a certain number of privileges or forms of freedom but to establish the nation as a living, social organism, which has its own spiritual existence based on race and history, its own mentality, its own culture, and needs and interests...[45]

Rappaport's clarification suggests that the meanings of the concepts 'patriotism' and 'nationalism' depend on a context in which they are applied and a perspective from which they are determined. The complexity of the two concepts is also indicated by Miroslav Hroch:

> It is very easy to label as 'nationalism' every phenomenon or attribute that has anything to do with the nation or national matters, rather than differentiating between national identity, national consciousness, national awareness, patriotism, chauvinism, loyalty and so on. […]
>
> We also need to bear in mind that the word 'nation', from which the term derives, has different connotations in different languages. In English, 'nationalism' is understood to imply a struggle for statehood, but this is not the case in German or Czech. In 18th-

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[41] Charles Taylor, 'Nationalism & Modernity', pp. 191-218, in *The State of the Nation. Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. by John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 201.
[42] *Ibid*., p. 214.
[43] Rappaport quoted in Wirth, *ibid*., p.730.
[44] The terms 'Ruthenia' and 'Ruthenians' were often used during the times of the Austrian Empire (and in modern writings about the Austrian Empire) to mean *Ukraine* and *Ukrainians* found within the empire (specifically in its province of Galicia), *Genealogy of Halychyna/ Eastern Galicia*, 'An Understanding of the terms "Ruthenia" and "Ruthenians"; alternatively: they are used to refer to Ukrainian and Belarusian societies (Plokhy, p.95).
[45] Rappaport quoted in Wirth, p.p.730-1.

century definitions one can already see a difference between a 'political' concept of the nation in English and a 'cultural' one in German and Czech. […]

…I use the term 'nationalism' only for extreme cases, where expressions of national identity extend into overestimation of one's own nation and hatred towards others…[46]

Furthermore, if nationalism can be understood as, first, 'the desire for political independence of people who feel they are historically or culturally a separate group within a country' or, second, 'a person's great love for their nation' which 'is often associated with the belief that a particular nation is better than any other nation and in this case is often used showing disapproval',[47] then Kortschenko's struggle for Ukraine's liberation from the Soviet regime is clearly in line with the first meaning of the concept. Admitting to being a member of a clandestine political organization, Kortschenko does not conceal its mission: 'Our goal is the destruction of Russian communism and the liberation of Ukraine.' (*SwSn*: 110) Reflecting the spirit of political flux in Europe, where bigger countries fight for power and smaller ones strive for independence, *Sweet Snow* highlights the ambiguity of different sets of beliefs. It is clear that in a time when borders are redrawn and old empires fall while new ones arise, Ukraine is faced with two equally undesirable options. Mikael Hjerm's observation that 'external threats keep nationalist sentiments activated'[48] is certainly fitting when the Soviets take a firm grip on Ukraine. Soviet rule is often deemed to have been the worst of all forms of oppression experienced by the Ukrainian nation. Orysia Kulick and Balázs Apor explain:

> In contrast to most of the other countries in the project, Ukraine witnessed the unfolding of the most traumatic episodes in the history of communism: it was ravaged by Civil War and the struggle for independence in the 1910s, devastated by the Stalinist collectivization campaign and the ensuing famine in the 1930s, ruined during World War II, and shocked by the Chernobyl catastrophe in the 1980s. These dramatic experiences shaped the trajectory of opposition to Soviet rule and significantly impacted resistance activities in the country.[49]

It is not surprising, therefore, that Soviet rule generates a counter-reaction and an increase in Ukrainian national sentiment, which lead to 'various forms of passive and covert opposition',

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[46] Miroslav Hroch, 'Learning from Small Nations', interview, *New Left Review*, 58, 2, pp. 49-50.
[47] *COBUILD Advanced British English Dictionary Online*,
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/nationalism>.
[48] Mikael Hjerm, 'Mobilizing Nationalist Sentiments – Which Factors Affect Nationalist Sentiments in Europe?', *UACES 38th Annual Conference*, Edinburgh, 1-3 September 2008,
<uaces.org/documents/papers/0801/2008_Hjerm.pdf>, p.13.
[49] Orysia Kulick, Balázs Apor, 'Ukraine: Milestones of Cultural Opposition' in *The Handbook of COURAGE: Cultural Opposition and Its Heritage in Eastern Europe* by Apor, Balázs, Apor, Péter, Horváth, Sándor, eds., (Budapest: Institute of History, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2018), pp. 187-205, p. 188.

'physical violence' and 'armed resistance'.[50] Following Blank and Schmidt's viewpoint that nationalism and patriotism are 'respectively associated with greater intolerance and greater tolerance toward minorities,[51] Kortschenko's 'state-focused nationalism', that is, a nationalism exhibited by a nation that strives 'to form a sovereign state',[52] signals that he can also be viewed as a patriot, just as Pieracki and von Mecklenburg regard themselves as patriots of their countries, given that patriotism means 'love of or devotion to one's country'.[53] The following thought-provoking definition of these two concepts is interesting to mention, especially that it is given with reference to Ukraine's present situation:

> Patriotism is fundamental to liberty because pride in one's nation-state, and a willingness to defend it if necessary, is the basis of national independence. Patriotism is the courage of national self-determination.
>
> By contrast, nationalism is patriotism transformed into a sentiment of superiority and aggression toward other countries. Nationalism is the poisonous idea that one's country is superior to somebody else's. Nationalism is intrinsically a cause of war and imperialism.[54]

Readers' awareness of the fact that Kortschenko is born to a Ukrainian father and an Austrian mother strengthens the idea that he is likely to have a patriotic rather than a nationalistic outlook. Moreover, Leerssen's reference to Hans Kohl's 'loaded and now-abandoned opposition between a Western-style, civic-rational type of nationalism and an Eastern-style ethnic-mystic type'[55] convinces us that nationalism versus patriotism is a valid argument.

Motyl's views on the issue of nationalism are interesting to consider from another source, which can provide further insights into the construction of his Ukrainian character in *Sweet Snow*. In a recent interview with *Radio Liberty*, Motyl points to the controversies surrounding an understanding of the term. He stresses that the word 'nationalism', which originally appeared at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries and concerned national liberation and establishment of certain sovereignty for countries, is imbued with many

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 192.
[51] Thomas Blank and Peter Schmidt, 'National Identity in a United Germany: Nationalism or Patriotism? An Empirical Test with Representative Data', *Political Psychology*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Special Issue: National Identity in Europe (Jun., 2003), pp. 289-312. p. 289.
[52] Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 'Nationalism'.
[53] *OED: Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com.dcu.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/138903?redirectedFrom=patriotism#eid>.
[54] Ronald Tiersky, 'Nationalism vs. Patriotism', *The Washington Post*, 23 February 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/nationalism-vs-patriotism/2014/02/23/9129d43a-9afc-11e3-8112-52fdf646027b_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.38a04b3fa811>.
[55] Joep Leerssen, 'The Cultivation of Culture: Towards a Definition of Romantic Nationalism in Europe', *Opleiding Europese Studies, Universiteit van Amsterdam*, 2005, <http://spinnet.eu/pdf/wpesa2.pdf>, p. 6.

different meanings, and is nowadays often confused with chauvinism.[56] Motyl explains where it stems from:

> old beliefs are still at work, when the French, the Britons, the Germans, the Italians perceive themselves at a higher stage of civilization, and continue to view Eastern Europe by and large the same as they had viewed it in the 18-19th centuries, as a backward, uncivilized part of Europe. Such an attitude is characteristic towards the Poles, the Hungarians, and the Romanians, not to mention the Ukrainians that are hardly existent in many Western Europeans' imagination.[57]

The idea that Ukrainian nationalism is perceived as somewhat different from Polish or German is prompted by the sense discernible at the beginning of the novel, when Kortschenko is regarded by the Pole and the German with some degree of suspicion. This is expressed in Pieracki's remark equating the Ukrainian with the Other: 'You nationalists are like the communists, *tak, tak* — just like the communists.' (*SwSn*: 38) Nevertheless, despite the protagonists' differences and disagreements that are manifest from their debates on politics and ideology, they display tolerance and develop respect for one another. This portrayal of their relationship suggests the possibility of a dialogue between those who hold opposing views, and also reveals that politics, exercised by ruling elites, do not always express a people's needs and expectations. This idea is reinforced by von Mecklenburg's explanation of a patriot's task: 'Chancellors and presidents come and go, Herr Kortschenko, while we diplomats stay. It is our sacred duty — *unsere heilige Pflicht* — to serve the state, not its leaders.' (*SwSn*: 98) It is unclear, however, what is meant by 'the state' in this deliberation, whether the count yearns for the traditional aristocratic order and 'his effete dying class' (*SwSn*: 33),[58] or if he feels concerned for the German people as a nation.

The uncertainty of belonging — problematic identities

Revealing the complexity of perceptions of the Self and the Other and reminding us of similar processes within the images in *Maria* and *The Silent People*, discussed in those parts of the novels' analyses that deal with the transitional characters, the prisoners' assumed belonging to the auto-image is made problematic because of the American journalist. It is indeed difficult to decide what group of images Golub can be associated with. Golub is a Ukrainian-born Jew, whose family escaped the pogroms and fled to America, where he became a communist. Regardless of such a combination of different characteristics, the element of hybridity is not

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[56] Maria Shchur, 'During the last 25 years nationalism in Ukraine has been exceptionally democratic and liberal — Professor Motyl', interview with Alexander J. Motyl, *Radio Liberty*, 18 August 2016 [my translation].
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] This is what Pieracki thinks of von Mecklenburg.

manifest in the construction of this literary image. This can be seen if Golub is juxtaposed with the hybrid characters from the Irish novels. While it is possible to consider the complexity of the processes of Golub's self-identification due to a sense of discontinuity triggered by his Jewish origin, Ukrainian birthplace, American residence and communist ideological identification, *Sweet Snow* does not show those closely-bound components that are considered to be essential to the state of hybridity, or those 'closenesses' or 'removals', identified as attributes that constitute Anglo-Irish hybrid identity. They are mentioned in the part 'Questions of Religion' in the imagological analysis of *The Silent People*.[59] In fact, there is a sense that *Sweet Snow* aims to highlight Golub's detachnemt from both the Self and the Other rather than his connection with any group. A view that his self-identity is in disarray is perceptible from his despair: he loses hope and perishes first in the novel while the rest of his companions are hopeful of survival to the last breath.

In the cell, Golub is a victim of the Bolshevik regime, just like the German and the Pole; yet, he is manifestly inimical to his cellmates, for 'they were bourgeois capitalists and anti-Semites, while he was a communist and a Jew. They were separated by a Grand Canyon of class, race, and ideology.' (*SwSn*: 27) On several occasions, Golub tries to persuade the guards that he is one of them. When they beat the prisoners, Golub begs them to stop: 'Comrades! Stop! Stop! I am one of you! Please, comrades, stop!' (*SwSn*: 34) In another episode, the guard seeks to punish those who were speaking in the van while meaningfully tapping 'his thigh with a menacing club.' (*SwSn*: 39) Von Mecklenburg's response that they all spoke is juxtaposed with Golub's attempt to protect himself: '*Ya – kommunist. Ya – vash tovarishch!* I am your comrade!' (*ibid.*) Golub's selfishness estranges him from his inmates, thus distancing him from the auto-image. Yet, these two episodes also demonstrate that he is the Other for the guards. One of them spits into Golub's face, calling him 'Zhid',[60] and severely beats him. It is important to note that this derogatory term is never used by his alleged enemies, his cell companions. Ironically, Pieracki realizes that one of Golub's tormentors, Comrade Izya, was also Jewish (*SwSn*: 54). Highlighting the wiliness of the Bolshevik regime, this detail prompts us to consider the ways in which the Soviet state stimulated antagonisms between groups of people and created the atmosphere of suspicion and threat in society.[61] *Sweet Snow* shows that Golub's passionate

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[59] See p. 102 in the analysis of *The Silent People*.

[60] The Russian word meaning 'a Jew', which had acquired a pejorative connotation in the nineteenth century (John D. Klier, '"Zhid": Biography of a Russian Epithet', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Jan., 1982), p. 1.

[61] One of them was the practice of denunciation. Sheila Fitzpatrick observes that denunciation as a social practice, with its multiplicity of types, strong visibility, and high incidence, was 'actively encouraged by the regime' in the Soviet Union of the 1930s. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Signals from Below: Soviet Letters of Denunciation of the 1930s', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 68, No. 4, *Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History, 1789-1989* (Dec., 1996), pp. 831-866. Also, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Practice of Denunciation in Stalinist*

adherence to communist ideology prevents him from noticing its deficiencies, and from recognizing that the true Other is the communists. Similarly to *Maria* and *The Silent People*, the gauge of Otherness in *Sweet Snow* is cruelty, a universal trait that cannot be associated with any national group specifically. This is why, the sense of Otherness in these three novels is not assigned to a particular nation. The uncertainty of Golub's belonging to either auto- or hetero-image strikingly resembles the ambivalence of the transitional characters of Korniy and Una, confirming the fluidity of images and subjectivity of national stereotyping. Golub's ideological leanings are reflective of his conflict with a sense of self, revealed in his explanation of the reason of having become a communist:

> I wanted to stop being a Jew. It is that simple. I was tired of this impossible race. I wanted to be nobody, anybody — *anybody* but a Jew. And communism promised me an answer to this infernal Jewish question. It let me be a Bolshevik. It let me be strong and build the future with my own hands. It let me abandon this terrible obsession with a glorious past that existed thousands years ago. It let me leave the ghetto and the desert.
> The freedom, Herr Graff, the freedom! You cannot imagine the freedom! (*SwSn*: 81-82)

Ironically, while seeking to attain freedom, Golub finds himself in captivity, filled with physical and psychological pain. The destruction of his pursuit of freedom emphasizes the detrimental nature of the Soviet regime. It can be assumed that behind Golub's mention of 'this impossible race' and 'this infernal Jewish question' is Jewish people's long-lasting suffering 'from discrimination and exclusion by other ethnic groups', which made the survival of the Jews even more complicated 'without a single territorial base'.[62] In confirmation of Golub's inner conflict is Angela Ferguson's mention of the confluence of psychosocial and societal factors that may affect the manner in which an individual integrates multiple social identities. According to Ferguson,

> Identification with respective social groups may be influenced by the way(s) in which individuals have experienced and internalized multiple forms and layers of social oppression. Experiences with oppression may cause an individual to shift his/her affiliation or identification with respective social groups in order to avoid internalizing negative reactions and attitudes connected to a social group. If membership in one socialgroup buffers an individual from prejudice and discrimination faced in another

Russia, Volume I, (Chicago: The National Council for Soviet and East European Research, 1994), <https://www.ucis.pitt.edu/nceeer/1994-808-04-Fitzpatrick.pdf>.

[62] Luis Kriesberg, 'Identity Issues', *Beyond Intractability*, *Knowledge Base and Conflict Fundamentals*, ed. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA, July 2003, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity-issues>.

social group, the individual may select to only identify with the social group that provides the least negativity.[63]

Ferguson's observation on the interrelation between one's identification with a group and oppression explains Golub's rejection of his Jewishness as an escape from the troubled past of his people. Hence, his affiliation with communism is manifest of his search for security and stability. Adopting the identity of the Other, Golub believes he has found them. Interestingly, his surname[64] triggers an association with freedom and hope, indicating that his quest for ideals promised by communism is genuine. Such an interpretation allows us to link Golub with a bigger picture of the entire Jewish people's longing to obtain inviolability, which can be strengthened by Richard Pipes' explanation for the origin of the belief of the Jewish people's embrace of communism:

> In the course of the civil war the Jewish community, caught in the Red-White conflict, increasingly sided with the Communist regime: this, however, it did not from preference but from the instinct of self-preservation. When the White armies entered the Ukraine in the summer of 1919 Jews welcomed them, for they had suffered grievously under the Bolshevik rule — if not as Jews then as "bourgeois". They became quickly disenchanted with White policies which tolerated pogroms and excluded Jews from the administration. After experiencing White rule, Ukrainian Jewry turned anti-White and looked to the Red Army as protectors. Thus a vicious circle was set in motion: Jews were accused pro-Bolshevik and persecuted, which had the effect of turning them pro-Bolshevik for the sake of survival; the shift of allegiance served to justify further prosecutions.[65]

In *Sweet Snow*, too, Golub's seeking acceptance of the communists is markedly distinct at times of increased danger. Paradoxically, despite the Pole, the Ukrainian and the German having similar aspirations — freedom for their countries, they are on opposite sides of the barricades to the American Jew. For them, von Mecklenburg argues, communist ideology is the utmost evil, destroying the very people who embrace it (*SwSn*: 82). Golub's utter commitment to communism, despite the atrocities he witnessed carried out by its proponents, shows how dangerous ideological blindness can be. The protagonists' debates on communism and their national belongings make it clear that ideological disagreements are likely to produce deeper conflicts rather than national affiliations. This is validated by the count's insistence on the impossibility of discarding one's identity: 'you always will be a Jew' and 'I cannot stop being

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[63] Angela Ferguson, 'Intersections of Identity: Navigating the Complexities', *The Forum on Public Policy*, 2006, p. 11.

[64] 'Golub' means 'dove' in Ukrainian, Polish, Slovakian, Czech, Belorussian (also variant of Holub), and Russian.

[65] Richard Pipes, 'Jews and the Russian Revolution: A Note' in *Poles, Jews, Socialists: The Failure of an Ideal*, ed. by Antony Polonski (Oxford, UK: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), p. 55.

a German' (*SwSn*: 82), and expressed in his conclusive remark that being a communist is 'infinitely worse' than being a Jew (*SwSn*: 104).

Descriptions of the protagonists' attempts to survive in the dire circumstances intermix with disturbing descriptions of the dead, encountered by them inside and outside the huts, on the roads and away from villages. This generates the thought that they, too, will not escape a fate similar of these perished Ukrainians. The impersonal group constructions in *Sweet Snow* parallel those passages in *Maria*, which portray the multitude of victims of the Soviet regime: Ukrainian men serving in the Russian army, mothers and wives who long for their sons and husbands to return home from war, and, finally, starving and dying peasants. They function to induce the reader to consider the magnitude of Ukraine's tragedy. Furthermore, to highlight its scale, in *Sweet Snow*, the number of corpses increases as the story unfolds. Famine victims are mentioned by von Mecklenburg for the first time in the cell, while he attempts to convince Golub of the destructive role of the communist order and the party leader Joseph Stalin: 'Have you seen the corpses? Have you seen the thousands of dead bodies littering the streets?' he asks Golub, and Piearcki adds somberly: 'There is mass famine' […] 'I have seen it with my own eyes.' (*SwSn*: 21) A while later, through a little peephole in the van, Golub sees heaps of dead bodies covered with snow:

> The irregularly distributed piles that lined the road for kilometers on end were the only objects that stood out against deadening uniformity of the barren landscape. […] each pile probably contained at least one dead Ukrainian peasant. (*SwSn*: 48)

Tragic images of the dead are discovered again and again as the protagonists wander in the countryside:

> Wherever they looked, however, they saw dead bodies. Open eyes and open mouths stared back at them with a fish-like indifference and animal ferocity that, literally, took their breath away. When the wind blew, the eyelashes appear to flutter, hinting at a desire to communicate… (*SwSn*: 66)

To Pieracki, the Ukrainians' 'passivity' and 'willingness to die' are obvious: looking at 'the neatly arrayed skulls', and smelling the 'distressing' odour, he can see 'no resistance, no struggle — *nothing*.' (*SwSn*: 121) The Pole reflects that they should not have resisted joining the collective farms and thus avoided hunger, for 'death is not worth a piece of land.' (*SwSn*: 114-5) Pieracki clearly does not understand what Ukraine's 'prodigal son', Kortschenko, knows well, and which is evident also in *Maria* — a fundamental quality of the peasants' nature: their love of the land, or, as Pieracki puts it, 'this mystical attraction of the

soil.' (*SwSn*: 115) The Pole is distressed by the numbers of those who died of starvation, and he feels he 'could no longer keep his irony from spilling over into sarcasm':

> 'The *people*? *What* people? The corpses on that oven? The corpses in that mound? There is no *narod*, *mon ami*, except in your imagination. I have travelled throughout this country. The people — *your* people — are all in graves or jails or cattle cars.' (*SwSn*: 115)

Pieracki's outcry expresses the utter desperation that pervades the novel, revealing one of the elements that distinguish the famine fiction on An Gorta Mór from works on the Holodomor: a lack of hope. This idea was already introduced in relation to *The Silent People* and will be conveyed in our analysis of *The Hungry Land*. It will be shown that amongst suffering and death, brought by the famine, there is a glimmer of hope for the Irish that they can survive by emigrating, whereas the Ukrainians are doomed to face 'their own annihilation' (*SwSn*: 121).

Representations of suffering: fiction and reality

Margaret Kelleher observes that 'the problem of integrating historical explanation within the famine story is one that besets most novelists who take on the subject.'[66] *Sweet Snow*'s dramatic scenes closely reflect textual descriptions of the atmosphere of desperation and gloom from photographic on-site images caught by a few cameras in the 1930s,[67] and also from the written testimonies of those few eyewitnesses who had the courage to tell the truth during the reign of Soviet terror. One of them, Welsh journalist Gareth Jones, dared to undertake an unescorted tour through several regions of Ukraine to find out for himself the disastrous consequences of Stalin's collectivization, which he revealed in a series of twenty-one articles, published in the Western press.[68] This is just one example of what Jones witnesses in 1933 Ukraine:

> I tramped for several days through villages in the Ukraine and there was no bread there, many children had swollen stomachs, nearly all the horses and cows had died, and the people themselves were dying.[69]

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[66] Margaret Kelleher, *The Feminization of Famine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 137.

[67] Illuminating images of Ukraine's famine are preserved in the photographs taken by Austrian engineer Aleksander Wienerberger, compiled by Gareth Jones's great nephew Nigel Linsan Colley. For example, see Abbildung 11 — "Die Leichen der in den Straßen Charkovs Verhungerten erwecken anfangs Anteilnahme", available from '1933 Famine photo's of Kharkov, Ukraine, from Dr. Ewald Ammende's {early winter} 1935 "Muss Russland Hungern?" [*Must Russia Starve?*] published by Wilhelm Braumüller, Wien [Vienna]', <http://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/thomas_walker/muss_russland_hungern.htm>.

[68] Ray Gamache, *Gareth Jones. Eyewitness to the Holodomor* (Wales: Welsh Academic Press, 2016), p.1.
Also, Zak Barnett discusses Gareth Jones's observations on the 1932-33 famine in 'The Stalin Beat. Reporting on the Real Russia' available from: <http://www.garethjones.org/soviet_articles/gareth_jones_stalin_beat.htm>.

[69] from Gareth Jones's letter dated March 27, 1933 in Gamache, Ray, *Gareth Jones. Eyewitness to the Holodomor* (Wales: Welsh Academic Press, 2016), p. 129.

From reading Jones's accounts of events, a connection with the images that the protagonists in *Sweet Snow* see in the steppe is easy to identify:

> "Do you see anything?" Someone said. Kortschenko turned his head. It was von Mecklenburg.
> "Only snow and corpses, I think."
> "They are dying like flies."
> "Yes", Kortschenko noted dryly… (*SwSn*: 50)

There are other examples throughout both texts which allow us to see that their depictions of a famished Ukraine and her people are similar. At another time, in a letter to his parents, Jones recounts what he heard during a visit to Danzig from the German consul stationed in Kharkoff:[70]

> Since March it has got so much worse that it is horrible to be in Kharkoff. So many dying, ill and beggars. They are dying off in the villages […] and the spring sowing campaign is catastrophic. The peasants are eating the seed. […] Many villages are empty.[71]

A sense of utter devastation, perceptible from Jones's lines, is also evoked in *Sweet Snow*. On many occasions, a noticeable emptiness, represented by people's destroyed homes, is used to indicate the scale of the tragedy:

> The shutters and door had been torn off, perhaps for firewood. The window and door frames were gaping holes, black voids that stared at him like the eyes of a blind beggar on the Naschmarkt. More than half the thatched roof was also missing. It might have blown away or the straw might have been used by desperate peasants to make a thin soup or an inedible gruel. (*SwSn*: 77)

From such passages, similar to some in *Maria*, it can be seen that Ukrainian famine fiction draws heavily on factual evidence and eyewitness testimonies. An important function that fiction fulfils lies in its capacity to bring suffering into sharper focus by using various literary techniques. The namelessness of the dead significantly heightens the magnitude of loss, which is enlarged even more by the growing numbers. Wandering around the vast countryside, the only thing the protagonists can see is death — 'two corpses entangled in a macabre embrace' (*SwSn*: 99), 'five — no, *six* — bodies in here' (*SwSn*: 99-100), three corpses (*SwSn*: 100), four skeletons (*SwSn*: 101), four skulls (*SwSn*: 121), one hundred and forty-eight corpses (*SwSn*: 130), a pile of corpses thrown together forming a mound (*SwSn*: 65). Finally, the accumulation of dead bodies conveys the image of an entire Ukraine, moving towards a decayed nothingness in the end:

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[70] Ukraine's capital at the time.
[71] Jones quoted by Gamache, p. 191.

> There was no one here. There was nothing here. Everything was dead, rotten, and decaying and everyone was dead, rotten, and decaying. Ukraine — *his* Ukraine — was dead, a corpse. No, it was worse. It was gone. It had disappeared, vanished. (*SwSn*: 147)

Despite the funereal images of piles of perished peasants, which present Ukraine as a dead territory: '"*Ukraina kladovyshche*" […] "Ukraine is a graveyard"' (*SwSn*: 67), the protagonists are more afraid of the living. On hearing the sounds of gunshots and assuming that they are being chased by the GPU agents,[72] they hide in a nearby mound, only to realize that it is a mass of corpses, 'crazily, haphazardly arranged, with limbs and heads poking out grotesquely and bits of rags flapping in the wind…' (*SwSn*: 65) In the mound, Kortschenko and Golub find what they think to be a corpse, but in fact, is a peasant woman, Kateryna Fedorivna Khanenko, in the final moments of her life. This grotesque scene of a still living person buried among the dead may seem to be a moment of imaginative fiction. Yet, the woman's explanation for the reason for her being in the mound — 'They also collect the living.' (*SwSn*: 67), includes an element of realism. This character's synecdochial meaning highlights the countless cases of insensitive treatment of the dying that have been recorded by the famine witnesses. One of the most impressive sources of evidence of horrific facts of inhumanity to the Holodomor victims is the collection of survivor testimonies, compiled by Yuriy Mytsyk. Memories of past events, shared by the interviewees, bear a strong resemblance to the scenes portrayed in *Sweet Snow*. One of the interviewees, Mykola Mykolayovych Polyakov, reminisces:

> In the spring of 1933, the people were so swollen from hunger that it was not even possible for them to go from village to village to ask for some food. Many of them had bleeding wounds on their bodies. In the streets of the village and in the houses, there were corpses everywhere.[73]

Polyakov's testimony strengthens the view that closeness to the actual events is an important feature of Ukrainian famine fiction. The borders of fiction and reality are blurred in a story by another witness, S. Holovko, who recounts the day when the director of a local orphanage in the village of Malamyna, where he lived with his parents at the time of the 1932-33 Famine, offered him and his friends a bowl of soup and a slice of bread in exchange for their help with the burial of some dead children. Holovko describes what he saw in one of the rooms of the orphanage:

> On the bare floor, side by side in a row, there were lying half-naked, exhausted (just bones and skin) children. Some were already dead; others were just opening their

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[72] In the Soviet Union, the GPU was the secret-police organization (1922–23) functioning under the NKVD (*Dictionary.com. Thesaurus.com*, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/gpu>).

[73] Yuriy Mytsyk, *Ukrainian Holocaust 1932-33. Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived: Part One* (Kyiv: Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Publishing House, 2005), p. 82 [my translation].

mouths, because they had no strength to utter a word. There were about ten of those that had to be removed and buried somewhere. After what we have seen, we took flight quickly. We didn't want any soup or bread even though we were so hungry, with swollen hands and faces.[74]

Holovko's account parallels the portrayal of the child victims in *Sweet Snow*, with 'bloated bellies and sunken cheeks and stick-like arms and legs that had been reduced to yellow-gray skin and sharply protruding bones' (*SwSn*: 135). The monstrosity of Ukraine's reality, described by the witnesses, and the horrors of famine, depicted in the novel, challenge the difference between fact and fiction. Weakness, swelling, silence, corpses — these are the main elements, incorporated in the descriptions of starvation either in the genre of testimony or fiction. In fiction, suffering experienced by a character — the dying of Kateryna Fedorivna, for example, is maximized because the processes, which ultimately transform it into a most gruesome death, are depicted in such graphic detail. Kateryna Fedorivna's lament encapsulates the explanation for the reason for Ukraine's famine: the forcible seizure of all food and livestock that the peasants had grown, as well as seeds that could be used to produce harvest during the next season. In her words, the true aim of collectivization is exposed — a deliberate destruction of the rebellious peasant class:

> "The communists took everything, Pan Golub. Our land, even our cow." Her voice rose. "One cow! We had one cow and the communists took it! And then they took our bread. And when we thought they had taken everything, they took our seeds. The unbelievers destroyed our church and took everything." (*SwSn*: 69)

Kateryna Fedorivna's testimony of the Bolsheviks' cruelty strengthens an understanding of the depravity of their rule, and also explains the reasons for the Ukrainian perception of their Otherness. A deeper investigation of the issues concerning the Holodomor leads us to discover that Motyl's fictional character can be traced to the real-life person: a peasant woman of the same name and surname, albeit with a different patronymic, is found on the list of the 1932-33 Holodomor victims in the village of Velyki Pritsky near Kiev.[75] For researchers, the knowledge of this detail increases the sense of the character's credibility, making her denunciation of the instigatros of the famine convincing. The link between a particular peasant woman from a small community — the village she is from, and furthermore, a large entity — entire Ukraine, is made to 'belatedly grant identities to past figures who have been unjustly unknown'.[76]

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[74] *Ibid*., p. 61 [my translation].

[75] Khanenko Kateryna Opanasivna (Ханенко Катерина Опанасівна) was a resident of Velyki Ptritsky (Великі Прітськи), a village in Kaharlyk raion (district), Kiev oblast (province). See the Holodomor victims in *Martyrology*, Section 1, <http://memorialholodomor.org.ua/storage/files/2017-01-18/kiivska_obl.pdf >, p. 424.

[76] Sam Sacks, 'The Rise of the Nameless Narrator', *The New Yorker*, March 03, 2015, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-rise-of-the-nameless-narrator>.

In this instance, the role of another minor character, also a dying peasant, is important to mention. The protagonists' attention is caught by 'the sound of a tin voice' that belongs to a man 'half-sitting, half-lying on the side of the road in the mud.' (*SwSn*: 135) Even though the man's description is provided, yet, in contrast to Kateryna Fedorivna, his name is not revealed:

> He was bearded and wet, from head to toe, and he wore rags on the skeletal remains of his body. His long black hair fell in thick knotted strands into his yellow face. His glassy eyes looked out from beneath thick eyebrows made to look thicker by the thinness of his face and body. His lips were pulled back, revealing the rows of rotting brown teeth. (*SwSn*: 135-136)

The stranger's suffering is brought to stand out among numerous piles of dead peasants, and the mention of his village, Stepanivka, connects the novel's fictitious place with a broader territory, for villages of such a name are widespread in Ukraine. Perhaps his name is left unknown for the reader so that a connection with the author's uncles whom he 'never knew', referred to in the novel's dedication, could be made. The anonymity of this character, linked to the multitude of corpses that the protagonists see throughout their journey, adds emphasis to the scale of Ukraine's tragedy, and leads to reveal another distressing aspect of the 1932-33 Famine.

The psychological effects of famine

As the horrors of the Holodomor unfold on a grand scale, the psychological effects of famine are brought to readers' attention. It is shown that apart from the inhuman nature of people's deaths, the result of a severe and prolonged nutritional deprivation is dehumanization. This aspect of famine is represented by another group that is part the auto-image, built upon the concept of anonymity — the cannibals. While hiding among corpses from possible GPU agents, Golub, von Mecklenburg, Pieracki and Kortschenko become aware that their chasers are scavengers, as they drag some dead bodies from the mound. The monstrous realization — 'They're not scavengers. They're *cannibals*.' (*SwSn*: 72) emerges when the pulling of the bodies is followed by a shriek, 'a deep and increasingly loud groan' and, finally, a 'terrible scream and the words, very definitely in Ukrainian, "Stop! Stop! Good God, stop!"' (*SwSn*: 67-8) The protagonists are reassured of the accuracy of their judgement by their discovery of a macabre image in the snow:

> They espied, half covered in a snowdrift, a battered head attached to a disembowelled torso. The head had once belonged to a young woman, a blonde, with long eyelashes — which might have fluttered in the breeze if they had not been sprinkled with blood — and a long thin nose and tight mouth. The arms, legs, breasts, and buttocks were missing

and the abdominal cavity lay open and mangled before them. The crows were pulling at sinews and picking excitedly at the blue intestines. (*SwSn*: 72)

In this gruesome description, such little details as the colour of hair or length of eyelashes allow readers to identify the victim as a real human being, and thus encourage their empathic response to her death.

In the scenes that deal with cannibalism, *Sweet Snow* presents naturalistic images of unnatural death. They suggest that Smart's explanation of the depictive power of realistic literature in his discussion of literary representations of Ireland's suffering during the Great Famine befits the context of Ukraine's Holodomor, too. Smart points to two idiosyncratic contexts, one that provides descriptions of what can be seen, and the other of what is hidden in texts:

> We tend to rely on what we have seen or known before to help us understand the new, and that habit of mind naturally restricts our ability to really "see" things which are outside the boundaries of what we have already experienced. Furthermore, the "meaning of things" is almost never in the text; rather, we bring meaning to texts and make them fit the contours of our understanding.[77]

The novel's graphic descriptions of death shape readers' perception of the brutality of the Soviets in Ukraine. At this stage, nothing is left undisclosed in the representations of Ukraine's suffering in *Sweet Snow*, and therefore, the element of cannibalism can be thought of as 'the fullest and most agonised expression of its magnitude'.[78] Considering that there are no other historical or physiological contexts, in which cannibal practice was a societal norm in this part of the world in modern times, the novel's depiction of cannibalism as utterly inhuman is a powerful means for reinforcing readers' understanding of the devastating effects of communist rule. The descriptions of the cadavers, butchered by cannibals, produce a surreal effect, almost positing this narrative as horror fiction, albeit only for readers unacquainted with the documentary accounts of the Holodomor. These are only a few excerpted pieces from the volume of testimonies compiled by Yuriy Mytsyk:

> There were also cannibals in the village. A mother, a grandmother and a daughter ate their son and a grandson.' (retold by Rodionova (Mateyko) Daryna Aksentiivna, b. 1920, p. 19)

> 'We ate everything. I heard about cases of cannibalism.' (retold by Slobodenyuk (Med) Antonina Semenivna, b. 1911, p. 21)

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[77] Smart, p. 8.

[78] Henry J. M. Day, *Lucan and the Sublime: Power, Representation and Aesthetic Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2013), p.197.

'There were cases when people ate their own children.' (retold by Onikiyenko (Bobyr) Klavdiya Oleksandrivna, b. 1914, p. 25)

'She says: "My daughter died, I boiled her, and we ate her." And then she became insane.' (retold by Malyshko (Solnytchenko) Nadiya Yosypivna, b. 1919, p. 28)

'I remember Yosyp from our village, and he had a wife and three children. They had a neighbour. People were telling us that he killed that neighbour, cured her meat with salt, and dug her head with a twisted crown braid in the cellar. But people learned about it, because Yosyp's wife often drank water in those hungry days.' (retold by Usenko Halyna Dmytrivna, b. 1927, p. 32)

'We entered one of the huts and saw a woman with red-rimmed, insane eyes. Later, we asked some people what happened to her. We were told that she had three children, she kindled the oven, filled the hut with coal gas, left the hut and locked the door. When her children died from gas poisoning, she ate them. Parents ate children, and children ate parents. There were a lot of such cases.' (retold by Sazhyferov Dushukar Semenovych, b. 1918, pp. 49-50)[79]

The enormity of the horror in these descriptions shows how human beings are transformed beyond belief by hunger.[80] One of the Holodomor survivors, teacher Oleksandra Radchenko, is perplexed by people's indifference during the famine, when she hears from peasants about two children 'freezing along the road to Chuhuiv': 'The children were still alive. Why did the passersby not pick up those children? How cruel people have become. My God, what is going on?'[81] Her outcry echoes Pieracki's anguished outburst on his first experience of a corpse encounter:

No one paid attention to the body. They walked around it, over it, as if it wasn't there. I couldn't understand their coldness, their indifference, their inhumanity. Didn't they see? Didn't they care? Why didn't they do something? (*SwSn*: 31)

Radchenko's and Pieracki's responses to inhumanity, emphasized by rhetorical questions, barely differ. Radchenko is clear in her explanation of such a lack of humanity: 'A beggarly way of life is gradually turning people into rude, cruel, unbridled creatures ready to turn to crime…'[82] Pieracki's reflection that his first reaction was naivety veers to the assumption that

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[79] Mytsyk, ed., *Ukrainian Holocaust 1932-33*, p.19 [all quotations are my translation].
[80] Also, James Mace mentions cases of cannibalism in his article 'The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine', in *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. by Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Kravchenko (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies University of Alberta Edmonton, 1986), pp. 1-15.
[81] From the diary of teacher Oleksandra Radchenko in *The Holodomor Reader. A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1932-33 in Ukraine* (Edmonton-Toronto: Canadian Studies of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2012), compiled and edited by Bohdan Klid and Alexander J. Motyl, p.181.
[82] *Ibid*.

one quickly 'gets used to misery' and 'to the horror' (*SwSn*: 31-2). Readers' apprehension of the terrors of famine is increased due to the novel's graphic imagery, while the witnesses' seemingly restrained testimonies can be a sign of their wish to distance themselves from their traumatic past. The presentation of the group of villagers, who lose their sanity because of starvation and are induced to cannibalism, triggers a reflection about who is more dehumanized — they who are brought to the state of cannibalism in order to survive, or those who actuate famine by violent, inhuman methods. This implies the need to further scrutinize the hetero-image as depicted in this novel.

The hetero-image

The suggestion that the distinction between the auto- and hetero-images can be made on the basis of the characters' belonging either to the group of the oppressed or to the group of their oppressors is borne out in the episodes showing the communists' cruel conduct towards the four prisoners. As in *Maria* and *The Silent People*, cruelty plays a major role in the construction of the hetero-image in *Sweet Snow*. An understanding that this trait is a distinctive characteristic of the Soviets is introduced by the descriptions of the protagonists' arrests. They create a sense of foreboding and unease from the outset, which is achieved by an effective use of kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory imagery. Golub is taken from a hotel room 'one or two hours after midnight', he is given 'five minutes to dress', and further 'escorted' by 'his 'quivering elbows' downstairs, amongst the smell of 'cheap cigarettes and sour sweat', and 'pushed into the lumpy back seat' of 'the waiting black car' outside (*SwSn*: 4). Golub's challenge to the arrest contrasts with the silence of those who detain him:

> He had protested, he had asked for an explanation, he had shown them the Party credentials and letters of referral, but they had said nothing, almost as if they knew that their very presence said all there was to say. It was their bored, mechanical, and indifferent silence that had most intimidated him. (*SwSn*: 5)

The captors' speechlessness underlines the cohesion of their group and, along with other elements of the arrest — the time and the black car used to transport the journalist, does not augur well, and their machine-like conduct suggests that such a procedure is common practice. Pieracki's and Kortschenko's arrests are carried out in a similar manner. The Pole is seized while walking home from 'an elegant reception' at the consulate:

> A black van pulled up alongside me and three gorillas in leather jackets sprang out and pushed me inside. They knocked me on the head and, when I awoke, my hands had been

tied and my eyes were covered with a hood. Then they dumped me in the cell. (*SwSn*: 110)

The symbolism of the black leather, already discussed in this analysis, reinforces the author's conveing of the captors' brutality. Shock tactics and violence are carried out during Kortschenko's detention, too: 'I was on a train to Kharkiv, asleep, and the guards stormed in at one of the stations and dragged me off.' (*ibid.*) The sense of injustice and intimidation evident during these arrests, enveloped in silence and lacking any explanation or announcement of charges, lay the foundation for readers' empathy with the victims and alienation from the perpetrators.

The imagery of the arrests in *Sweet Snow* is extended outside the margins of the novel, for it is also most likely familiar to the reader from the historical context. The ruthlessness with which Soviet communists eliminated not only their most obvious political opponents, but also all those who were regarded as potentially dangerous, has been depicted numerous times both in fiction and non-fiction.[83] Indeed, there is a long tradition of such representations of Soviet abuse of power in Western culture and literature. A typical Soviet arrest, when 'anyone could receive a knock on the door in the middle of the night and be dragged away by the secret police',[84] has become a recognizable pattern of power imposition in the Soviet state, strengthening its association with dictatorial rule. The trademarks of Stalinism, indeed, became 'harsh political repression and terror'.[85] At a superficial level, the attribute of brutality has been often linked to the quality of being Soviet, or Sovietness in general, and Russianness in particular, due to the interchangeability of these terms. Derek C. Maus mentions the 'frequent synonymous use of the "Russian" and "Soviet"',[86] and Christopher Lawrence Zugger notes a semantic link between them: 'It is common still in Western writing to find "Soviet Union" interchanged with "Russia", and "Soviet" with "Russian".'[87] The equivalence between these

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[83] Descriptions of cruel treatment of innocent victims in labour camps and prisons, during purges and organized famines can be found, for instance, in *I Chose Freedom* written by Victor Kravchenko, a high Soviet official who defected to the USA in 1944 (London: Robert Hale Limited, undated) or in *Memoirs* by Petro Grigorenko who also escaped from the USSR to America (London: Harvill Press, 1983, translated by Thomas P. Whitney). Also, see Fitzpatrick, Sheila, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Lynne Viola, 'The Question of the Perpetrator in Soviet History', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Spring 2013), pp. 1-23, pp. 18-19.

[84] Tony Downey and Nigel Smith, *Russia and the USSR, 1900-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 47.

[85] Bertrand M. Patenaude, 'Regional Perspectives on Human Rights: The USSR and Russia, Part One', *Standford SPICE, Freeman Spogli Insitute*, Fall 2012, <https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/regional_perspectives_on_human_rights_the_ussr_and_russia_part_one>.

[86] Derek C. Maus, *Unvarnishing Reality: Subversive Russian and American Cold War Satire* (University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. xii.

[87] Christopher Lawrence Zugger, chapter 'Russian versus Soviet' in *The Forgotten: Catholics of the Soviet Empire from Lenin Through Stalin* (Syracuse · New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. xxvii.

terms emerges from the fact that in the USSR, 'the Russians constitute the ruling majority'.[88] Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone explains:

> The international and popular Western image of the Soviet Union rarely recognizes the multi-ethnic and formally federal character of the Soviet State. The usual perception is that the Soviet Union is synonymous with "Russia." This is so, first, because in the Soviet Union the Russians are the dominant nation, quantitatively and qualitatively, their historical hegemony having survived intact the 1917 Revolution and the transition from Imperial Russia to the Soviet "international workers"' state; second, because the highly centralized nature of the Soviet political system, run by the unitary Communist Party renders the federal constitutional state structure largely irrelevant for the purposes of international Realpolitik.[89]

Analyzing Stalin's polemics against Lenin in relation to the structure and organization of the Soviet state, Vitaly Portnikov highlights that '"Советский Союз" был синонимом "России"'[90] and explains the reasons for this case of interchangeability. The convergence of negative portrayals of the Russian national character in literary texts written before the Soviet period[91] and numerous representations of cruelty of the Soviets provided by texts produced during the times of the USSR,[92] and the equalization between the terms "Soviet" and "Russian", not only bolstered stereotypical representations of brutality of Russians/ Soviets but also activated the two terms' interchangeability. Moreover, Sheila Fitzpatrick notes that in her usage, Stalinist and Soviet are overlapping concepts, 'the former representing both a maximalist version of the latter and its defining moment'.[93] All these nuances confirm the significance of power-related issues on national representations.

References to the practice of arrests are even found in jokes and anecdotes. In his article on Soviet social cohesion and personal relations between 1935-1939, Robert Thurston provides the example of one of 'most popular' jokes that circulated during the 'grim period' of the 1930s, known as 'Great Terror' — 'the 4.a.m. joke' — told by Wolfgang Leonhard, a committed Young Communist League member:

> At four o'clock in the morning there was a knock on the door of a Moscow house... Finally one of the tenants, Abram Abramovich, took his courage in both hands and

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[88] Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, 'Ethnicity in the Soviet Union', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 433, Ethnic Conflict in the World Today (Sep., 1977), pp. 73-87, p. 73.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[90] '"The USSR" was synonymous with "Russia"' [my translation from Russan]. See Виталий Портников, 'Панельная дискуссия "Что ждет РФ: сценарии и прогнозы"', *Guildhall Media Centre*, 20 January 2016, — Vitaly Portnikov, 'Panel Discussion "What awaits the RF: scenarios and forecasts"', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-GyYxFf0YQ>, min. 16'20-16'30.

[91] See chapter on the hetero-image on pp. 49-50 of this thesis.

[92] See chapter on the role of ideology on pp. 69-70, footnotes 61, 62 of this thesis.

[93] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4.

opened the front door. He was heard whispering for a few moments with a man standing outside. Then he came back to his terrified fellow tenants with a bright smile on his face: "Nothing to worry about, comrades — the house is on fire, that's all!"[94]

Coupling the harrowing with humour as a way of coping with deep fear in what 'seemed so inevitable anyway',[95] the joke brings out the most distinguishable element of a Soviet arrest — its time — early morning hours, highlighting the dangerousness and unpredictability of life under the Soviet regime. Coincidentally, the ethnic identity of the journalist in *Sweet Snow* is shared with the joke's protagonist, as both have distinctively Jewish names. 'Arrest' imagery, abundantly reused and reworked, has become a trope which, *pace* Leerssen, 'obtains familiarity by dint of repetition',[96] and functions as one of the schematized stereotypical patterns, representing the contemporary Soviet discourse. Because the scenes of the protagonists' arrests mirror realistic accounts of the actual treatment of millions of Soviet citizens, they activate a level of predictability about how the story will unfold. In the Soviet state, it was not unusual for the arrested to undergo torture, and the novel reconstructs this realist sequence. Golub is interrogated in a small dark room, while sitting on a chair 'bolted to the floor' under 'a piercingly bright lamp', in alternating spells of monotonous questions and silences (*SwSn*: 5). Emotionally exhausted, the journalist eventually gives in: 'He told the truth that they wanted to hear and then at some point he realized that he no longer knew what the truth was, that there might even be no such thing as the truth...' (*ibid.*) Golub's psychologically coercive interrogation is in juxtaposition with the portrayal of physical violence, inflicted on Kortschenko: 'They beat him, ceaselessly, for what seemed like days in an adjacent building where the floorboards creaked with every blow and the grimy windows rattled every time he screamed.' (*SwSn*: 49) The methods applied to torture the Ukrainian differ from those used with the Jew, yet, the result is the same: 'They broke him […] and he had signed a long confession in the vain hope that they would let him board the first train home.' (*SwSn*: 50) In this, again, an element of realism emerges, as false confessions were one of the most notorious features of the Soviet penitentiary system. Von Mecklenburg knows just well how the Soviet system works:

> They need no evidence. They can manufacture whatever they want and whatever they need. That is the genius of the system, *mein junger Freund*. They can make you into a Japanese spy, me into a Romanian imperialist, and our sleeping comrade into an agent of Wall Street. And we will believe it, too. (*SwSn*: 26)

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[94] Robert W. Thurston, 'Social Dimensions of Stalinist Rule: Humor and Terror in the USSR, 1935-1941', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Spring, 1991), p. 546.
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and Method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 26.

Even though there is no description of von Mecklenburg's arrest, it is made clear that the representative of Germany in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic was also tortured: 'The soles of his feet were bruised, creating a striking contrast to his toenails, which were as neatly rounded as his fingernails.' (*SwSn*: 9) The juxtaposition of the diplomat's well-kept nails with the signs of physical abuse underlines the contrast between his life before and after the detention by the Soviets. Inhuman treatment of the imprisoned in the USSR has been documented by many researchers. Von Mecklenburg's torture strikingly resembles the infliction of pain described by Vsevolod Meyerhold, one of the greatest Russian theatre directors, in his letter to leading Soviet politician Vyacheslav Molotov: 'They beat me, a sick 65-year-old man, on the soles of my feet and my spine with a rubber strap'.[97] It appears that every aspect of an arrest, portrayed in *Sweet Snow*, has a connection with authentic events. Asked whether there were those who refused to sign confessions even after torture, historian and Gulag researcher Lidia Golovkova explains:

> That was very rare. The pain of the beatings and torture was so excruciating that 50-year-old generals would forget themselves and start crying for their mothers. General Sidyakin lost his mind and howled in his cell like a dog. Many prisoners were sent off to psychiatric hospitals for compulsory treatment immediately after their interrogation.[98]

These accounts of torture confirm the closeness of famine fiction to the bitter Soviet reality, which is used in *Sweet Snow* to render the exponential growth of cruelty, brought about by the communist regime — from arrests to torture, and further on to the scenes depicting a multitude of corpses. In this way, the perception of the hetero-image is shaped in an increasingly negative light.

It is noteworthy that there are no descriptions of those who carry out the arrests, conduct interrogations and torture the arrested, and neither are their names given. The unnamed are also the prison guards, whose conduct reinforces the novel's presentation of the depravity of the Soviet system:

> Five guards, all reeking of a powerful home-brewed *samogon*,[99] had burst into the tiny cell. They were shouting incomprehensibly and smacking the men across their shoulders, arms, and heads. (*SwSn*: 34)

This description again makes them appear as one unified force. In addition to the violent behaviour of the Soviet cadre, effectively highlighted by kinaesthetic imagery, their Otherness

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[97] Golovkova in Ekaterina Loushnikova, 'Comrade Stalin's Secret Prison', *openDemocracy*, *oDR Russia and beyond*, 13 January 2015, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/ekaterina-loushnikova/comrade-stalin%e2%80%99s-secret-prison>.

[98] *Ibid*.

[99] Home-produced spirit.

is built up by their drunkenness. Mentioned several times throughout the novel as a distinctive attribute of the Other, it makes the hetero-image even more pronounced. Von Mecklenburg's summation of the prison workers' traits is an example of the basic structure of a generalized image: 'all prison brutes look alike.' (*SwSn*: 40)

As observed earlier, the technique of namelessness underscores the large numbers of famine victims when applied to the auto-image. It is questionable if it fulfils exactly the same function regarding the hetero-image. The novel's publication date — 2013, brings to mind Sacks's mention of an increase in the deployment of the concept of namelessness by novelists in recent years. His point that 'in popular conceptions of dystopia, names are often among the first things to disappear'[100] suggests that within the apocalyptic depictions of famine in *Sweet Snow*, the dystopian symbolism of unknowability functions to heighten the sinister atmosphere. Given that for a long time, the phenomenon of namelessness was 'predominantly a feature of allegories,'[101] the allegorical quality of the novel's depiction of the secret police as symbolic of Soviet ideology becomes manifest. The characters belonging to the hetero-image are kept nameless in order to highlight the corruption they represent. The Other is thus identified by its cruelty, not by its name. Sacks's view that 'in the Bible, unnamability is evidence of holiness; for Beckett, it is the cornerstone of the absurd'[102] prompts a variety of interpretive possibilities for unnamed characters, whose meanings depend on several aspects, such as the perspective of both the narrator and the reader, the discourse that influences their perspectives, and the context that a novel portrays.

Also, it is possible that the anonymity of the secret police and prison guards is to remind us that their identification was not possible until recently. All information about the events that took place during the 1930s in the USSR, including the names of many victims and their executioners, as well as those who issued and signed the deadly directives, was kept secret for decades. In Ukraine, Soviet-era archives remained undisclosed to the public until 2015.[103] The Russian archives were officially made available to the public in the 1990s, after the demise of the USSR; however, commentators point to their incompleteness. For instance, investigating the Katyn operation — the mass murder of Polish prisoners-of-war and other Polish civilians carried out by the NKVD in April and May of 1940, Witold Wasilewski maintains that many

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[100] Sacks, 'The Rise of the Nameless Narrator'.

[101] *Ibid*.

[102] *Ibid*.

[103] Government bill No. 40 opening up access to the archives of repressive bodies of the Soviet Union totalitarian regime of 1917-1991 was approved by Ukrainian Parliament on April 9, 2015, *UA Position. Focus on Ukraine*. One of the most valuable sources containing numerous documents regarding Soviet rule in Ukraine can be found in *Poland and Ukraine in the 1930s-1940s: Unknown Documents from the Archives of the Secret Services* (Institute of National Remembrance IPN; Warsaw-Kyjiv, 2008), ed. by Diana Bojko and Jerzy Bednarek. This book is also available on: <http://1576.ua/books/7203>.

documents from the Russian state archives have not been declassified and disclosed, some were destroyed, and 'the personal files and a number of NKVD operational documents are still missing.'[104] Wasilewski claims that despite plans for its destruction, 'a part of this documentation has survived and is kept in the Russian archives.'[105] In his view, one of the reasons why many documents are still not available from the Russian archives may be 'protection of personal data of the NKVD functionaries.'[106] Even though Wasilewski's research deals with a case that has no connection to the 1932-33 Holodomor, it is important for our analysis because it reveals Soviet involvement in the annihilation of national elites in neighbouring countries with the purpose of quenching the spirit of resistance to Bolshevik ideology, and thus increases an understanding of the ways in which Moscow's influence was extended outside the territory of the USSR.[107] It can be suggested that the knowledge of the details of the Katyn massacre, which was planned in Moscow but carried out in the territories of Ukraine and Belarus, as well as Moscow's unscrupulous denial of the Soviet responsibility for the massacre that lasted for decades,[108] do not help mitigate stereotypical perceptions of the Soviets/ Russians.

It has already been noted that juxtaposition is one of the main techniques deployed in famine fiction; hence, the anonymity of the characters is also more effective when apposed to those who are named. Within the auto-image, there are nameless famine victims but also those characters whose names are known, and likewise the hetero-image formation utilizes both anonymity and distinctiveness. Two named characters that correspond to the hetero-image are Vanya, the van driver, and Izya, the guard assisting him on the journey. Izya and Vanya are selected from the faceless and nameless figures representing the hetero-image to furnish readers with specific features of the Other in order to increase its negative portrayal. Therefore, even though they are named, the nature of the depravity, already promulgated by the novel's anonymous constructs, does not disappear. Moreover, representing the Soviet system, Vanya's and Izya's identification renders the 'realness of their existence'[109] more convincing.

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[104] Witold Wasilewski, 'Katyn Documents in the Russian Archives' in *Katyn: State-Sponsored Extermination* (Libra Institute Inc., 2012), ed. by M.B. Szonert, p. 47.

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[106] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[107] For more detail on the organization of the Katyn massacre by the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the USSR see pp. 43-50 in *ibid*.

[108] Robert Szymczak, 'The Vindication of Memory: The Katyn Case in the West, Poland, and Russia, 1952-2008', *The Polish Review*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (2008), pp. 419-443; John Radzilowski, 'Katyn Massacre and Related Atrocities', *World War II Database*, January 2006, <https://ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=149>; *History.com* eds., 'Soviets admit to Katyn Massacre', *History*, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/soviets-admit-to-katyn-massacre>.

[109] Sacks, 'The Rise of the Nameless Narrator'.

Vanya and Izya's Otherness is underscored, in the first place, by their behaviour and attitude to the prisoners. In the van, once Golub cries out in pain, a voice from the cab roars: '*Tikha, svoloch*, […] Quiet, you bastards!' (*SwSn*: 36) When the prisoners start singing a song, the guard's reaction is blatantly aggressive: he bangs the wooden partition of the van with his fist, stops the van and appears before the prisoners in a threatening pose: "*Kto govoril*?"[110] the guard demanded in Russian. He was tapping his thigh with a menacing club.' (*SwSn*: 39) His verbal aggressiveness is followed by physical force, and the prisoners are brutally beaten. The Russian language, used by Izya, signifies Ukraine's enemy — Russian is mentioned on several occasions, and every time it is linked to an unpleasant experience and violent actions. This parallels the construction of the hetero-image in *Maria*, in which Otherness is also indicated by means of the cultural element of the Russian language. Paula Gambarota proposes to view language as 'the quintessential manifestation of the genius of the nation or of national character',[111] and in Ukrainian famine fiction, Russian indeed is one of the most significant markers of Otherness. In *Sweet Snow*, Russian is the language of oppression, and it carries a decidedly negative connotation:

> After guttural commands were delivered in incomprehensible Russian, the boots broke into a raspy run, rusty gates were banged shut, and a deep cold silence settled on the cell like a wet blanket. (*SwSn*: 14)

The unpleasantness of the Russian language is heightened by abrupt sounds, displeasing sensations, and items related to incarceration. Russian is then compared to the sounds of a dog barking to stress the dehumanizing nature of its speakers: 'Both men and dogs barked outside, especially when heavy footsteps scratched the snow.' (*ibid.*) In this context, the meaning of the language, reinforced by strong imagery, evokes a sense of ill-boding.

The perception of Russian is quite different from the other languages spoken by the prisoners. The four protagonists' conversations are peppered with single words, phrases and sentences in Polish, German, Ukrainian, and French, which do not generate unpleasant connotations even when contentious issues are tackled, given that their speakers, victims of the Soviets, are portrayed in a positive light. Pieracki's remark, 'We appear to be a polyglot community' (*SwSn*: 11) points to the characters' eagerness 'to embrace cultural diversity.'[112] The polarity in the presentation of the languages demonstrates that a language carries a social and 'ideological nucleus'[113] fitting to the construction of a national character. That one's

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[110] "Who spoke?" [my translation].
[111] Paula Gambarota quoted by Heyer-Caput, Review of '*Irresistible Signs. The Genius of Language and Italian National Identity* by Paola Gambarota, *Italica*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (Autumn 2012), p. 416.
[112] *Ibid.*, p. 417.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

perception of a language depends on social context and on the role language plays in it can be seen in the episode in which von Mecklenburg prompts Golub with a way to quell thirst, pointing to snow: "*Gospodin zhurnalist*", the count said in Russian, "*vot Vasha voda.*"' (*SwSn*: 29)[114] Firstly, the courtly register — the polite form of the pronoun 'Vasha' meaning 'your', capitalized to emphasize its cultural refinement, and secondly, the character's inclination for help, shift the language onto a different level, securing a positive perception. This detail convinces us that both language and national character can be understood as 'processes rather than a priori givens.'[115] A similar function of language is observed in *Maria*, where a negative perception of Russian by Ukrainian peasants is an effect of the communists' brutal conduct. Also, in *The Silent People*, English is perceived as the language of the Other when presented in the context of violent oppression. If Otherness is non-threatening, it conjures a sense of exoticism, and does not necessarily generate animosity, even if it incorporates irony or mockery, or a touch of condescension. We see this in the example of a street vendor speaking English among the Irish dwellers in *The Silent People*, and in Korniy's use of Russian on his return home to his native village in *Maria*. A language is thus part and parcel of a construction of national character, for it can be easily bound to a nation and its culture.

With reference to language, the impact of obscene words is worth mentioning, as they are presented explicitly as an element of Otherness, similarly to *Maria* and *The Silent People*. In *Sweet Snow*, the context of their use is important, too. Izya, the guard, exclaims "*Blyad!*"[116] and "Shit!" as he trips over a dead peasant's body. (*SwSn*: 45) His words indictate a distinctly profane attitude towards the dead, highlighting a discrepancy between the dehumanization of the hetero-image and the humanity of the auto-image. The protagonists' sadness over the perished peasants, discovered by them in the countryside — in the houses, and on the roads, is clear from the text. One such contrasting moment is provided when Kortschenko reproaches himself after he has washed himself in the snow, 'in the very spot where Golub lay': 'He crossed himself. This was an abomination, a violation of the sanctity of the dead.' (*SwSn*: 94) Furthermore, Vanya's view of the peasants "*Eta tolka kulak*," […] "It's only a kulak."' (*SwSn*: 45) emphasizes a lack of compassion, which is transformed into inconceivable cruelty:

> "There are many rich peasants hiding from Soviet power under the snow" […] "That's where they belong, *svoloch*." [117] […]
> "Did I ever tell you about the kulaks in my village? We took their grain and their clothes and we drove them bare-assed to the cemetery." […] "Most of them joined the collective

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[114] "Mister journalist", […], "here is your water" [my translation].
[115] Paula Gambarota quoted by Heyer-Caput, p. 417.
[116] A curse word meaning 'whore' in Russian; equivalent to the English 'fuck' in the process of swearing.
[117] The Russian word 'сволочь' can be translated as 'asshole' or 'scum'.

farm voluntarily that day," […] "We achieved success without violence and" […] "without dizziness." (*SwSn*: 45-46)

The malevolence of Vanya's revelations is strengthened by unpleasant mannerisms and sounds that he produces: 'snickered' (*SwSn*: 45), 'snorted' (*SwSn*: 46), and also by his smile, revealing 'a row of straight white teeth' (*ibid.*), a detail that indicates that he is healthy and not starving. The use of swear words in *Sweet Snow* shows that in a discussion of national character, any aspect can be modulated to a desired effect. Notably, the protagonists curse, too, yet their obscene language does not compromise the positive perception of the auto-image. For example, Kortschenko and Pieracki swear while barricading themselves in a house from cannibals — in moments of utter stress, and in fear for their lives. The fact that the exact expressions are not presented to the reader but described as 'silent cursing' (*SwSn*: 108) softens the effect of their bad-mouthing. Another time, Pieracki exclaims '*Kurwa*!' [118] on hearing the sounds of an approaching vehicle, fearful that the NKVD police launched a manhunt to capture them (*SwSn*: 128). In these examples, the menacing situations that generate stress and fear fully justify their use of foul words. Therefore, the obscene register produced by both the oppressed and their oppressors cannot be likened due to their contextual differences.

In addition, reference to Russianness in *Sweet Snow* is indicated by the driver's typically Russian name, Vanya, and also by the sign 'Agricultural Products', stenciled in Russian on the sides of the van (*SwSn*: 35). The mention of the imprinted words acquires a special meaning, for they reflect real life events in the USSR in the 1930s. An interesting detail is found in the article on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn by Ottar G. Draugsvold:

> A French journalist observes vans transporting prisoners between islands of the Gulag, believing the signs advertising food products painted on their sides; he concludes that "provisioning of the capital is excellent", understanding nothing that he sees.[119]

Strikingly, what appears as an essentially fictitious element in the novel, deployed to highlight the deceitfulness of the regime, turns out to be a fact. An analogous example is presented in an excerpt from the memoir of Liudmila Ivanovna Granovskaia, a political prisoner, arrested in 1937 for being the wife of an enemy of the people: 'They put us in vans with the logo "bread", literally jammed us in, so we could hardly breathe.' [120] Similar details are mentioned in numerous other publications.

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[118] A curse word meaning 'whore' in Polish; equivalent to the English 'fuck' in the process of swearing.
[119] Ottar G. Draugsvold, ed., *Nobel Writers on Writing* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2000), p. 112.
[120] Judith Pallot, Laura Piacentini, Dominique Moran, *Gender, Geography, and Punishment: The Experience of Women in Carceral Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Chapter I: 'The Archipelago and the Matrioshka', p. 1.

Just as the Russian language feeds into the representation of the Other, the image of Russian national character is supported by another well-established feature of its imaginative model: a penchant for drinking. In *Sweet Snow*, as also in *Maria*, it is depicted as a distinctly Russian trait. The mention of five drunken prison guards, whose violent behaviour has been referred to in one of the quotations above, is followed by the description of the guard in the van, Izya, who, 'judging by the sour breath smell of his breath […] had also been drinking heavily.' (*SwSn*: 39) His and the van driver's behaviour becomes even more repulsive when readers learn that they rampage through the perished villagers' houses, looting icons. Izya's portrayal is almost demonic, when, with his eyes glowing at another bottle of vodka in the driver's hand (*SwSn*: 46), he instigates him to go faster: 'just keep on going. Faster, Vanya, go faster. […] *Davay*, Vanichka *davay*, *davay*, *davay*!'[121] and then praises him for doing so: '*Kharasho*, *kharasho*.'[122] (*SwSn*: 53)

Alcohol is mentioned in relation to the auto-image, too. While 'Russian' drinking is exposed in a negative light, it is impossible not to notice that 'drink' imagery is different when it is associated with the novel's multinational protagonists. Not only is the consequence of the Russians' excessive drinking ruinous — it brings about Vanya's and Izya's end, but also the manner, in which they consume alcohol, is distasteful: their 'salacious smacking of greasy lips' while taking 'shots of vodka' produces a decidedly unpleasant effect (*SwSn*: 44). By contrast, when von Mecklenburg recalls that his father 'had too much to drink', other, more pleasant parts of his recollections surrounding this detail, such as 'a thinly cut and crisp Wiener Schnitzel, a cucumber salad with just enough chopped parsley, and a sweet Kracherl at his parents' favourite Heuriger' (*SwSn*: 96) alleviate its possible negative perception. While sharing memories of their lives before Soviet captivity, the protagonists cast their minds back to their favourite pleasures — cigarettes, alcohol, and food. The German remembers: '*ein Gläschen Wein*', Kortschenko exclaims: 'A liter of Grüner Veltliner!' (*SwSn*: 102) and reminisces that his father and his émigré friends would meet in the Urbanikeller every Friday and 'plot their revenge against the Bolsheviks over litres of wine and blood sausage with horseradish and thick slices of black bread.' (*ibid*.) Von Mecklenburg confesses that he prefers the place called the Esterhazy, 'where the alcoholics congregate like Christians in catacombs.' (*ibid*.) The final pages of the novel describe Pieracki foretasting his return home, when he dreams about playing billiards with his friends, meeting with girls and drinking '*wódka*, oceans of *wódka*'[123] (*SwSn*: 134). It should be pointed out that the protagonists' reflections on alcohol consumption do not generate distaste

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[121] In this context, the words 'davay, davay' can be translated as 'keep on going'.
[122] 'Kharasho' means 'good' in Russian.
[123] Polish word for vodka.

for several reasons. Firstly, the way it is described involves more sociable images of drinking and creates the impression that they enjoy rather than abuse it. Secondly, their drinking is not associated with aggression, in contrast to Vanya and Izya. Finally, by this stage in the novel, it is doubtful whether Pieracki and Kortschenko, the last of the four, will survive their journey, and therefore, while they are in the state of extreme distress, their vices are to be forgiven.

It appears that drinking as a stock motif in literary representations of various nationalities suggests a possibility of opposite counter-images also within the auto-image itself. Von Mecklenburg's mention of 'the Slavic love of alcohol' (*SwSn*: 41) demonstrates that the unattractive trait is ascribed by him to a larger group of people, and not merely to the Russians. It is interesting to discover that the count's assumption is close to the factual state of affairs. According to Laurence Witherington's list of alcohol consumption, the first six places, indeed, are taken by Slavic states, indicating that the stereotype 'the Russians have vodka for breakfast' can be shared between three states that precede Russia in her fourth position: Belarus, Moldova and Lithuania, all of which are, as it happens, former Soviet Republics,[124] and were viewed as part of Russia until the dissolution of the USSR. While the Slavs are on the list of the 'world's biggest boozers',[125] the German image, too, did not avoid the label of having a liking for drink. Demonstrating pervasiveness and durability of stereotypes, one of the earliest references to the Germans' 'heavy drinking' is found in Dante's *Divina commedia* (1308-21), and their 'tendency towards hard drinking' is also mentioned by Roman authors Caesar and Tacitus in *De bello Gallico* (1469) and *Germanica* (1470) respectively.[126] Sara Warneke states that the Germans and Dutch 'suffered the embarrassing reputation of drinking so heavily' in medieval and early modern popular thought,[127] and Beller notes that this quality survives in the characterization of the German image to the present day. M. Bobak et al's research shows a substantially lower mean annual intake of alcohol by Russians than by Czechs,[128] and Adam Leszczynski wonders about the origins of the stereotype of the hard-drinking Poles.[129] While he asserts that 'Poles drink slightly more than Germans', which corresponds with Witherington's data, Leszcynski underlines the difference between a belief and a fact: 'Clichés about the Poles have a foundation

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[124] Laurence Witherington, 'Which Country Drinks the most Alcohol?', *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 August 2014.
[125] *Ibid*.
[126] Beller, 'Germans' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 160.
[127] Sara Warneke, 'A Taste for Newfangledness: The Destructive Potential of Novelty in Early Modern England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol.26, No.4 (Winter, 1995), p. 881.
[128] Bobak, M., R. Room, H. Pikhart, R. Kubinova, S. Malyutina, A. Pajak, S. Kurilovitch, R. Topor, Y. Nikitin and M. Marmot, 'Contribution of Drinking Patterns to Differences in Rates of Alcohol Related Problems between Three Urban Populations', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health (1979-)*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (March, 2004), p. 238.
[129] Adam Leszczynski, 'Polish stereotypes: hard-drinking Catholic zealots? Nie!', *The Guardian*, Thursday 26 January 2012.

of truth, possibly rooted in the past — statistics show a very different, changing Poland'.[130] As can be seen, excessive alcohol consumption can be depicted as part of national character of different groups of people.

Interestingly, Leszczynski's mention of a 'changing Poland' suggests that traits of national character can alter. Agnieszka Kwapisz and Zofia Mielecka-Kubien's research on alcohol consumption in Poland during 1950–2005 is useful for an understanding of aspects that can generate changes in national character. The researchers note that in 1978, due to the opposition's demand, the Polish government undertook certain measures to reduce alcohol consumption: alcohol prices were significantly increased, and alcohol availability became limited by restricting hours and days of sale. This led to a gradual but significant decrease of alcohol consumption,[131] which was strengthened by the 1982 Alcohol Act of Parliament. However, when the Act was amended soon after, alcohol wholesale was privatized and selling restrictions lifted, previous policies began to lose their effectiveness, and as a result, alcohol consumption began to increase.[132] Still, in 2003, per capita alcohol consumption in Poland was lower than in most of Europe.[133] The changes in alcohol consumption by Poles confirm that government policies and legislation can have an influence on social behavioural patterns. Whether drinking culture can be reshaped by measures implemented by the governments or not has been a topic for numerous debates that generated 'diverse political opinion'[134] and resulted in various alcohol policies at different periods in many countries.[135] Policies of prohibition often led to undesirable effects, including underground production and consumption, or the destruction of vineyards. It is unlikely, however, that a change in drinking culture could set in motion a complete alteration of stereotypes regarding drinking habits. Supported with evidence or not, they are deply embedded, reflect an impressive time span and remind us that perceptions of a national image depend on the viewpoint of the spectant.

In *Sweet Snow*, the count's view of the Slavs indicates his belief of their inferior position in relation to Western nations, bringing to mind the East-West binary opposition, from which

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[130] *Ibid.*

[131] Agnieszka Kwapisz and Zofia Mielecka-Kubien, 'Alcohol Consumption and Its Adverse Effects in Poland in Years 1950–2005', *Hindawi Publishing Corporation, Economics Research International*, Volume 2011, Feb 09, 2016, p. 2.

[132] *Ibid.*

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[134] Patricia Herlihy, *The Alcoholic Empire: Vodka & Politics in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 128.

[135] See Rod Phillips, *Alcohol: A History* (2014), Sergei V. Jargin, 'Alcohol and Alcoholism in Russia: Policies and their Effects', Arşiv Kaynak Tarama Dergisi. *Archives Medical Review Journal*, June 2017, <ttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/315829774_Alcohol_and_alcoholism_in_Russia_Policies_and_their_effects>, p. 217, Patricia Herlihy, *The Alcoholic Empire: Vodka & Politics in Late Imperial Russia* (2003) and Lynne Viola, 'The Question of the Perpetrator in Soviet History', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Spring 2013), pp. 1-23, pp. 11-12.

many highly stereotypical images spring. An understanding of the 'asymmetrical valorization of this East-West opposition'[136] is recognizable from Motyl's remark on the attitude of Western Europeans towards Eastern nations, identified in our analysis of the auto-image.[137] In *Sweet Snow*, the opposition between the unrefined drinking of the hetero-image and the auto-image's civilized liking for a drink solidifies the negative image of the Russian national character. Drink and violence are paired to imply the uncouth, barbaric nature of the Other: 'The time of the barbarians had arrived and salvation would come from the vulgar and the venal.' (*SwSn*: 43) Both features, drunkenness and cruel behaviour, are not novel suggestions for the representation of the Russian image, and they fit into the larger context of the stereotypical opposition between the civilized West and savage or barbarian East.

Perceptions of Russia

In Western eyes, Russia has long been perceived as a backward territory, 'with little political organization and no cultural or intellectual achievement.'[138] A remarkable consistency of 'the representation of the Russian character as a barbarian, gradually adapting to civilization in German, French and Anglo-American literary tradition', and Russia's 'distance from the restrictions of European civilization', are marked by Oksana Bulgakowa.[139] Russia's negative image sprang from the fact that from its emergence on the European political scene in the fifteenth century,[140] it was continuously involved in conquering neighbouring lands and subjugating other nations. In his discussion of Russia's ways to achieve the status of a great power, and the role of Catherine II in them, H.M Scott notes that Russia's territorial expansion was 'trully spectacular during the Empress's reign' and that 'Catherine II's territorial gains were dramatic and important'.[141] Russia is by no means the only colonial power to have acquired its territory through occupation and annexation of other lands. Her aggressive politics is compared to those of Austria and Prussia in Ute Planert's *Napoleon's Empire. European Politics in Global Perspective. War, Culture and Society 1750-1850*.[142] Planert analyses rapid territorial expansion of the Napoleonic empire and notes that the Russian imperial strategy changed under

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[136] Beller, 'East/West' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 315.
[137] See p. 143 in this chapter.
[138] Naarden and Leerssen, 'Russians' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 227.
[139] Oksana Bulgakowa, 'The "Russian Vogue" in Europe and Hollywood: The Transformation of Russian Stereotypes through the 1920s', *The Russian Review*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Apr., 2005), p. 214.
[140] Naarden and Leerssen, 'Russians' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 226.
[141] H.M Scott, 'Russia as a European Great Power' in Roger Bartlett, Janet M Hartley, eds., *Russia in the Age of the Enlightenment: Essays for Isabel de Madariaga* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp. 7-40, p. 8.
[142] Planert, Ute, ed., *Napoleon's Empire. European Politics in Global Perspective. War, Culture and Society 1750-1850* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 174.

the influence of Napoleonic practice. [143] However, it is the mention of Russia's forcible icorporation of the neighbouring countries that is important for an understanding of the reasons of the formation of her negative image in the context of Ukrainin-Russian relations. Russian journalist Alexander Nevzorov's point on Russian expansionism explains the durability of stereotypes associated with it:

> 'Под словом "Россия" вы обязаны понимать то историко-политическое образование которое в принципе свою жизнь видит в захвате, в агрессии, в насаждении себя, в грубых попытках устранения любого инакомыслия, и это традиционно для России уже на протяжении нескольких веков. Она никогда другой не была.' — 'Under the term "Russia" one must understand the historico-political construct that sees its life principally in annexation, in aggression, in her self-imposition, in crude attempts of elimination of any kind of dissent, and this has become customary for Russia over the past several centuries. She has never been any different.'[144]

Bruno Naarden and Joep Leerssen point to the fact that the tyrannical nature of Russia's rulers, who also terrorized their own population, is conveyed by the register describing them or their ordinance: 'the autocratic tsar', Ivan IV 'the Terrible', 'the forceful rule of Catherine the Great',[145] to name but a few; and in their outline of the Russian image, they remind us that Russian backwardness became 'a more dominant trope' in the nineteenth century, when Russia began to be seen as 'a transit zone […] between civilized Europe and the vast stagnation of Asia'.[146] The authors explain that the Russian image underwent changes with the emergence of modern literature in Russia and the rise of a national Russian school of music, which generated a positive shift of the country's reputation in the West.[147] This favourable image reverted after the 1917 Communist Revolution. The establishment of the communist dictatorship and terror in

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[143] Planert, p. 164.

[144] Interview with Alexander Nevzorov, *The Gordon programme on channel 112 Ukraine* (2017), 6 March 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZ8XZ0dI7vY&feature=youtu.be> [Accessed 21 February 2019], min. 6'00-6'27 [my translation].

[145] Different interpretations of Catherine II's rule and its outcomes reminds us of subjectivity of image construction, and also shows that it is power-related and depends on a national perspective. While Catherine II's role for the Russian empire is viewed in a positive light, the years of her rule are considered disastrous for Ukraine and destructive for Poland. Anthony Cross notes 'Russia's social, political, economic and cultural development and of its emergence as a formidable power in the international arena during the 34 years of her reign' and highlights 'the cynicism and opportunism in Catherine's foreign policy, the ruthlessness behind her actions in the Ukraine, the Baltic provinces and Poland' in his article 'Catherine's People', a review of *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* by Isabel de Madariaga, *The New York Times*, 19 April 1981, <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/19/books/catherine-s-people.html>.
On Catherine II of Russia, see Władysław Andrzej Serczyk, *Katarzyna II Carowa Rosji* (1974), Roger Bartlett & Janet M Hartley, eds., *Russia in the Age of the Enlightenment: Essays for Isabel de Madariaga* (1990), Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (London: Pimlico, 1997), Robert K. Massie, *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman* (2011), Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine & Russia* (2008) and *The Gates of Europe* (2015).

[146] Naarden and Leerssen, 'Russians' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 227.

[147] *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Russia[148] led to a renewed Western negative perception of its image, which eased when the USSR became the West's ally in the struggle against Nazism. During the Cold War, however, Russia again began to be viewed as 'a half-Asian autocracy bereft of culture: a formula of terror and oppression.'[149] As can be seen, during the nineteenth century, the perception of the Russian image has experienced a succession of changes. At all times, the unfavourable perception of Russia was politically driven, and occurred in periods of power fluctuations, with particular upsurges of intolerance, despotism and oppression both internally and in foreign relations. The Holodomor happens at a time when Russian forcible interference in Ukraine's affairs turns into a tyrannical subjugation of the republic and fuels the spread of existing derogatory characterizations to the entire nation. Drinking and barbarism, strengthened by the Russian use of coarse language, are mobilized to be recognized as part of the Russian national character. It is beyond doubt that in this case, influenced by many factors resulting from complex socio-economic conditions and historical developments, national character stereotypes are moulded by power relations by and large.

Adding to the perception of the country's reputation as a barbaric land, the specificity of the forms of political arrangement in Russia probably secured the association of its population with terms such as 'savagely cruel' and 'primitive, unsophisticated.'[150] Mike Carey notes that 'violence was rife in Russia even before the First World War and two revolutions of 1917'.[151] In his book *Russische Filmkunst* (1927), theatre and film critic Alfred Kerr stresses the ascribed cruelty of the Russians, while characterising Russian actors: '[In Russian actors] instincts [triumph] over restraint. Asia over Europe.'[152] In Kerr's view, Russians are good artists as 'they have not reached the stage of Western civilization', and because 'they manifest a different attitude to the representation of cruelty, and their naturalism attains a strikingly new and terrifyingly uncanny quality.' [153] In 1928, German-American film director Ernst Lubitsch referred to cruelty as a typical Russian trait, reflecting that 'we can only show Russia in a "style *russe*", because otherwise it would appear unconvincing and atypical.'[154] Even though Lubitsch was speaking of filmmaking, his insight on the importance of plausibility of national images can be applied to literature, too. Kerr's and Lubitsch's arguments point to the existence of the established matrix of meaning, which can be deployed for the construction of the Russian image

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[148] In the West, the word 'Russia' has been often used to denote 'the USSR'.
[149] Naarden and Leerssen, p. 229.
[150] *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*.
[151] Mike Carey, 'Russian Revolution', *British Library*, <https://www.bl.uk/russian-revolution/articles/violence-and-terror-in-the-russian-revolution>.
[152] Kerr quoted by Bulgakowa, p. 221.
[153] *Ibid*., pp. 221-2.
[154] Lubitsch quoted by Bulgakowa, *ibid*.

in literary texts. This matrix is accepted in the famine narrative genre, which adapts the clichés of the Russian national character to the discourse of the 1932-33 famine in Ukraine. The notion of a barbaric Russia pervades the novel. It is expressed in the presentation of the hetero-image, conveyed by its atmosphere and imagery, and strengthened by the protagonists' judgements. Von Mecklenburg is convinced of Russia's backwardness:

> Russia is savage — a vast, uncultured, barbarian land. De Custine recognized that with the clarity of a biblical prophet a hundred years ago. I saw it myself when I was here during the war. And the Bolsheviks are Russians, after all. How can they not be savages? It is their Tatar blood. (*SwSn*: 25)

As in *Maria*, the Russians are equated with the Bolsheviks, and characterized as the Other in *Sweet Snow*. A century-long image of a barbarous Russia, registered by the French writer, is highlighted when the count contrasts the country to the 'civilized' world: 'We are Europe. Russia is — ' (*ibid.*). However, the seeming civilization of the West is perhaps disputed when Golub mentions the dictatorship of the proletariat and the protagonists' discussion of Hitler and the Nazi Party's rise to power, which occurs at the time of Ukraine's Holodomor: it was 'a chilly winter day in 1933 when the German dictatorship began'.[155] Both the register and rhetoric of these two atrocious regimes are cunningly used to cover the true purpose of their usurping power. Signifying that communism is equally as destructive as Nazism, a parallel between the 'civilized' Germany and 'uncivilized' Russia suggests that the stereotype of 'barbarism', identified as a feature of national character, evolves from a country's political arrangement.

Thematising space and disgust

The perception of the Russians' barbarity is further highlighted in *Sweet Snow* by dint of the trope of disgust. Disgust is experienced by all of the protagonists, during their arrests, in captivity and outside, and in the course of their breakout. Detailed descriptions of psychological reactions associated with the feeling of disgust through the sensory details of sight, smell, taste, sound and touch add to the portrayal of the relationship between the Self and Other in the oppressor-victim pattern within the context of the Holodomor. The mechanisms underlying the link between the characters' disgust and the ruthless Soviet machine develop readers' condemnation of the cruelty of the Other. In the opening of the novel, the repulsive images of 'the black rat' and 'the shit bucket' (*SwSn*: 3) introduce the picture of the cell, in which the four

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[155] Charles Hawley, 'Jan. 30, 1933: The Story behind Hitler's Rise to Power', *Spiegel Online International*, 30 January, 2008.

protagonists are thrown, and further, on the same page, the description of Golub's revulsion parallels the unpleasant sight:

> As the stench of the bucket rose to his nostrils, he jerked his head to the left with disgust and coughed, repeatedly and uncontrollably, loudly clearing his throat and depositing globs of mucus into the filthy receptacle. (*ibid.*)

What makes the usage of the trope of disgust specifically powerful is that its level intensifies due to the engagement of various senses of perception as the story unfolds. References to repellent odours pepper the text of *Sweet Snow* from the first pages describing the protagonists' arrests and their stay in the cell: 'the stench of the bucket' (*ibid.*), throughout their hopeless journey in the countryside: numerous references to the 'powerful stench' (*SwSn*: 99) or 'a pungent smell' of corpses (*SwSn*: 121); and these haunt them until the novel's final scenes, when 'the smell of death' (*SwSn*: 145) is mentioned. In order to survive, the starving prisoners are compelled to eat the rat, and in this part, the gustatory sense makes the previously described image and sounds even more repugnant. In a state of startled disbelief, the Pole reflects on having eaten vermin: 'He recalled the sickening sound of breaking bones and tearing skin. One of the bloody parts had found itself in his own reluctant hands.' (*SwSn*: 19) In further descriptions, sight, touch and smell are also brought in:

> Their fingers, mouths, and chins were splattered with dried blood. As the Pole rubbed cold hands and cupped them over his mouth, he smelled the rat's blood encrusted on his fingernails, moaned pathetically, and retched, ejecting a thin sliver of dark blue onto his blood-stained shirt. An identifiable odour rose to his nostrils. (*SwSn*: 18)

Such graphic depictions heighten the sense of the inhuman conditions of Soviet prisons. While the rat is recurrent in the passages portraying the cell (*SwSn*: 3, 4, 7, 16), there are more unpleasant images deployed to strengthen the repulsive surrounding, for instance, spitting (*SwSn*: 3), the sour smell of vomit (*SwSn*: 7), urine trickling, and wet crotch (*SwSn*: 6), urinating (*SwSn*: 22), offal (*SwSn*: 31), and others. Drawing upon the definition of disgust as 'a basic emotion characterized by revulsion and withdrawal',[156] Gordon Hodson and Kimberly Costello observe that having originated from oral distaste, disgust became 'culturally enriched and co-opted by other self-protection systems' and 'increasingly involved in moral issues'.[157] The relevance of this observation emerges in the scene when, sickened by the consumption of the vermin, the Pole enquires where they are. The German's highly ironic reply 'in the Union of

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[156] Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley quoted by Gordon Hodson and Kimberly Costello in 'Interpersonal Disgust, Ideological Orientations, and Dehumanization as Predictors of Intergroup Attitudes', *Psychological Science*, Vol. 18, No. 8, Aug., 2007, p. 691.
[157] Haidt, Rozin, McCauley & Imada quoted by Hodson and Costello in *ibid.*, pp. 691-92.

Socialist Soviet Republics, of course' and 'in glorious Russia, in the land of the victorious proletariat...' (*SwSn*: 19) allows for a connection between physical disgust with the place and moral detestation for the system, decisively highlighted by the adverb 'of course'.

The effectiveness of the trope of disgust, built by aural and visual images and enhanced by senses of perception, is reinforced by sound effects. The mention of the creaky sound of the cell's 'heavy iron gate', the prisoner's 'panting laboriously and irregularly like an asthmatic', 'slamming of the gate', 'sounds of cough and spit', 'cracking of the lens', 'crackling' in the neck' (*SwSn*: 3), and myriad other sounds create the distressing background, arousing anxiety and a sense of foreboding. The irritating sounds are embedded in the novel's structure: every passage starts and ends with sharp, unpleasant sounds and images that convey danger, fear and revulsion. For instance, the opening of the novel begins with 'the heavy iron gate creaked open' (*SwSn*: 3) and ends with 'his stomach moaned uneasily' (*SwSn*: 4), the second passage starts with 'motor purring' and 'windshield wipers squeaking' (*SwSn*: 5) and ends with 'a piercingly loud siren went off outside' (*SwSn*: 7), the third begins with 'the discordant jangling of heavy keys followed by the familiar creaking of the gate' (*ibid.*) and closes with the prisoner's loud exhaling (*SwSn*: 9). The beginning of each respective part of the novel is telling: 'the gate swung open with a long squeal' (*ibid.*), 'a shot rang out' (*SwSn*: 11), 'a siren cracked the frigid air' (*SwSn*: 14), and there is a plenitude of similar displeasing or frightening noises. In the array of unpleasant sounds, the commands, given by the prison guards in the Russian language, which were mentioned earlier in this chapter, arouse feelings of threat, and dramatically combine the negative emotions with those who cause them. A further reference to the GPU quarters in Moscow (*SwSn*: 126) decisively localises the nerve centre of the communist ideology. This is another point of similarity with Samchuk's novel, which categorically blames Moscow for Ukraine's tragedy.

The ability to link the sounds with threat and death is sharpened by the mention of a contrasting phenomenon. The once lively countryside is enveloped into 'the all-encompassing silence' (*SwSn*: 47). It is in great distress that the Ukrainian character notes the lifelessness of his native land: 'Everything is dead […] *alles ist hin, tout est mort, vse mertve*. Ukrainians were known for their singing, but no one sang any more and even the songs had died.' (*SwSn*: 48) The expression of Kortschenko's thoughts in English, German, French and Ukrainian not only strengthens an understanding of his sorrow for the once happy people, but also signals that attention of a wider, international community should be drawn to the Holodomor. Those readers who are familiar with the history of the Stalin era can reflect on why despite the fact that Western

governments were well informed about the state-organized famine, aid was not provided.[158] This constitutes a considerable difference between Ireland's An Gorta Mor and the Holodomor: the former was known internationally and generated compassion that resulted in international relief, while the latter was concealed, denied and aggravated by the ban on aid. By creating his protagonists as representatives of different nationalities, the writer demonstrates his intention to heighten the story's credibility. Given that the novel evinces a remarkable closeness to actual events and real-life details, as was shown throughout our analysis, the fact that the 1932-33 Famine is narrated not only by Ukrainians, but from the perspective of other nations adds a sense of objectivity to its depiction in this work of fiction. The idea that protagonists' multinational nature serves to highlight their role of witnesses of Ukraine's tragedy is strengthened by copious references to Ukraine as the victim of the organized famine and descriptions of the Ukrainians perishing *en masse*. The detrimental nature of Soviet rule that is given special focus by means of the contrast between the west and east further corroborates this view: 'How different was this lifelessness from the vibrant villages of Galicia or Niederösterreich which boiled over, even in winter, with myriad sights and sounds and smells.' (*SwSn*: 48) The stereotypical East-West opposition, discussed earlier in this chapter, is thus brought up once again, on the geographical level, by means of the mention of real spaces. 'The silence of the countryside' (*SwSn*: 53) in Motyl's novel echoes the quiet of the Irish villages in Macken's *The Silent People*. Lack of sounds conveys the destruction of people and their communities. In *Sweet Snow*, the gravity of silence is indicated by the words 'severe' and 'abandoned': 'Here was the severe stillness, not of the graveyard, but of the abandoned graveyard.' (*SwSn*: 48) The following reference further underlines the sense of disgust by linking silence and death: 'Were the animals and insects also dead? And what of the worms? Were they dead or were they feasting on the dead?' (*ibid*.)

The interplay of aural and visual images heightens the protagonists' personal tragic experiences and prepares the ground for the portrayal of the tragedy of the entire country on a greater scale. In order to do so, the foreboding sense of the novel's imagery is amplified by a particular use of space. At the beginning of *Sweet Snow*, Golub recollects details of his arrest.

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[158] Etienne Thevenin observes that 'The examination of the files confirms that the English, Italian and German governments were remarkably informed about the famine, of its extent, and its evolution.' See 'France, Germany and Austria Facing the famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine', *James Mace Memorial Panel, IAUS Congress*, Donetsk, Ukraine, 29 June 2005, <https://www.garethjones.org/ukraine2005/Etienne%20Thevein%20%20English%20translation.pdf>, p. 10.
In addition, see Jerzy Bednarek, Serhiy Bohunov, Serhiy Kokin, Petro Kulakovsky, Marcin Majewski et al., eds., *Holodomor The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933. Poland and Ukraine in the 1930's – 1940's Unknown Documents from the Archives of the Secret Services* (The Institute of National Remembrance – Commission of the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation Ministry of Interior and Administration, Republic of Poland The Security Service of Ukraine Branch State Archives Institute of Political and Ethno-National Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine: Warsaw–Kiev 2009).

He is taken to prison in a cramped car: 'He was pushed into the lumpy back seat, where he sat, stunned, between two silent agents...', and brought to 'an oppressively small interrogation room — painted black or olive green: he couldn't tell which...' (*SwSn*: 5) Furthermore, a small window in the prison cell, through which threatening sounds reach the prisoners, connects the dangerous and disgusting confined space of the cell to the equally menacing outside:

> For a brief moment during the long night the dirge-like hum of a distant train wafted through the cell and remained suspended, like an unanswered question, in the air. Whenever screams of commands rent the stillness, the frantic barking of dogs erupted, subsiding only when equally frantic shrieks reduced them to submission. Once, a horse neighed and a whip cracked and wheels appeared to turn. (*SwSn*: 16)

The confined space of the cell is replaced by 'a foul-smelling, inky space' of the van (*SwSn*: 35), and the fact that the prisoners are severely beaten before they are pushed inside, promises more danger. Even though all the constricted places depicted in the novel can be easily imagined by the reader, their names are not specified. In the same manner as the names of the perpetrators are not given, with the exception of Izya and Vanya, the name of the hotel in which Golub stays, the location of the prison, and the name of the penitentiary institution itself are not provided. The generalization principle used in the depiction of space and places in *Sweet Snow* creates the sensation of large numbers and anonymity. Occasionally, real objects as symbolic markers of Sovietness, such as 'a collection of Stalin's speeches' (*SwSn*: 100), and actual geographic names, for instance, Stepanivka (*SwSn*: 136), the Zbruch River (*SwSn*: 120), Galicia (*SwSn*: 143), Kyiv (*SwSn*: 136), Kharkiv (*SwSn*: 136), are mentioned to indicate the connection between the Soviet regime and Ukraine's territory. In this way, as the novel's smaller places transform into larger areas, space is engaged to emphasize Russia's hostile rule in Ukraine, and to show that 'this Soviet monster is too strong.' (*SwSn*: 116)

The elements connecting the confined and larger spaces are interesting to observe. The prison cell is linked with the outside by a small window; similarly, there is a detail that joins the van with the outside — a tiny peephole, discovered by the prisoners in one of the walls. While through the window of the cell the prisoners can only hear sounds, through the van's peephole they can see the outside. What comes into their view is long rows of collective farmers 'clad in colorless coats', 'with their feet wrapped in rags', with 'their listless eyes set deeply in their sockets' and 'their lips wafer-thin and cracked' (*SwSn*: 40), led by the guards. Clearly, the enlargement of space brings greater distress to the protagonists, and their repulsion and fear intensify. Similar to British writer Tobias Smollett's semanticization of space, discussed by Neumann, the author of *Sweet Snow* also effectively utilizes spatial awareness in order to

construct 'an ideologically charged nationscape'[159] that reflects differences between the Self and the Other. Neumann notes that Smollett uses space to portray the 'corrupted nature of its inhabitants',[160] and in Motyl's novel, too, space serves to strengthen the unfavourable aspect of Ukraine's Other: it is constructed to implicate communists in cruelty.

Within space, the utilization of colour considerably accentuates the atmosphere of tragedy. Peering wistfully through the tiny peephole, the protagonists see the sky and the bright light, and perhaps, feel hope welling up within them: 'White — it is all white [...] Even the sky. *Alles ist weiss*.' (*SwSn*: 43) Von Mecklenburg is disturbed by 'the relentless whiteness of the white snow and sky' which 'stared back at him with a ruthlessness, savagery, and indifference…' (*SwSn*: 43) For a moment, it appears that the change of colour offers a promise for better, as white implies cleanliness, peace and purity. The rearrangement of colours — the dark shades of the prison in contrast against the whiteness of the outside, suspends the tension, deescalating the feeling of fear. Yet, it becomes clear that instead, its function is to emphasize the hopelessness of the situation. As the van proceeds along the vast areas of Ukrainian countryside, all that its passengers see through the peephole are piles of snow that cover corpses of starved peasants. Kortschenko takes notice of 'only corpses and snow' (*SwSn*: 50), and foresees the worst:

> We will die, Pan Pieracki, we will die. I know that for certain: we will die. *Ja, wir werden sterben*. In the middle of this emptiness — in the middle of this accursed whiteness. (*SwSn*: 133)

The juxtaposition of the image of the dark, 'charcoal-coloured countryside' (*SwSn*: 53) with the negatively perceived whiteness that has 'blinding' and 'confusing' effects on the protagonists' senses (*SwSn*: 133) highlights the abhorrent discovery, when the prisoners gain their freedom due to the van crash:

> Five minutes later, they chanced upon a bloated corpse lying face up in the ice. It was a girl, no more than fifteen years old, with coal-black hair tied in two braids and a sack-like beige dress made of some coarse material. She was barefoot and her arms lay along her sides, with the palms of her small hands facing upward near the surface of the ice. Her gaunt yellow face had remained well preserved: she had green eyes, long lashes, and what must have at some time been full lips. Only the tip of her nose, which extended above the ice, had begun to rot, creating an unsettling effect that reminded the count of a painting by Kirchner or Dix. (*SwSn*: 59)

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[159] Neumann, p. 282.
[160] *Ibid*.

From this quotation, the proximity between life and death, and fiction and reality can be sensed. The way the protagonists perceive the perished girl, 'so young' and 'so pretty, too' (*SwSn*: 60), and their sorrow over her fate reveal their kind nature, creating a contrast with the guard's and the driver's contemptuous attitudes towards the famine victims. This adds to the positive perception of the auto-image.

The white snow resembles a shroud, which ultimately engulfs the characters. Golub goes first, he is submerged in the snow (*SwSn*: 87), von Mecklenburg takes a deep breath, dives into snow, and disappears in it (*SwSn*: 108), Pieracki walks slowly and vanishes from sight 'amid the swirling snowflakes and the thickening mist' (*SwSn*: 146). The transition from the confined to the limitless space — from the car, the interrogation room, the cell and the van to larger areas of land, accompanied by the prisoners' discovery of more and more famine victims, and finally, resulting in their own deaths, connects the protagonists' personal tragic experience with Ukraine's national tragedy. In this way, the novel's representations of disgust and their link with communism mark the magnitude of the Holodomor, demonstrating that the development of prejudicial attitudes towards the Russians is firmly associated with the forceful imposition of communist ideology and the destruction of Ukraine's people. In other words, moral disgust with the system, represented by the Russians, participates in the construction of a negative perception of the Russian national character.

Hodson and Costello's point that the negative feeling of disgust is closely intertwined with such emotions as danger and fear explains the psychological basis of the characters' behaviour, placing it within what the researchers' call 'disgust sensitivity'. First, they explain that disgust 'signals danger and instigates withdrawal, removal, or avoidance responses',[161] and in *Sweet Snow*, the protagonists also retreat from potentially dangerous targets. For example, they instinctively hide when they hear some people approaching, or see shades in the village, for they are afraid to be noticed by cannibals. On seeing a van full of soldiers, they hurriedly move out of sight, because Soviet soldiers signify imminent danger. Second, Hodson and Costello mention a vertical dimension of 'degradation-elevation and a link to notions of purity and sacredness',[162] clarifying that disgust reactions connote 'the sense that one is better, and less offensive than the offending target'.[163] The relevance of this observation can be gleaned from the final pages of the novel culminating in the pinnacle of communists' cruelty. The descriptions of rotting corpses in a remote Ukrainian village and an appalling scene in the church reach the highest level of disgust with the regime:

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[161] Rozian et al quoted by Hodson and Costello, p. 692.
[162] Haidt et al quoted by Hodson and Costello, *ibid*.
[163] Hodson and Costello, *ibid*.

Four meters away stood the iconostasis, its gold frames glistening darkly and its painted icons almost invisible to the eye. Hanging from the three crosses, evenly arrayed along the top of the iconostasis, were three emaciated bodies. The nooses had been attached to the crosses. The central figure, with long white hair and a long white beard and dressed in a black cassock, was obviously the village priest. The other two were probably village elders or kulaks. Their heads were tilted to the sides, their glassy eyes bulged, as if they were surprised by their own death, and their blackened tongues extended from their distorted mouths to their pointy chins. Their hands were tied behind their backs and their bare feet, bloody and swollen, dangled below. (*SwSn*: 145)

On seeing such degrading treatment of people in a sacred place, the Pole realizes that his reaction, expressed by the words '*Matko Boska*!'[164] (*ibid.*) that he exclaims in the very beginning of the novel, comes full circle. Shortly after the scene in the church, the last two protagonists die, and their death becomes the structural resolution of the novel — they pass away in the very same order, in which they were introduced: the American, the German, the Pole and the Ukrainian. Their demise culminates in the most powerful denunciation of those accountable for Ukraine's greatest tragedy:

There was nothing here. Everything was dead, rotten, and decaying and everyone was dead, rotten, and decaying. Ukraine — *his* Ukraine — was dead, a corpse. No, it was worse. It was gone. It had disappeared, vanished. It had been extinguished and obliterated by the Russians. (*SwSn*: 147)

This final judgement, presented by Kortschenko, pinpoints the role of the Russians in Ukraine's tragedy, and underlines again the Ukrainians' perception of their aggressive neighbour.

An important detail that substantially reinforces the feeling of disgust as a way to express condemnation of the inhumane Soviet system is the recurrent motif of war. The German's memories of his World War I experience provide a powerful comparison between the winter of 1933 in Ukraine and warfare. Trying to catch the rat in the cell, he recalls fights with Makhno[165] anarchists, who skilfully applied the element of surprise while striking German units and left behind 'scores of bloody bodies hacked to pieces by machine guns and curved sabers.' (*SwSn*: 16) Other prisoners are likened by him to soldiers in a trench, whose life is 'hell — eine *Hölle*' (SwSn: 18), where they were all 'always tired, always terrified, always dirty, always smelly, always wet — and *immer hungrig*.' (*ibid.*) Golub is compared to a soldier when he appears to have lost hope, overwhelmed with the scale of the tragedy — 'Soldiers without the will to live did not.' (*SwSn*: 72), and indeed, he is the first prisoner to die in the novel. However,

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[164] "Mother of God" [my translation from Polish].
[165] Nestor Makhno was the leader of an anarchist movement in Ukraine in 1917-1921.

to von Mecklenburg, the colour of snow and sky of the lifeless countryside is worse than the colours of the front:

> It seemed self-evident to von Mecklenburg that the appallingly white whiteness of the white snow and white sky was intolerable. It was arguably worse than the carnage — the brown dirt and red blood — of the front. Where was one to go in a world without dimensions, in a world of emptiness? (*SwSn*: 44)

The repetition of the word 'white' reflects the character's emotional response to the colour associated with the famine, which he finds beyond endurance. The German's ruminations on the senselessness of famine suggest that even the bloodshed of war is better than the endless whiteness of 'a hollow world, one without color, without honor, without purpose, without nuance, without substance.' (*ibid*.) The thought that war is the lesser of two evils because death from hunger is the most terrible way to die is also expressed in *Maria*. In *Sweet Snow*, the old soldier ascribes to World War I the fact that 'the world has changed, and not for the better', for 'war dehumanized everyone' (*SwSn*: 13), and points to a difference between war and hunger. Von Mecklenburg admits that in the trenches, they learned to eat everything, even insects and worms, in order to survive; but when asked by the Pole if they had to eat human flesh, he is outraged and declares that even at war, there were 'limits.' (*SwSn*: 18) Juxtaposed with cases of cannibalism, described later in the novel, von Mecklenburg's statement highlights the limitless cruelty of the Soviet system, repeatedly indicated throughout *Sweet Snow*. As von Mecklenburg sees huge piles of corpses that were 'crazily, haphazardly arranged, with limbs and heads poking out grotesquely and bits of rags flapping in the wind' (*SwSn*: 65), war images are summoned up in his mind to enable a contrast with famine, pinpointing that the latter is worse: 'Even in the war, he had not seen anything like this.' (*ibid*.)

Expressed in various forms, the representation of disgust adds to the depiction of communism as an inhuman system, and the Russians as its perpetrators. The protagonists' disgust sensitivity plays the role of 'a predictor of rejection' of the Other. [166] Having demonstrated that 'interpersonal disgust sensitivity in particular relates to ideological orientations and dehumanizing out-group perceptions in ways that can effectively account for prejudicial attitudes', [167] Hodson and Costello's indication of the link between disgust and prejudice strengthens the point that prejudicial attitudes are power-based. Bearing in mind the heterogeneity of the auto-image, perhaps this trope also serves to express the author's appeal to consolidate the world against the dangers of communist ideology, given that images are

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[166] Hodson & Costello, p. 691.
[167] *Ibid*.

'designed to structure systems of thought.'[168] The argument that disgust sensitivity reflects 'powerful symbolic cultural forces'[169] which engage 'withdrawal strategies to protect the self from potentially offensive objects, including social groups',[170] suggests that the lack of interpersonal disgust within the auto-image shows that stereotypes are modifiable, and that under certain conditions, cultural differences can become a bonding force, uniting people against an offensive target that presents a bigger threat than intercultural distinctions. This is shown in the way the German, the Pole and the Ukrainian are brought together in the face of danger, realizing they have to put their 'knives away' (*SwSn*: 111). At this point, the animosity to the 'bigger threat' is ingrained in the protagonists' perception of the Russians, revealing how cruelty gives rise to hatred. This is furnished by Kortschenko's expression of his dream: when he finally gets out of the famished countryside, he will 'shoot a Russian communist', 'will enjoy watching him die', and then will 'go to a wine garden in Grinzing and have a liter of young wine.' (*SwSn*: 134)

Finally, the characters' feeling of disgust is accentuated by the mention of the taste of snow, a detail numerously referred to throughout their journey in the countryside. Golub drinks snow to rid of the taste of the dead woman's lips (*SwSn*: 70). While 'gnawing at the delicious snow', von Mecklenburg thinks, '*Wir sind ja Ratten* […] We are rats. Before, we ate rats. Now, we have become rats.' (*SwSn*: 101) Apart from suppressing the distasteful flavours in the characters' mouths, the taste of snow also highlights a sense of voidness, for snow can only be sweet when there is nothing else to eat. In this, the difference between the auto- and hetero-images is reinforced: even though the protagonists are immensely hungry, they do not lose their humanity, and do not kill one another in order to survive. Snow is the last thing that they can see and taste. In his final moments, Kortschenko realizes that he cannot distinguish the flavours:

> Kortschenko scooped up a handful of snow and pressed it to his face and mouth, waiting for it to melt before he extended his tongue. The snow had a pleasantly sweet taste, which he recognized but could not place. Was it milk? Fresh raspberries? Or the vanilla sauce on a warm piece of Strudel at Heiner's? (*SwSn*: 128)

The passages showing that the erstwhile familiar tastes become blurred provide heart-rending descriptions of the Ukrainian poet's slow demise, in which snow has a soothing effect in moments of excruciating pain. Kortschenko reflects that the snow feels 'like a down comforter', and triggers dreams of 'a celebration of some kind, a birthday or Easter', and of 'the table covered with food and drink', and of *Schwarzwälderkirschtorte* baked by his mother

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[168] Mullenbrock and Leerssen quoted by Neumann, p. 276.
[169] Rozin et al quoted by Hodson and Costello, p. 697.
[170] Hodson and Costello, *ibid.*

(*SwSn*: 138). These illusory images fill his passing with some dignity, which is in contrast with the deaths of Izya and Vanya, who drink and curse before they die. As at the end of the novel Kortschenko's last breath concurs with the recognition of the intangible at first taste, it becomes clear that from its first pages, the protagonists' journey has portrayed the inexorable process of their death: 'Kortschenko opened his mouth and drank in the sweet snow. […] The snow tasted just like the young wine in Grinzing.' (*SwSn*: 148) Readers' initial hope, generated by the protagonists' escape from captivity, that at least some of them will survive, is shattered by the gradual realization of the full scale and horror of the Soviet-made famine. And thus, the trauma of the Holodomor, expressed in *Sweet Snow* by intermingling of various literary techniques and historical facts, culminates in its final tragic point.

The Hungry Land

'We have a most unhappy history, a most unhappy history…'[1]

In *The Hungry Land* (1986), Michael Mullen depicts a series of events that take place in County Mayo in the 1840s, when Ireland is under British rule, and also refers to some background developments in France and America. Mullen has created a network of memorable characters, whose exploits set in motion the novel's portrayal of Ireland's traumatic experiences in the wake of and during the Great Famine. *The Hungry Land* tackles issues interrelated with the Irish famine: poverty, oppression, injustice, starvation, eviction, hate and revenge, blending each of them with positive nuances, such as love, humour and patriotism. At the centre of the story is the Anglo-Irish landowning family — the Barretts, who enjoy peaceful and friendly relationships with their Irish tenants and servants, with whom they sympathize and support during the famine. The Barretts participate in the national movement for the Irish cause. The novel's heroine, Gráinne Barrett, is an unruly beautiful young woman, determined to continue her father's shipping business. As the famine engulfs Ireland, she eagerly engages in the movement for independence. In many ways, Mullen's character resembles 'the Queen of the West'[2] — a historical figure from 16th-century Irish history, Grace O'Malley, also known as Gráinne O'Malley, who is described as 'a very beautiful woman', and 'a capable sea-captain and a ruler of men', who had 'a commanding presence'.[3] This striking similarity corroborates Neumann's point that constructions of national character rely on the processes of 'the perpetual reaffirmation of cultural notions of self and other'.[4]

The hero is Myles Prendergast, the son of Irish immigrants who fled the country to France after the failure of the 1798 Uprising. Myles follows in his father's footsteps as a freedom fighter and arrives in Ireland to join the Irish in the organization of an anti-British rebellion. Gráinne and Myles' first encounter is marked by mutual antagonism that gradually evolves into a romantic relationship. Their growing affection is fuelled by a common desire to liberate Ireland from British colonial rule. The combination of the characters' personal feelings and their devotion to their collective cause renders the plot more intricate and provides a broader image

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[1] Michael Mullen, *The Hungry Land* (New York · London · Toronto · Sydney · Auckland: Bantam Press, 1986), p. 34. Henceforth, in this chapter, all page numbers in parentheses, placed after quotations and preceded by *HL*, refer to this text.

[2] Conor Maguire, 'Grace O'Malley: The Queen of the West', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 32, No. 126, (Jun., 1943), pp. 225-230, p. 225.

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] Neumann, p. 276.

of contemporary Irish life. In its depictions of the 'reality' of the Great Famine, the novel presents villainous characters alongside positive heroes.

Much attention is dedicated to Dick Kenrick and Colonel Spiker, whose ruthlessness and lack of compassion towards Irish peasants make them the novel's unquestionable villains. In comparison to the previously analysed novels, *The Hungry Land* has a larger number of minor characters, whose diverse positions, views and affiliations reveal interesting details of reciprocal perceptions between the Irish and the English. The symbolic nature of the novel's images and subplots has been noted by many commentators. Exploring the Great Famine's impact on literature, Melissa Fegan mentions Mullen's novel, indicating that it is 'much more concerned with stock themes such as the wild Irish girl, the failed rebel, and the lowly but well-educated Irish woman who steals the heart of the local English lord'.[5] Lesley Denny reflects that Mullen's heroine is 'all too typical of this type of fiction, the wild tempestuous and beautiful Grainne, heiress to the Barrett shipping line'.[6] Fegan's and Denny's viewpoints are significant for an imagologist, as they strengthen the understanding that the process of stereotype formation relies on 'constant processes of translation, appropriation, renarration, and remediation'.[7] In other words, stock themes and stock characters are products of stereotyping that become recognizable due to their frequent reappearance in literary works. The multifaceted nature of the many characters in *The Hungry Land* is of particular interest, as it constitutes a rich source for an examination of the mechanisms of the development of stereotypes. The ambiguity of image formation is clear from the novel's portrayals of the English sympathising with the oppressed Irish, on the one hand, and of the Irish exploiting their own countrymen, on the other. The opposition between these two groups is emphasized by spatial entities. We shall see that in Mullen's work, the distinction between the Self and the Other is not delineated by nationality or ethnic belonging, but is marked by the presence or lack of an ethical stance.

The role of space

In the three previously discussed novels, it has been shown that spatiality contributes to the process of the negative construction of the Other in depictions of Soviet terror or British indifference. In *Maria*, the vastness of the territory of Russia contributes to the negative perception of the hetero-image. In *The Silent People*, the representations of small and big places relate to the auto- or hetero-image respectively. The landlords' big houses and estates are

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[5] Melissa Fegan, *Literature and the Irish Famine, 1845-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 16.
[6] Denny Lesley, 'Wild Colonial Girl', review of *Hungry Land* by Michael Mullen, *Books Ireland*, No. 110 (February, 1987), p. 11.
[7] Neumann, p. 278.

presented as attributes of the Other, and, along with the affluence of their interiors and abundance of food in their pantries, they are juxtaposed with the restricted habitat of the Irish, emphasizing the distinction between the dispossessed auto- and the wealthy hetero-images. In *Sweet Snow*, the representations of space and place are arranged in a particular order, ranging from smallest to biggest. The enlargement of space is associated with the presentation of the scenes revealing acts of cruelty and is used to highlight the great numbers of famine victims. The deployment of space and place in *The Hungry Land* is at variance with the aforementioned works of famine fiction. Mullen's novel demonstrates that spatial practices can be used in different ways and produce diverse meanings, making David Livingstone's reflection on the meaning of spatial thought in geography fitting to literary works: 'Geography ... has meant different things to different people at different times and in different places.'[8] Indeed, the notions of largeness or smallness of places are not specifically tailored to represent either the Self or the Other in *The Hungry Land*, but are exploited in the construction of all images. Introducing one of the characters, Irish poet Patrick Gill, the first lines of the novel show that his portrayal involves the mention of both small and large spaces: 'When Patrick Gill lay in a ditch on a warm summer night or tried to sleep in a crowded mud cabin at the edge of the bog, he felt that was a fatal curse on him.' (*HL*: 7) In this passage, the concepts of space and place interact with other textual features. Even though the words 'ditch', 'cabin', and 'bog' seem to bring a sense of enlargement, their meanings take on different nuances due to the adjacent phrases. The 'ditch' is not perceived as unpleasant because of the description of the weather; and the largeness of the open space 'the bog' — is semantically reduced by its immediate closeness to the word 'edge', which suggests spatial restriction and marginality. The juxtaposition of places, which serve as a background for the construction of the novel's images, shows the ambiguity of spatial entities. It can be further noticed that each place can reflect the characters' emotional states and trigger various associations. For John Burke and Myles, who are convinced that they are fighting 'in a good cause', 'the hills of Ireland' are associated with 'their bright glory' (*HL*: 45), while Seamus Costello beholds the valley as a cramped space. In addition, the small size of the ship cabins generates unpleasant feelings for the emigrants, whereas the old couple, the O'Hares, live a humble life in their poor home — a small cabin with 'heavy smoke from the turf fire, and the low rafters […] black and crusted with sooth' and the 'pungent' smell of turf smoke (*HL*: 48), and seem happy together.

At the same time, Lord Lannagh describes his land, three miles away from Castlebar, with 'a walled garden and glasshouses where he planted exotic flowers and shrubs' as 'paradise'

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[8] Quoted in Hubbard and Kitchin, *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (Los Angeles/ London/ New Delhi/ Singapore/ Washington DC: SAGE, 2011), p. 4.

and regards his estate as 'a mystical place' (*HL*: 101). Lannagh banishes from his mind the fact that 'outside the walls lay a bleak and overpopulated landscape', distancing himself from the real state of things, from 'the harsh reality of winter, when the snow fell, the cold froze the bone and the peasants huddled over the turf fires, day and night, to keep themselves warm.' (*ibid.*) Another example revealing the subjectivity of the characters' perception of space can be discerned from Grainne's and Myles' feelings about the Barrett's house — big in size, yet appearing small to them in comparison with the sea that conveys the idea of freedom.

Thematising spatial entities: Valley/ Land

Depictions of space are ambiguously portrayed throughout the novel. In passages describing land, the concepts of largeness and smallness may be used in relation to the same places, but their meanings may differ. Spatial restriction of a larger place is linked to poverty in Seamus Costello's expression of despair to his cousin Eileen Horkan:

> This valley is a prison! *You* live in comfort, *you* sleep in a feather bed and you eat meat. You have never gone without. Tonight I will sleep on rush. Smoke from wet peat will burn out my eyes. I will rise early and have a meal of cold potatoes, and then I will work on the land. It is no life for any man with pride. My mind is on fire with hate and I haven't God's charity to quench it. (*HL*: 252)

Seamus' anger with his destitute existence, which he knows he is powerless to change, contributes to the development of a stifling atmosphere, creating the impression that the valley's space is limited and claustrophobic. Thus, valleys are perceived as low social status markers, and in this way, a connection between social context and spatial structure is achieved. At the same time, scarcity can be associated with an enlargement of space. Kate Brady's remark on crop failure, confirmed by Eileen Horkan's discernment of it, renders a portrait of infertile vastness: '"The earth is like a barren woman. No seed takes life in it." Eileen was acutely aware of the great empty space about them.' (*HL*: 261) From this insight into Eileen's consciousness, it seems that poverty renders the sense of a void even greater. The poverty-space relationship in *The Hungry Land* brings to mind Motyl's deployment of space in *Sweet Snow*, where the enlargement of spatial entities amplifies the characters' suffering, maximizes the sense of loss, and enhances an understanding of the deleterious nature of the Soviet system.

Similarly, Patrick Gill's description of Belmullet reinforces the understanding that large spaces can have a negative meaning: 'It's terrible in this bleak place, open and empty…' (*HL*: 275) The place, mentioned by the poet, appears larger due to its extreme sparsity. With poverty as a focal point of the novel's narrative, these passages highlight the subjectivity of

space perception. Because poverty is an effect of the imbalanced socio-economical condition, it can be suggested that an understanding and interpretation of space regarding poverty is reflective of power relations in a society. Supportive of this is Henri Lefebvre's view of space as a 'social product',[9] and a phenomenon that 'embodies social relationships'.[10] Lefebvre's point that every society 'produces a space, its own space'[11] suggests that the spatial practices in famine fiction seek to illuminate issues of power. A connection between space and power is also pointed to by Michael J. Watts, who argues that 'scarcity and conflict are far from natural phenomena', clarifying that

> Spaces of scarcity and the particular places produced through social conflict and violence only exist in relation to other places, space, and scales, in a context of uneven capitalist development.[12]

Watts's mention of the capitalist mode is interesting to consider in parallel with Lefebvre's claim that 'capital and capitalism "influence" practical matters relating to space...'[13] These standpoints are challenged by representations of spatiality in Ukrainian famine fiction, exploited for the expression of the corruptness of the Soviet system. Furthermore, Lefebvre's reference to 'the *hegemony* of one class' as one of the aspects of capitalism[14] can be thought of in the context of the dictatorship of the Soviet proletariat, reminding us that at the core of every system, notwithstanding its form of political governance and ideological doctrines, is power. Lefebvre ultimately cements space and power together:

> Is it conceivable that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched? Could space be nothing more that the passive locus of social relations, the milieu in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of the procedures employed in their removal? The answer must be no.[15]

The link between space and power affirms that our examination of space in Irish and Ukrainian novels has common ground. In this instance, the warning given to Victor Kravchenko[16] by his father is fitting: 'Always remember this: that no slogan, no matter how attractive, is any indication of the real policy of any political party once it comes to power.'[17] The imagological

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[9] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (USA-UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), p. 28.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[11] *Ibid.*, p.31.
[12] Quoted in Phil Hubbard and Roy Kitchin, p. 459.
[13] Lefebvre, p. 9.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[16] A Soviet defector, mentioned earlier in the analysis of *Sweet Snow*. See p. 156, footnote 83.
[17] Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom*, p. 16.

analyses conducted in this study show that one of the means to attain power is the activation of the 'othering' processes, and these ought to be understood as entirely subjective phenomena.

Discussing the role of Western humanism in 'shaping geographical inquiry through centuries', Anne Buttimer expresses a view that reminds us of the omnipresence of spatial thought: 'For each facet of humanness — rationality or irrationality, faith, emotion, artistic genius or political prowess — there is a geography.'[18] In *The Hungry Land*, space lends itself to image construction. While in Seamus's and Kate's remarks the mention of privation makes places seem smaller, Patrick Gill's impression of the area shows that descriptions of destitution can also produce a contrasting spatial effect, when space and misery seem endless:

> He was cast upon a destitute landscape. The spectre of hunger haunted the small perished fields: men were muted by it, the women and children spare. The hungry and poor will be his patrons until he returned to the great house. His fate was to walk the endless tracks and roads of Mayo, moving from one miserable village to the next, lying at night among the populous stench of sweating bodies in one-roomed cabins. His food, like the food of illiterate peasants, was simple. He ate potatoes and drank milk during nine months of the year, and meal from June to August. (*HL*: 9)

Despite the smallness of the fields and cabins, the plural forms used when referring to the victims of hunger, emphasized by the largeness of the territory affected by famine, and by the length of time spent without proper nutrition, underscore the scale of Ireland's great calamity. In another reflection by Gill at the end of the novel, the portrayal of misery and death has the same capacity — it makes the place look larger:

> There was no break in the weather, no day of compassionate sunshine or blue sky. The county lay under deep snow, making travel almost impossible. Hunger and starvation had become general; people died more rapidly now. The fat on their bodies had been consumed by November; by December they were living off necessary tissue. In the valleys bound by snow, they died without the comfort of sacred oils. (*HL*: 359)

The description of the adverse circumstances in the 'county' and 'valleys' and the widespread nature of hunger, highlighted by the word 'general', shapes the awareness of the same fate for an entire country. The scale of the tragedy is indicated by means of the combination of the multitude of victims and the speed of their death. What is more, the geography of this hunger is extended by the parallel between the enlargement of the territory and the increasing thinness of the bodies. From the above passages, it follows that the characters' perceptions of space are determined by context. This is in line with Buttimer's view of space as a relational concept that

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[18] Anne Buttimer, 'Geography, Humanism, and Global Concern', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (Mar., 1990), pp. 1-2.

brings out 'the intermingling of subjective dimensions, such as attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of place, and objective spatial environments on a variety of scales.'[19]

The places portrayed in *The Hungry Land* represent those who have power and those who do not. For example, amidst poverty and starvation, Mullen describes a fine house that belongs to Lord Edward Lannagh, near Castlebar. Lord Lannagh enjoys his Irish land and the house:

> He described this land as paradise. […] It was a strange place, almost Mediterranean in its appearance, isolated from the poverty and the despair of the countryside. He loved the house and the grounds, and he relaxed here far from the pressures of London society. (*HL*: 101)

This quotation shows how spatiality is used to identify different social groups: the descriptions of the land and landscape reinforce the images of the starving peasants; and the portrayals of the big houses depict the lifestyle of the wealthy landowners, as in *The Silent People*. In this way, a distinction between the Self and the Other could have been achieved, especially if the former were presented in a positive light, and the latter received an unfavourable portrayal. However, this is not the case in *The Hungry Land*, whose auto- and hetero-images are highly ambiguous. Initially, this is perceptible from the juxtaposition of the two spaces: villages and towns. Patrick Gill ruminates that he would be treated with hospitality in 'any of the huddle of villages along the coastline', but not in the towns, for 'they spoke English there and cared little for a rhymer' (*HL*: 7). From Gill's further reflection, it becomes clear that the spatial factor is not the yardstick for distinguishing the Self from the Other, but a gauge of fluidity of the images: 'They looked towards Dublin and London for their music and their songs.' (*ibid*.) The locus of Otherness is, therefore, not only the heart of the British Empire, but Ireland's capital and other towns, too. One may infer, consequently, that what is related to Irishness cannot be categorized as the Self, and what pertains to Englishness is not a straightforward manifestation of Otherness. This assumption is realised in Mullen's novel, whose morally-ambiguous characters, representing either Irish or English identities, are not entirely good or bad. Irish poet Patrick Gill is a 'spoiled priest and a drunk hedge-school teacher' (*ibid.*), Michael Barrett is a wealthy landowner and businessman of Irish-English origin, and he is supportive of the Irish struggle for independence; Frederick Cavendish, a friend of Barrett, is an English landlord, the owner of *The Connaught Telegraph* newspaper and an ardent advocate of republican ideals, inspired by the French Revolution. English lord Edward Lannagh harbours romantic feelings for Eileen Horkan, a daughter of Irish freeholders. There are also negative Irish characters, for instance,

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[19] Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin, p. 93.

landlord's agent Dick Kenrick, or 'Kenrick of the Crooked Nose' (*HL*: 174), a debaucher and uncouth drunkard, characterised as 'The worst type of Irishman ever created. A sullen ox perfectly bred to serve his English master.' (*HL*: 146)

The symbolism of the Big House

One of the most important components in the discussion of spatiality in *The Hungry Land* is the Barretts' 'great house, built […] in the woods of Eisirt outside Northport' (*HL*: 8) that acquires a positive meaning due to the owners' belonging to the auto-image, both through their origin and because of their conscious affinity with the oppressed Irish. Gráinne's revelation that her father 'detests living in the great house — it makes him angry and introspective' (*HL*: 230) confirms that the binary opposition of 'small cabins of the poor' against 'big houses of the wealthy', often deployed for the construction of the distinction between the Self and the Other in Irish fiction, is challenged in Mullen's novel. Calling into question Claire Norris' point that in Irish fiction, a strong image of 'the Big House' evokes the Protestant Ascendancy,[20] the distinct fluidity of the meanings, reinforced by spatiality, reflects the ambivalent nature of *The Hungry Land*'s images. Norris' explanation of the role of space and place in Irish fiction is better understood if the hybridity of images is taken into consideration:

> The spatial frames of Irish fiction are set and determined, despite their occasional "disturbance" by visitors. Space and place in Irish fiction play an integral role in both the creation and rediscovery of identity, on both a personal and a national level.[21]

Moynahan's mention of 'the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tradition of Anglo-Irish writing centered on the "big house" of the landlord culture as it faltered, declined, and came to ruination'[22] strengthens an understanding of a connection between the 'big house' and hybridity. Michael Barrett's, his daughter's, and some other characters' hybrid identities, which will be discussed in this analysis, govern the novel's spatial representations, which, using Hubbard and Kitchin's wording, can be seen as framing devices 'in the creation of cultural imaginaries'.[23] Otto Rauchbauer's explanation of the role of the Big House — 'For more than two centuries, the Big House has been a setting, a subject matter, a symbol, a motif, [and] a theme in Irish fiction'[24] — finds practical use in *The Hungry Land*, too. Strikingly, the spatial frame of the

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[20] Claire Norris, 'The Big House: Space, Place, and Identity in Irish Fiction', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 107-121, p.107.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] Moynahan, p. 23.
[23] Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin, p.2.
[24] Rauchbauer quoted in Norris, p.133.

symbolic Big House allows for the creation of a contrast between Lord Lannagh's and Michael Barrett's great houses, representing the owners' opposite values, identities, and sets of beliefs. In other words, the same physical space of the Big House participates in the creation of two dissimilar images: Lord Edward Lannagh, an English Protestant and absentee landlord, and Michael Barrett, a landowner and businessman of Anglo-Irish origin, or 'the merchant and the half-English gentleman', as poet Gill puts. (*HL*: 156). Norris observes that 'The Big House stands as "symbolic of a social base," as well as for the Irish nation itself, but ambiguously so'.[25] In *The Hungry Land*, this symbolism is complicated by the binary opposition of the two sides, each of them standing for a certain social group. Again, this suggests that in the representations of spatiality in famine fiction, context extends beyond depictions of size. This view is validated by the divergent resolutions provided by the representations of the Big House in the two Irish novels, analysed here. In *The Silent People*, Una leaves the Big House for a small cabin, as it does not conform to her understanding of being Irish. By contrast, in *The Hungry Land*, Gráinne stays in the big house, inherited from her father, to uphold Irish traditions. Norris's indication of a link between space, place and identity, reinforces this point: 'Space and place in Irish fiction play an integral role in both the creation and rediscovery of identity, on both a personal and a national level'[26] when Gráinne leaves the house later to go to America with Myles Prendergast, it is set on fire. Perhaps the destruction of the Barretts' house symbolizes a new phase in Anglo-Irish relations, when the Irish intensify their fight for national independence, which ultimately results in the fall of the old social order, imposed by the English. Norris' observation that 'the motif of the deteriorating Big House and its society recurs throughout Irish fiction'[27] pertains to Mullen's novel, too. Indeed, the signs characteristic of 'incipient Anglo-Irish decline', such as, the absentee proprietor, the hard-driving estate agent, the middle man, the evicting bailiff, and some other, are present in *The Hungry Land*.[28] When Eileen Horkan ends her relationship with Lord Lannagh, he realizes that his Big House is doomed: 'I will close the house and I may not return again. I will have nothing to return to', he reflects, adding that 'the flowers and shrubs' will die. (*HL*: 418) Eileen's explanation that the blame for this lies with 'the political system', to which Lannagh himself belongs (*HL*: 417) suggests that the defunct Anglo-Irish Big Houses are symbolic of the doom of Ireland's Other. In this, a connection between power and images of space can be perceived.

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[25] Norris, p.116.
[26] *Ibid*., p.107.
[27] Norris, p.115.
[28] See Moynahan's account of the characteristic signs of *Anglo-Irish decline in his Anglo-Irish: The Literary Imagination in a Hyphenated Culture*, p. 16.

Larger spatial entities: the Sea

Gráinne Barrett's contrasting feelings about her home place and her passion for the sea reveal one of the difficulties that can be found in the assessment of the phenomenon of space, specifically, its ability to be enlarged *ad infinitum*, generating different interpretations. Lefebvre's consideration that the quality of space can have multiple meanings strengthens this idea:

> No limits at all have been set on the generalization of the concept of *mental space*: no clear accounts of it is ever given and, depending on the author one happens to be reading, it may connote logical coherence, practical consistency, self-regulation and the relations of the parts to the whole, the engendering of like by like in a set of places, the logic of container to the *versus* contents, and so on.[29]

In *The Hungry Land*, space is used to express the characters' perception of the reality that surrounds them, and therefore, it is their mental construct. Spatiality participates in their identity formation, which can be seen from the description of Gráinne's feelings, when she is torn between her father's house and the sea:

> There would always be the tension in her blood between the great house overlooking Clew Bay and the three-masted ships which sailed the oceans of the world. The sea was her master, and she must return to it again and again to renew her knowledge of herself. (*HL*: 221)

The largeness of the house yields to the greatness of the sea, creating another spatial area that makes it possible to learn more about the novel's characters. Norris' point that in Irish fiction, 'every main plot must be substantially weak so as to allow the subject to flourish and be explored'[30] is demonstrated in *The Hungry Land*, whose different treatments of space provide more details on the subject of famine. In the novel, each place activates different feelings or expectations, and awakens multiple associations. Gráinne's above mentioned reflection on space makes it clear that these functions involve both open and closed space.

For Myles Prendergast, largeness has a positive implication. This is indicated by the mention of 'the air' in an olfactive reference: 'The air is filled with the scent of the sea. The house is like a prison, and the rooms are small places.' (*HL*: 49) Even though described as big in the novel, to him, the house appears a confined space, creating the sense of a lack of freedom. The incongruity between the object's actual size and the character's perception of it triggers an

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[29] Lefebvre, p. 3.
[30] Norris, p. 111.

understanding of the connection between the physical and spiritual effects of English domination: the Irish are not only hungry for food, but also eager to regain their space.

Revealing the subjectivity of his perception of space, Myles Prendergast's remark directs our attention to Gráinne's love of the sea and prompts us to consider the role of the spatial constructions in the descriptions of Michael Barrett's ship that brings Irish emigrants to America. It can be seen from the novel's structure that the sea journey is an important element in the discussion of space, for its description takes several chapters. The difficulty of the journey is indicated by its length — 'forty-seven days at sea' (*HL*: 241). However, it is the portrayal of the people's misery that most reveals the hardships of emigration in the time of An Gorta Mór. The distance between Ireland and America appears longer due to the account of the passengers' tribulations during the journey across the ocean. Myles reflects compassionately about it: 'The sea lanes to America must be marked with bitter tears.' (*HL*: 132) Furthermore, Liam Joyce's impressions of the ship cabin convince us that spatial dimensions are subordinate to the characters' subjective perceptions:

> Despite the small area of the cabin and the confined space in which they would live, he felt happy. There was no nostalgia in his mind for the levelled village and the acres, half-bog and sour, that they had abandoned. He would take his chances on the high seas and in a new land. (*HL*: 219)

In the above quotation, the seemingly negative connotation of the smallness of the cabin is outweighed by the mention of the character's emotional contentment, resulting from his hopefulness. The escape from hunger reinforces Liam's realization that the small cabin is a safer place than his native village. Smallness is semantically positive in this case, which is validated in the following sentence: 'It was indeed a cramped space, but with some lantern light it looked more certain and comfortable.' (*HL*: 224) Also, Myles Prendergast dislikes his 'confined and narrow' cabin (*HL*: 227). In order to deal with the unpleasant feeling, he decides to 'engage his mind and body in rigorous activity' not to 'find the voyage tedious' (*ibid.*), and asks the captain for books, and studies maps to keep his 'mind occupied in a narrow space' (*HL*: 228). These examples, in which cramped places have positive and negative signification, show that the characters' experiences of spatiality are entirely subjective, echoing Lefebvre's point that 'the status of space is that of "a mental thing" or "mental place."'[31]

Frequent mention of the confinement of the cabins signals the significance of spatial thought in *The Hungry Land*. This is reflected in the register — the chapters dealing with the sea journey are speckled with references to size, for example, 'narrow berths', 'in cramped

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[31] Lefebvre, p. 3.

quarters and in darkness', 'the small cabin', 'the younger children crowded in twos and threes', 'a narrow place' (*HL*: 218), among others. Remarkably similar to the connection between space and disgust in *Sweet Snow*, the narrowness interweaves with revulsion in this part of *The Hungry Land*: the passengers' stomachs are 'unsettled', the cabin is filled with 'the stench of their vomit' (*HL*: 218), 'within two days the ship would reek of vomit and excrement' (*HL*: 220), 'the sour vomit', and the 'fetid' air in the cabin (*HL*: 222). The vastness of the sea creates a contrast to smallness and disgust, and this convergence of the visual and olfactory systems makes the novel's atmosphere tangibly oppressive. This is provided by such expressions as 'the limitless seas' (*HL*: 218), and 'the immensity of the sea, flat and empty' (*HL*: 222). These opposed elements create the distinction between despair and hopefulness, expressed in the passengers' perception of their destination as of 'a promised land' (*HL*: 217). This feeling is substantiated by Liam Joyce, who points out that 'Many of the passengers think that it is a land of plenty and that there will be a welcoming hand for them…' (*HL*: 240) The binary opposition 'west versus east' is further deployed to highlight the righteousness of their decision to emigrate: 'To the west in the darkness lay a vast expanse of ocean and a promised land; to the east the land they had abandoned, a pestilence growing in the soil' (*HL*: 217), indicating that America provides the sense of hope that 'beckoned like a light' (*HL*: 219). The idea that the Irish turn to America during the harshest period in their history is articulated by Michael Barrett: 'Hope lies in America.' (*HL*: 295) On his deathbed, he gives advice to his daughter: 'Move when you see things fail; cut the moorings that bind you to the place and do not let your mind be bothered with memories. Take your wealth to America: another great house can be built there.' (*HL*: 295) The thought of building a new great house in America, in the image of the Barretts' house perhaps, which 'would stand as a charred reminder that he had left his mark upon the landscape' (*HL*: 422), contributes to the portrayal of Ireland's predicament, highlighting emigration as a fate that many Irish are forced to adopt. Also, it allows for the portrayal of Ireland's Other in a changing hue — from the big and powerful empire, emerging from Liam Joyce's thoughts on its dominance: 'It made him feel insignificant against the British power over the great towns. He wondered if he could ever get away from its control.' (*HL*: 76), it is diminished and made less important in Gráinne's contrasting it to America: 'the power of England looked puny in comparison to the great power of this new country.' (*HL*: 248) In Myles's view, America's positive role is endorsed, while the negative attitude towards Ireland's Other is reiterated even without naming it: 'Many carried bitterness and hate with them across the Atlantic: if aid would come from any source it would come from America.' (*HL*: 228) This perception is delineated throughout the novel; it is expressed in its opening by Patrick Gill, in his reflections on an unjust system which makes people starve: 'leave this blighted place and go to America' (*HL*: 9), and

also in the closing lines that describe Gráinne's and John Burke's feelings on the future ahead of them: 'The stars were bright in the wide arc of the heavens. A wind was rising in the sails.' (*HL*: 429)

The references to America widen the scope for a discussion on spatiality in the novel. Along with the favourable depiction of France, both countries are contrasted with the unfavourable image of England. Numerous indications of the destructive effects of English rule in Ireland make space in *The Hungry Land* a highly politicized aspect. When Myles observes, 'during my days in Ireland I have seen more injustice and inequality than I have seen in Europe' (*HL*: 229), he makes it clear by implication that the reason for this is British rule. England's negative role is so deeply embedded in the context of the novel's narrative that even when it is not mentioned directly, it can be easily detected. For instance, Captain Burke is in favour of emigration and, at the same time, he grapples with the thought that it is wrongfully forced upon the Irish:

> The only reason people will not do so is because they were never there. It is outside their comprehension; they are in a cage which time and history have made. They have not crossed the great seas as we have. If I had my way, I should ship all the landless to America and give them a start there. On the other hand, why *should* they have to leave the country and why *should* they have to leave the land? They have a right to it. (*HL*: 285)

From his mention of the cage made by time and history, there emerges a sense of Ireland's forced confinement, with the implication that Ireland is 'caged' by English oppression. The Irish response to this situation is the struggle for independence, which in *The Hungry Land* is linked to France as a champion of freedom. Indicative of the subjectivity of perceptions, in this comparison, there is a positive view of revolution. It is interesting to observe that while the Russian revolution is not depicted as having positive effects in any of the novels selected for this study, the French one seems to invite emulation. Sister Geneviève's remark signals the importance of the ideals of the French Revolution that inspire Mullen's characters to fight for their country's independence: 'The world is changing. That fire that kindled in France will blow through the world.' (*HL*: 27) Eileen Horkan acknowledges the French contribution in independence movements:

> The phrases of Voltaire, Rousseau and Thomas Paine were so simple and strong. In their time they had brought down the French monarchy and the rotten system built around it, in a fever of revolutionary thoughts. They gave men a cause to fight for; yet they had not taken a firm root in Ireland. They had not inflamed the imagination. (*HL*: 260)

In Eileen's thoughts, France is positively portrayed, for it is a country that has gained freedom, and which can serve as a model for Ireland.[32] Again, the importance of the French rebellious spirit is highlighted by the evocation of the two famous French philosophers in Frederick Cavendish's memories of his political activities as a young man in France: 'He had been seduced by the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau and he had thrown in his lot with those who undid a political structure shaped by a thousand years of history.' (*HL*: 17) Here, while France is portrayed with the strength to change its political system, Ireland's success in an eventual revolutionary movement appears doubtful. Similarly to Eileen, who reflects on Ireland's poor potential for a revolution, Myles Prendergast questions the country's self-sufficiency in the struggle for independence. While observing the granaries 'guarded by the soldiers', and 'the state of the countryside' (*HL*: 137), he notes that Ireland is weakened by her inferior position. Myles believes in a significant mission that will emerge from America: 'No revolution will come out of the boglands; it must be prepared in America.' (*HL*: 137) Conviviality in the relations between Ireland, France and America in opposition to Ireland's belligerent attitude towards England highlights the Irish response to British colonial dominance, resulting in the emergence of images. These images are bound up with specifically allocated places and spaces. England is associated with a source of oppression, while France and America represent spaces that bring justice and are full of promise.

An important factor of the novel's spatiality is the presence of a set of geographical terms. *The Hungry Land* abounds with the actual names of both Irish and foreign locations. The reader comes across such places as Erris (*HL*: 7), Ulster (*HL*: 21), Mayo (*HL*: 7, 9), Northport (*HL*: 15, 24), Castlebar (*HL*: 17, 51), Clare Island (*HL*: 22), Dublin (42), Galway (*HL*: 38, 40, 45, 53), Clew Bay (*HL*: 428), and Paris, Seine, Devon (*HL*: 17), Canada (*HL*: 23), England (*HL*: 24), Tasmania, London (*HL*:25), France (*HL*: 27), Africa, Bordeaux (*HL*: 28), America (*HL*: 31), the Mediterranean (*HL*: 39), Pointe de Grave (*HL*: 39), and others. Because of its wide variety of places and spaces, Lesley Danny rightly refers to *The Hungry Land* as 'Michael Mullen's vast panoramic tale.'[33] The geographical details, along with some other aspects, appropriated from the contemporary context, for instance, the titles of newspapers, *The Nation* (*HL*: 34) and the *Connaught Telegraph* (*HL*: 15), develop a connection between fiction and reality, making Mullen's story credible and its characters convincing.

It can be assumed that events and characters described in a story acquire higher probability when located in spaces that can be thought of as real. Susan Bordo maintains that 'if

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[32] The positive portrayal of France and her people reflects the French efforts over time to come to the Irish rescue against the British.

[33] Lesley Denny, 'Wild Colonial Girl', review of *Hungry Land* by Michael Mullen, *Books Ireland*, No. 110 (Feb., 1987), p. 11.

the created reality is vivid and convincing enough […], it carries authority',[34] a point she supports by referring to Hilary Mantel's opinion that 'fiction is commonly more persuasive than history texts."[35] There is a sense that fictionalised historical details can be exploited for certain purposes. In the case of famine fiction, one of the central ideas around the writer's fidelity to history is the denunciation of British oppression of the Irish and cultivation of empathy for the victims of a cruel colonial system.

The auto-image

The images in *The Hungry Land* bring to mind the complex imagological constructs of *Sweet Snow*. In both novels, the Self and the Other are represented by the groups of oppressed and oppressors respectively and marked by certain positive and negative national features. A distinction between these two groups of images is influenced by the characters' disparate cultural belongings and ideological and political affiliations, both generated by and reflected in their social statuses. In Mullen's novel, too, the complexity of the image formation does not pertain to the two contrasting groups of images solely but occurs within each of them. The novel's images can be divided into three categories: the auto-image, representing the oppressed Irish, the hetero-image, representing their oppressors — the English, and the hybrid image that inhabits and features both the auto- and hetero-images. Perhaps the most clear-cut Irish character is Kate Brady, who is depicted as 'typically' Irish: Kate is a hard-working Irish peasant woman, with 'the marks of exhaustion and hunger' on her 'ashen face' (*HL*: 259), and a devoted mother who works hard to provide for her two children without 'self-pity' (*HL*: 260). She is religious; she speaks Irish and does not complain of her lot: she has 'a pride within her which, despite hunger, gave her a false energy to continue to work beyond the edge of exhaustion.' (*ibid*.) Kate Brady is endowed with ethics that serves to emphasize the positivity of the auto-image. In many ways, this character evokes Samchuk's Maria, and passages about Kate are similar to the accounts describing Maria's precarious lot:

> For Kate Brady the last two years had been dark. She had been dispossessed of her precious single acre because she was a widow woman — it had been divided between two families. She had worked in the fields during the planting season, picking up her wages at the end of the day, eating the raw potatoes when the owner was not looking. She had carried stones in the panniers when they built the committee roads until her

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[34] Susan Bordo, 'When Fictionalized Facts Matter', *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 06 May, 2012, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/When-Fictionalized-Facts/131759>.

[35] Mantel cited by Bordo, *ibid*.

fingers bled. She had dragged herself forward until her mind was light from exhaustion. (*HL*: 262)

There are times when Kate's desperate situation drives her to further desperate actions:

> On two occasions she had slept with sailors in Northport in order to make a shilling for food. If she had once possessed pride, it had now been taken from her: she was a beast of burden, driven by the hard urgency to survive. (*ibid.*)

This quotation draws the character from this Irish novel closer to Samchuk's Maria, in the episodes where Maria has an affair with Korniy, and when an abortion is forced upon her. Maria's and Kate's positive portrayals are not devalued by their actions, for they can be justified by the hopeless situations in which both find themselves. The characters' hopelessness is reflective of their countries' powerless positions as parts of empires. In the same way as Maria is presented as a symbol of the multitude of Ukrainian peasant women in order to highlight the scale of Ukraine's tragedy, Kate Brady can be thought of as a character illustrative of the Irish peasants' suffering during the tragic period in Irish history. This function is strengthened by these characters' resemblance to real figures. Kate, for instance, bears a striking similarity to Nora Connelly, mentioned by Coogan in his *Famine Plot. England's Role in Ireland's Greatest Tragedy*. Coogan writes:

> Nora was a peasant woman who, hungry and ill-clad, walked several miles over a bleak, rocky Kerry hillside to obtain food for her children from a workhouse. However, she was turned away empty-handed because her name was not on the list of those who were to be given food. When Nora eventually stumbled into her cabin once more, she found that four of her children had died of starvation. Later it was discovered that she should have been on the food list but a careless official had given her a wrong name.[36]

Mullen's Kate shares Nora's destiny. After vain attempts to find work, exhausted and undernourished, Kate drowns in a small stream outside Balla. Her son dies of cold the next morning as he gets lost in the 'vast expanse of bog' (*HL*: 317) while searching for her; and a year-old baby, whom Kate rescued from his perished mother, dies in Kate's cabin, too. Perhaps the image of the real Nora can be gleaned from another of Mullen's characters, Nora Flaherty, who 'nearly sold' herself to a soldier from hunger (*HL*: 162). There are many analogous figures in documented materials and also in fiction on Ireland's An Gorta Mór, and the closeness of fiction and reality is perceptible throughout Mullen's novel. Through the images of Nora and Kate, an indication of a multitude of similar fates of the impoverished Irish is achieved. When Kate Brady makes her way home from the bog, distressing views emerge before her eyes. She

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[36] Coogan, p. 4.

sees 'a rough shelter against a bank' of the river, whose inhabitants have 'the dark pigment of hunger under their eyes', following her with their 'hunted eyes' (*HL*: 263). The large numbers of evicted and hungry people continue:

> She passed several such shelters on her way to her cabin and remembered a hundred starving eyes. One could tell when the children were starving: they had thin fleshless limbs and bloated stomachs. (*HL*: 263)

Highlighting the desperate state of those vulnerable during the famine, *The Hungry Land* provides numerous passages that describe their conditions:

> They live in 'the small cabins, low and squat, with smoke issuing through the doors. […] the inhabitants, hungry and frightened. In some cases people did not even live in cabins but in holes dug in ditches.' (*HL*: 131)

> The people were famished and poorly dressed, their bodies dirty, the old women haggard from child-bearing. (*ibid.*)

> They had the appearance of beasts of burden, their backs and heads bent towards the land as they moved forwards. (*ibid.*)

> They live like animals. (*ibid.*)

> In the past few years the number of paupers in the towns had been swelling. In Castlebar they were sleeping in archways and even under the flat tombstones in the graveyard. (*HL*: 143)

An indication of large numbers of famine victims is also given by other characters. For example, Eileen Horkan notes 'the thousands of people spread across the wide landscape of Mayo who were in a similar position, gradually succumbing to the hunger.' (*HL*: 261) Travelling to Belmullet, Michael Barrett bitterly notes that 'the names of the first victims were recorded, but by winter nobody remembered any more.' (*HL*: 273)

The novel's presentation of poverty remarkably reflects the realistic state of Ireland at the time of An Gorta Mór, which can be found in the contemporary official reports and in much published research. Moynahan's mention of Ireland as 'the place where truth and reality may be stranger than any fiction that can be created about it' is befitting here.[37] The conditions of Irish people were documented by the Devon Commission: 'The majority of the peasantry, perhaps as many as 3 million people, lived in conditions in which a considerate owner would

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[37] Moynahan, p. 25.

not have placed a dog.'[38] Quantitative data, such as that presented by Gail Seekamp and Pierce Feiritear, reinforces this understanding of the scale of Ireland's homelessness and hardship portrayed in fiction: 'Police records indicate that perhaps up to 500,000 Irish tenants — half a million people — were evicted between 1845 and 1854.'[39] Our imagological analyses show that the close adherence to verifiable facts is one of specific elements of famine fiction; hence, it may be useful to investigate authors' rationale behind their adherence to truthful depiction of characters and events. Considering that novelists are seen as those who 'often vouch for the centrality of empathy to novel reading and writing and express belief in narrative empathy's power to change the minds and lives of readers',[40] perhaps it can be expected that a fictional character, created to represent a particular type, class or group of people within identifiable contexts and patterns of discourse, will generate a higher level of the reader's emotional response rather than statistical data, especially given that the novel is regarded by many as 'the most influential genre'.[41] Yet, analysing the issue of empathy in fiction and discussing a relationship between character identification and empathy, Suzanne Keen argues that closeness to reality is not a necessary prerequisite to arouse empathic response:

> Character identification often invites empathy, even when the fictional character and reader differ from one another in all sorts of practical and obvious ways, but empathy for fictional characters appears to require only minimal elements of identity, situation, and feeling, not necessarily complex or realistic characterization.[42]

While Keen's perspective covers different types of fiction, it can be suggested that an investigation of specifically famine fiction within the study of empathy may result in fresh conclusions. It would be useful to examine the development of empathic elements in famine narrative, using different perspectives, from Vernon Lee's stances on aesthetics, her claim that art is 'the awakening, intensifying or maintaining of definite emotional states'[43] and her view on empathy as 'a central feature of our collaborative responsiveness',[44] to Keen's most recent arguments on narrative empathy and her assumption that 'empathy for a fictional character does not invariably correspond with what the author appears to set up or invite.'[45] It is possible that in the same manner as images of a national character cannot be painted black and white, so the

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[38] From the evidence given to the Devon Commission (1843-1845) by Mayo clergy quoted by Liam Swords in *The Famine in North Connacht* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1999) in Coogan, pp. 19-20.
[39] Gail Seekamp and Pierce Feiritear, *The Irish Famine* (Dublin: Pixie Books, 2012), p. 34.
[40] Suzanne Keen, 'A Theory of Narrative Empathy', *Narrative*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Oct., 2006), p. 215.
[41] Mary Beth Culp, 'Literature's Influence on Young Adult Attitudes, Values, and Behavior, 1975 and 1984', *The English Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 8 (Dec., 1985), p. 35.
[42] Keen, 'A Theory of Narrative Empathy', p. 214.
[43] Lee quoted in *ibid.*, p.210.
[44] Keen, 'A Theory of Narrative Empathy', p.210.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

development and literary expression of empathy may involve different mechanisms and techniques, reflecting some peculiarities of a certain genre. This suggestion can be supported by Keen's clarification of the elements contributing to the emergence of empathy, when she observes that

> Specific aspects of characterization, such as naming, description, indirect implication of traits, reliance on types, relative flatness or roundness, depicted actions, roles in plot trajectories, quality of attributed speech, and mode of representation of consciousness may be assumed to contribute to the potential for character identification and thus for empathy.[46]

Adding that 'genre, setting, and time period may help or hinder readers' empathy', Keen further identifies more elements contributing to empathy, such as 'the repetitions of works in series', 'the length of novels', 'genre expectations', 'vivid use of settings', 'metanarrative commentary', and 'aspects of the discourse that slow readers' pace (foregrounding, uses of disorder, etc.)'.[47] The long list suggests that authors can avail of a wide range of techniques and devices in their attempt to engage the reader in their narratives. Keen's consideration whether the homogeneity of authors' and readers' emotional responses is possible, expressed in her article on readers' reaction to fictional characters, strengthens this point:

> We still know much less than we realize about which techniques effectively invite concord of authors' empathy and readers' empathy in experiences of intense emotional fusion with the imaginary experiences of fictional beings.[48]

Because Keen notes that readers 'often feel for characters, feel involved in turns of events, even when they are aware of the illusory quality of fictional worlds',[49] it can be surmised that authors see the realist presentation of characters and events as an opportune technique to increase readers' empathetic responsiveness to their fictional narratives, and therefore, endow their literary creations with 'typical', easily recognized traits.

Similarly to the construction of the auto-image in the analysed Ukrainian works of fiction, some attributes are presented as 'typical' of the Irish national character in *The Hungry Land*. The main indicator of Irishness is the use of the native language, deployed in the formation of both the main and minor characters belonging to the auto-image. This is shown, for example, in Gráinne Barrett's reflection that while she speaks Irish, 'a certain part of her nature came alive' (*HL*: 225), or in the novel's brief description of an elderly couple, the

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[46] *Ibid*., p. 216.

[47] *Ibid*.

[48] Suzanne Keen, 'Readers' Temperaments and Fictional Character', *New Literary History*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Spring 2011), pp. 295-314, p. 297.

[49] *Ibid*., p. 309.

O'Hares, who 'spoke only in Irish', which is 'a sweet and rich language' (*HL*: 48); and clearly stated in the portrayal of Captain Burke's forebears, the dispossessed merchants from Galway:

> They had an abiding hatred of the British rule in Ireland and the dominance of an Irish culture by a foreign one. They spoke in Irish. Their secrets and their hates were communal. (*HL*: 53)

In the last quotation, people of the same group are connected by means of language. This is in line with Joseph Moffatt's observation, made in relation to his paradigms of Irishness. Moffat notes that 'a common language has often proved an effective organisational mechanism allowing — as some languages can be ideologically employed — a very distinctive picturing of the Nation.'[50] Interestingly, his point is pertinent to the function of language in Ukrainian famine fiction, too. By using languages as the main catalysts for the discernment of the Self and the Other, both Irish and Ukrainian fictions demonstrate the process of the formation of a sense of national identity, resulting from the two countries' attempts to shake off colonial oppression. Regardless of dissimilarities in the Irish and Ukrainian cultural, social, political and ideological contexts, the Ukrainian and Irish languages function analogously in literature: they demonstrate ways in which the forcible imposition of power generates a higher level of intolerance and animosity towards the language of the oppressor, confirming that cultural peculiarities are used as a means to differentiate the Self from the Other. The retention of a native language is a depicted as a defence mechanism: for the Self, the preservation of language means the survival of the nation. Eileen Horkan clearly puts this idea in words: 'The day they destroy the language is the day they destroy what we are.' (*HL*: 414)

The beauty of the Irish language is emphasized on many occasions in Mullen's novel, which not only validates the point that 'language and identity are "ultimately inseparable"',[51] but also creates a positive perception of the Irish national character. Speaking Irish invariably generates a positive connotation. On his meeting Myles Prendergast, John Burke remarks: 'Oh, he speaks sweet Irish.' (*HL*: 50) The portrayal of Liam Joyce also involves the mention of the language: 'He spoke his words in Irish, with strength and softness, his mind running easily. His mind was supple in this language, and he could express himself easily and well.' (*HL*: 89-90) Depicting the Irish language in a positive light and pointing to its applicability and practicality, a favourable perception of its speakers is secured.

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[50] Joseph Moffatt, 'Paradigms of Irishness for Young People in Dublin', a doctoral thesis, The National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2011, <http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/2578/1/Joseph_Moffatt_Paradigms_of_Irishness_for_Young_People_in_Du.pdf>, p. 11.

[51] John Edwards, *Language andIdentity: An introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 20.

In a similar way to *The Silent People*, the issue of language is indivisible from culture and education in Mullen's novel. The characters belonging to the auto-image are proud of their Irish roots and heritage. Eileen Horkan recalls that her father had 'a wide understanding of Irish literature and the hidden streams of Irish history', which 'had given her pride in her lineage' (*HL*: 187). Liam Joyce, who 'had picked up the rudiments of reading and writing' and 'had accumulated both cunning and wisdom from the soil and the politics of time', declares that 'There is no virtue in ignorance' (*HL*: 73). The thirst for knowledge in the Irish is indicated in many episodes. For example, on his way to America, not to be unoccupied during the long journey, Myles studies the manual in order to learn to identify the stars from the deck of the ship (*HL*: 228-9). Furthermore, even in America, Liam Joyce is interested in Irish poetry: he paces through Broadway, 'carrying the poems of Rioccard Barrett in his mind.' (*HL*: 242) Michael Barrett's search for his ancestor Rioccard Barrett's manuscripts, a valuable artefact of Irish cultural heritage, is an important thread throughout the novel. It is noteworthy to mention that the prototype of the poet is a real figure — Riocard Bairead (Richard Barrett), called 'the Poet of Erris', who was born in 1735 in Belmullet, a place referred to in *The Hungry Land*. Bairead wrote his verses in the Irish language and actively participated in the 1789 Rebellion; he was a small farmer and taught in a small school at home.[52] All these details make him a suitable character for Mullen's work of fiction and highlights the importance of verisimilitude in the famine narrative. In this, links between history and culture, factual information and fictional narration are palpable and interwoven in the text, which recalls Leerssen's elucidation of the role of Gaelic poetry for the idea of Irish nationality:

> …the main value of the language is seen to lie in the fact that it represents a link with the golden past; thus the poet's concern for his language echoes the older bardic concern for the continuity of history, for the historical continuity of culture.[53]

Such continuity is observable in fiction, when certain themes, images and motifs are reused, creating a sense of tradition and national symbols. *The Silent People* likewise utilizes the figure of the poor poet, Flan, to accentuate the Irishness of the auto-image. The Irish language is symbolic of the auto-image — the 'clever speakers of that well-wrought language',[54] whose positive perception is strengthened by the fact that an understanding of the importance of their language is expressed by the characters who are not part of it. Frederick Cavendish, an English gentleman, laments the decline of the Irish language:

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[52] Noelene Beckett Crowe M.G.G., 'Riocard Bairead (Richard Barrett). Poet / United Irishman', *Our Irish Heritage*, <http://www.ouririshheritage.org/page/riocard_bairead_richard_barrett>.
[53] Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, p. 208.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

> Eventually the changes may come here through legislation and education. And the unfortunate thing is that the education must take place through the English. A civilisation is dying out in the bogs at this moment as the Irish language, complex and old, is dying. The children will learn English and ape after the English ways. That will be the final colonisation. (*HL*: 164)

This quotation shows that power is imposed through language. By expressing his regret about the future of the Irish language, a language that 'has been maturing for two thousand years' (*HL*: 33), Cavendish not only pinpoints the merits of the language, but also stresses the damaging impact of the British colonization on Ireland's development, its culture and heritage. That English is the language of power is intelligible from the episodes, which deal with the tenants-landlord relationship, the police, the army and the system of justice. In fact, the novel makes it clear that there is no justice for the Irish in their own land. Suffice to think of one of the characters, Ned Kenny, who, tied to the whipping-post, cries out 'Christ and Mary save me!' in Irish, and his voice fills 'the silent barracks with its strange foreign intonations.' (*HL*: 62) The reference to the strangeness of Ireland's indigenous language reveals its subjective position. During Seamus Costello's court case, Eileen Horkan remarks with indignation that the trial is 'a travesty of justice', that the judge has 'his British voice', and Seamus is presented as 'a vengeful peasant', who finds it difficult to understand the court proceedings that 'were carried out in a precise legal English' (*HL*: 414). Her impression echoes her father's outrage with the British system, which suppresses Irish people:

> We have been made poor and ignorant. Laws have been put on the statute-books to keep us ignorant and out of any office. Remember, the British seek to destroy us. They might not wipe us off the earth, but they can destroy the language and the memory we had of ourselves. (*HL*: 187)

Language here is shown as a divisive force, indicating that the Irish are perceived and treated as second-class citizens.

The denigrated position of the Irish is the most developed theme in the novel, where examples conveying the English negative perception of the Irish abound: Gráinne Barrett's nurse is 'an Irish-speaker, like all the other servants' (*HL*: 20); the tavern-keeper expresses a view that Irish is a 'doggerel tongue' (*HL*: 37); and Gráinne's mother does not wish her daughter to spend time with their Irish servants, as her daughter 'would only learn a barbaric tongue and all the superstitions of the Celtic race.' (*HL*: 21) Lord Lannagh's overtly racist attitude towards the Irish begins with his dislike for their language and extends to hostility towards the native people:

> He had an aversion for the Irish. […] He found their religious practices bordering on superstition. Most of the Mayo peasants were illiterate and unwashed. They belonged to an inferior and disordered race; to shake their hands was to feel that one was soiled. (*HL*: 123)

Lannagh's feeling about the Irish appears particularly odd and unexpected, for he is not the novel's complete villain. Rather, Edward Lannagh is a romantic lover, and 'a dreamer' (*HL*: 101, 108), infatuated with an Irish woman, who carries his child. This character, however, represents English landlords as products of the contemporary British colonial discourse that encourages the perception of the Irish as an inferior race and reassures the English of their superiority. Mullen's novel has many examples of the English negative position towards the Irish language, revealing their denigrating attitude towards the Irish as a people. Colonel Spiker's question, put in an incredulous tone, and Kenrick's derisive reply both show overt disdain for the Irish:

> 'You mean to say the Irish have poets?' […]
> 'They are rhymesters, sir. They write doggerel.' (*HL*: 326)

One of the most often encountered negative descriptions of the Irish language expressed by the Other is that of 'the language of the vermin' (*HL*: 321). Landlord's agent Dick Kenrick reiterates that Irish 'is the language of the vermin' (*ibid.*), and applies the disrespectful word 'vermin' to describe the Irish peasants:

> I have known they are vermin for a long time. They are everywhere: in every fold of the hills and on the sides of the mountains you will find them. And they are lazy and suspicious. (*HL*: 320-321)

In parallel with Kenrick's offensive rhetoric, there is Colonel Spiker's loathing of the Irish: 'A common soldier was of little matter, especially when the common soldier was Irish, and the Irish were numerous and filthy vermin.' (*HL*: 67) It can be seen that the negative attitude towards the Irish occurs regardless of their social group, and that the process of dehumanization is fuelled by their national belonging. Revealing a high level of animosity of the English towards the Irish, the frequent use of the word 'vermin' also creates a feeling that the negative perception of the English by the Irish is justified, and hence, those who regard the Irish negatively are easily defined as the Other. In a remarkable way, the process of 'othering' in *The Hungry Land* concurs with the construction of Otherness in *Sweet Snow*. The van guard's remark about the prisoners in Motyl's novel is a clear example of this: 'The vermin would be quiet if they knew what was good for them.' (*SwSn*: 40) It can be assumed that notwithstanding historical timelines or socio-political and ideological contexts, the construction of Otherness entails some uniform

mechanisms showing that the process is about positioning the Self as superior and the Other as inferior. In other words, 'othering' is first and foremost about power. This view is renforced by Jean-François Staszak's indication of an imbalance between these binary images:

> The asymmetry in power relationships is central to the construction of otherness. Only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devalue the particularity of others (their otherness) while imposing corresponding discriminatory measures.[55]

Staszak's mention that the Other 'only exists relative to the Self, and vice versa'[56] explains a number of aspects separating the auto- from hetero-image in *The Hungry Land*. In the first place, the emphasis on the goodness of the language of the Irish is juxtaposed to the negative portrayal of the language of the Other. Speaking with Liam Joyce in Irish, Gráinne feels that 'had she spoken English with him, their relationship would have been strained and faulty' (*HL*: 225); Sorca O'Hare points out that 'the English is spoken in the towns and by the gombeen men and the quality. They look down on us for our ways and the manner in which we live.' (*HL*: 48) Sister Geneviève, Grainne's teacher in the convent in England, gives advice to her student: 'Remember your French and practice it. It is a fine and delicate language, not like the language of the beer-drinkers. English is not a good language. Too heavy, too heavy…' (*HL*: 27) Suggesting antagonisms between England and France, this explicit expression of the dislike for the English language deepens the negativity of the image of the English. Moreover, because the English language has a negative connotation, and is established as the language of the Other, those Irish characters who use it, become perceived as the Other. One such example in the novel is a critical portrayal of the clergy due to their use of English, which is in contrast to the positive image of the Irish religious leaders in *The Silent People*:

> The bishops are far away and in towns […] and they call upon us to follow a law which is not God's law. Let them eat plates of gruel morning, noon and night and soon they will change their ways of thinking. Anyway they all talk English and have English ways. (*HL*: 76)

Even though the bishops are portrayed with strong disfavour for speaking English, the quotation implies that beneath this linguistic element there is a bigger issue. They belong to a social group, which is more identifiable with the Other rather than with their own, starving people. Images' capacity to shift from one group to another, therefore, depends upon the dynamics of power.

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[55] *Ibid*.
[56] Jean-François Staszak, *Other/ otherness*, <http://www.unige.ch/sciencessociete/geo/files/3214/4464/7634/OtherOtherness.pdf>, p. 2.

Such an interrelation between images and power prompts further consideration of the complexity of Anglo-Irish relations.

Factors shaping Anglo-Irish relations

Initially, the colonizer-colonized dichotomy can be deciphered from the portrayal of poet Patrick Gill. A once talented verse maker, he still remembers his glory days, drinks heavily and sleeps rough, and is dependent on people's mercy for food and shelter. Gill's reflection on his decline can be linked to the condition in which Ireland finds itself at the outset of the Great Famine:

> Any dreams which he had once carried were now fragments. Time and poverty and the feeling that he was on the forgotten edge of Europe had destroyed all his hopes. He had sought refuge in drink; the raw poteen could set his spirit on fire. (*HL*: 7)

In this passage, Ireland's misery is conveyed through the poet's fallen existence. Throughout the novel, the country and its people, the 'race, whose traditions had stretched back two thousand years' (*HL*: 8), become more submerged in poverty and dejection, just like this 'rake in filthy and torn clothes chanting in Irish', this 'sad and tragic figure' (*HL*: 344). Despite some unappealing qualities, the impoverished poet is overall a likeable personage, as are other ill-clad and hungry characters. By showing that vices can develop from people's underprivileged position, the image of the poet as a collective symbol of the Irish poor is validated. The following quotation explains the connection between living in harsh conditions and alcohol consumption: 'Men and women fell into a drunken stupor which deadened them to reality and destroyed their minds with raw alcohol. [..] They killed their fears and their hungers in drink. (*HL*: 161) It is made clear that the Irish are forced to seek solace in drinking, which contrasts with the depiction of alcohol abuse within the hetero-image. Agent Kenrick, for instance, is portrayed as an uncouth 'whiskey-drinker', who 'drank the bottle of whiskey rapidly, displaying his peasant origins, and another bottle was placed after him.' (*HL*: 320) Kenrick's dismal drinking habit draws a line between the victim and culprit. Moreover, it should be noted that in this example the difference between the two is indicated also by the use of the word 'peasant'. In respect to Kenrick's flaw, it conveys the negative meaning of 'a person who is rude, behaves badly, or has little education',[57] while at other times throughout the novel, the word 'peasant' presupposes a more neutral connotation, meaning 'a farmer who owns or rents a small piece of

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[57] *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*,
<http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/peasant?q=peasant>.

land'.[58] The influence of the context on the interpretation of the word 'peasant' reveals the subjective nature of meaningful elements of speech. Thus, it may appear that a liking for alcohol serves to corroborate a positive portrayal of the auto- and a negative one of the hetero-image. Yet, Edward Silken's alcohol dependence shows that it is universal, and unrestricted to nationality or class. Silken is the master of the workhouse, who arrived in Castlebar from London when he was 'a fresh young man moved by the noblest motives' (*HL*: 147), yet his hope that the workhouse would be 'a refuge for paupers' (*HL*: 143) is frustrated. Silken is distressed by the downtrodden appearance of the poor, searching for food and shelter: 'They were as listless as the bell whose sound presided over all their movements, destroying thought and freedom of action.' (*HL*: 147) Silken's response to witnessing the suffering of hundreds of dispossessed of their homes, poorly fed, and separated from their families people is drinking, for 'it helped him to forget' (*HL*: 150).

The drinking habit is not the only adverse consequence of the underprivileged position of the Irish. Kenrick's observation that 'Poverty generated cuteness and cunning' (*HL*: 87) suggests that privation leads to a decline in people's moral values, which Kenrick exploits for his own purposes. He gathers a group of 'outcasts' (*HL*: 84) to assist him in the evictions of cottiers and small farmers. The portrayal of Kenrick's 'cavalcade' (*HL*: 87) that was 'hated in the towns and feared in the countryside' (*ibid*.), and avoided 'as if they were lepers' (*HL*: 85), confirms that attribution of either entirely positive or solely negative traits to one group of images is incongruous. This strengthens our understanding that image construction involves 'a compound layering of different, contradictory counter-images', most of which 'boil down to a characteristic, quazi-characterological, polarity'.[59] The attribution of negative traits occurs when oppression and injustice come into play, and these are interrelated with the issue of power. Yet, there is one aspect in *The Hungry Land* that seems to be attributed solely to the Self. In response to English oppression, the Irish national liberation movement gains pace, as the story unfolds. Patriotism, underpinned by the characters' thirst for knowledge and their use of the Irish language, becomes another positive feature of the auto-image, often referred to throughout the novel.

Representations of patriotism

Irish patriotism in *The Hungry Land* is a complex, multifaceted construct that extends beyond Ireland's borders. Irish secret societies are founded abroad, in France and America. Eoin

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[58] *Ibid*.
[59] Leerssen, 'Image' in Beller and Leerssen, pp. 343-344.

Prendergast, a Galway merchant who fought for independence with General Humbert in 1798 but had to flee the country after the insurrection was defeated, does not cease to fight for Ireland's liberation from British rule even as an old man. In France, he is a member of the Revolutionary Circle, whose members gather regularly 'to listen to reports from Ireland and to make plans for the future' (*HL*: 31). Also, they form cells in New York and look 'to America for support', for there, 'a force could be raised which some day might make Ireland free.' (*ibid*.) Eoin prints and binds pamphlets, which are sent to Ireland and 'distributed secretly in taverns and at fairs.' (*HL*: 32) Noting that the revolutionary spirit of the starving Irish is low, Eoin believes that one day they will rebel against their oppressor:

> Each box contains an army. These pamphlets will be read in cabins and in town houses. They will spread the French fire. The day will come again when we will rise out, and not with pikes and forks but with quality guns; for you must always be as good as the enemy. (*ibid*.)

Eoin's conviction that freedom has to be gained through knowledge as well as force parallels Liam Joyce's view on Ireland's independence: 'We must survive. We must learn to survive and never give in. […] We are the slaves for the moment, but we can throw off the ropes and chains if we are bright.' (*HL*: 73-74) The idea of the importance of education, conveyed in the above quotations, echoes the themes on literacy, learning, and schooling in *The Silent People*. Both novels provide a clear message that political liberty and social equality cannot be achieved without knowledge. For the Irish, the concern with knowledge develops their sense of worth, and is in stark contrast to the imposed cultural denigration. This point is strengthened in *The Hungry Land* by the portrayal of Eoin Prendergast's son, Myles, who studies Irish history and graduates from military academy. Myles is preoccupied with Ireland's liberation from English rule, and he is sent to Ireland by the Circle because he has some military experience. Eoin and Myles are important figures for the expression of patriotic sentiment in the novel. Their connection with Ireland suggests that fidelity to the cause of the country's freedom passes on from one generation to the next: from the father, who 'never deviated from his love of Ireland' (*HL*: 32) to his son, who regrets that 'for all his life he had been in exile from his own land' and awaits going to 'the land of enchantment' (*HL*: 35). In this way, patriotism is presented as a typical trait of the Irish national character.

The strong attachment of the Irish to their homeland is an element that brings to the fore the dominant position of the English. Patriotism and colonial oppression form a binary opposition, where the former grows stronger as the latter intensifies. Myles is perplexed with the state of the country: 'during my days in Ireland I have seen more injustice and inequality than I have seen in Europe.' (*HL*: 229) Frederick Cavendish adds to Myles' critical impression

explaining the condition of its people: 'The people who are hungry do not think. They have no noble ideas or ideals. When your belly is empty, then you think only of food and not of rebellion.' (*HL*: 164) Throughout the novel, the characters' faith in the ability of the Irish to rise up to a rebellion fluctuates. Captain Burke sees the problem in the fact that the country is divided:

> There is a patriotic feeling in the hearts of people, but with Catholic Emancipation the Catholic middle class and the Catholic professional people are now good servants of the Crown. (*HL*: 42)

Barrett is sceptical about the Irish peasants' mind-set. In his view, it is not suitable for fighting for independence:

> Courage is not a virtue found amongst people who work the soil. We need more anger in this country, and that might shake the British government and vipers like Kenrick who use the courts and the police for their advantage. (*HL*: 181)

While Fergus Ryan is convinced that most people fear to rebel: 'The mass of people are afraid to rise out.' (*HL*: 302-303), Myles is strongly doubtful about the Irish in general: 'You seem to me to be a downtrodden race and you are starving at the moment. […] there is no nationalistic spirit in Ireland. You are a subservient race and will continue to remain subservient.' (*HL*: 302) Myles' angry invective evinces indignation arising from his wish to encourage his countrymen to actively participate in a rebellion against the English. Mullen's characters representative of the Irish auto-image are united in their love for Ireland, and the expression of their patriotism bears a similarity with *Sweet Snow*. Captain John Burke's confession of his love of Ireland, 'I love the land of Mayo. I'll die for it.' (*HL*: 246) strikingly resembles Pieracki's promise to give his life for Poland. Undoubtedly adding to the positive portrayals of the national auto-images, the representation of patriotism confirms that the construction of images in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions deploys uniform methods.

At the same time, it should not be overlooked that *The Hungry Land*'s references to the role of Daniel O'Connell in the struggle for freedom in Ireland provide a strong connection to *The Silent People*. Even though O'Connell is mentioned just briefly in Mullen's novel, while *The Silent People* devotes much of its space to this historical figure, in both works, his contribution to the Irish cause is presented as highly significant. Myles and his father are in awe of O'Connell's ability to unite and lead 'the great numbers' (*HL*: 34). This suggests a continuance of respect between generations and emphasizes Ireland's long-term resistance to British rule. At the same time, the acknowledgement of O'Connell's efforts and achievements is juxtaposed with the need for newer, more modern methods of struggle. Myles notes that

'Daniel O'Connell had served his purpose well. He had brought his people out of the dark eighteenth century and lifted them up from their knees.' (*HL*: 35); however, as a representative of a new generation of Irish freedom fighters, he realizes that Ireland's freedom cannot be gained without outside support: 'No revolution will come out of the boglands; it must be prepared in America.' (*HL*: 137) Indicative of both continuity and change in the Irish struggle for independence, Myles' position highlights an understanding of the negative effects of colonial rule and the strong Irish desire to overthrow it. In addition, the characters' patriotic aspiration is strengthened by their pride in their Irish heritage. This is shown, for example, in Liam Joyce's emotive speech:

> I hate this tyranny of place and I hate this poverty. I know that we were born for better things. My father was a schoolmaster and he had the great racial poems in his head. We were not always land agents' curs and slaves. We came from rich ancestry. We must get away. This bog is not going to be our graveyard. (*HL*: 75)

Liam's declaration reiterates that a distinction between the Self and the Other is power-related. His determination to fight against the unjust system, tangible from his vow, 'I will not be beaten into the earth, I am not vermin' (*ibid*.), shows the auto-image to its advantage. While contributing to a larger picture of the national struggle of Ireland, the novel's references to Ireland's heroic past and the presentation of the Irish combative spirit create a sense of hope amongst all the impoverishment, hunger and death. This constitutes a point of dissimilarity with the Ukrainian works of famine fiction, discussed in this thesis, whose lack of hope depicts Ukraine's famine as outstandingly tragic.

The use of humour

A sense of hope in Mullen's novel is strengthened by the element of humour. In the text, there are examples of joking remarks and entertaining comments, which occur within the group of the characters representative of the Irish auto-image. Humour indicates warm and friendly relations between them, as shown, for example, in the exchange between Gráinne and Captain Burke, when Gráinne is a little girl:

> 'Were you a good girl while I was in America?' […]
> 'I was a good girl most of the time, honest — except once or twice when I was bad, but it wasn't very often.'
> 'And will you marry me when you grow up?'
> 'I will, if you carry me across the wide sea.' (*HL*: 20)

While the conviviality between these two characters enhances a positive perception of the Irish auto-image, humour can be politically charged, as well. The episode, in which Gráinne is presented to Queen Victoria when a pupil in a convent school in England, uses humour to bring out the theme of Ireland's colonized position. The Queen, who was told that Gráinne was 'related to the Sea Queen', jokingly remarks, 'Then I must be careful of my throne.' (*HL*: 26) The girl's confidential commentary 'She has no need to fear for her throne,' […]. 'I'm far more interested in her colonies.' (*ibid*.), which she whispers into her father's ear, is thought-provoking, and yet another reminder of British colonization of Ireland. This example of humour contributes to the reader's awareness of Ireland's subjugated position, which, in turn, will guide them to justify the Irish negative perception of their Other, approving of their struggle for independence. As Gráinne further adds that the Queen 'looks like Mrs Cash who takes in the washing' (*HL*: 27), her joke downplays the importance of the British monarch for the Irish. In this way, the Self/Other binary is strengthened.

There are other uses of humour in the novel. An example of self-criticism of the auto-image is discernible from Myles' bitterly ironic remark of some well-to-do Irish people, who 'could see nothing wrong with a political system which deprived them of a right to their own land in their own country.' (*HL*: 132) Self-criticism can also be deciphered from cosmic irony in the description of the poet Patrick Gill: '"What is Gill but a spoiled priest and a drunken hedge-school teacher?" the peasants asked behind his back, adding 'He would sell his soul to the devil in hell for a drink.' (*HL*: 7) Such a characteristic alone should cast a negative light on the poet. Yet, his misfortune is perceived differently in a wider context, with an indication that it is not entirely his fault.

Reflecting that humour has different manifestations in the text, the characters belonging to the auto-image banter easily and tease one another in different situations. A recurring aspect indicating the positivity of humour is 'a pissing contest' (*HL*: 226), or 'a pissing match' (*HL*: 287) held between Liam Joyce's uncle and Michael Barrett's famous ancestor, poet Rioccard Barrett. Giving his word for the authenticity of the event, Liam Joyce relates:

> Barrett said he could piss higher than my uncle. They went to the back of the whitewashed house, and by lantern-light the contest was held. My uncle won, and that is why the manuscript survived. (*HL*: 186)

The characters' laughter that turns into 'choking spasms' (*HL*: 287), and their certainty that the story of Rioccard Barrett's pissing match 'will go into oral tradition for sure and, if Gill gets his hands on it, into a poem' (*ibid*.) demonstrate their ability to laugh at themselves, which can be

viewed as 'a supplement to the superiority stance'.[60] Because *The Hungry Land*'s characters laugh even at a time of extreme hardship, humour highlights their strength of character. This is reinforced by Michael Barrett's observation of the endurance of the peasants dying from hunger: 'Even on the edge of death their thoughts took on humour and exaggeration; it was black and macabre.' (*HL*: 273) In this respect, Mullen's novel has close parallels with *Sweet Snow* that draws heavily upon irony as its protagonists face danger and death. The deployment of humour in *The Hungry Land* endorses the assumption that in famine fiction it functions to render a more nuanced image of the Self.

Causes of the Famine

Another point of similarity between these two novels is their juxtaposition of the characters' attempts to explain the causes of the famines. In *The Hungry Land*, the impoverished peasants are convinced that the blight is a punishment for their sinfulness. This belief is articulated time and again:

> Many said that the curse of God was on the land. (*HL*: 252)
> They say that we are cursed for our sins. (*HL*: 260)
>
> 'They say it's a curse for our sins, sir,' they said.
> 'What sins?'
> 'All sorts of sins.' (*HL*: 273)

A similar understanding of hunger is expressed in *Sweet Snow*. A dying peasant woman, Kateryna Fedorivna Khanenko, convinces the four protagonists of the divine inevitability of famine:

> "We are dead. It is God's will."
> Unnerved, Golub stammered, "And — and if there is no — no God?"
> Her response was dismissive.
> "No God? Of course there is a God. That is why we suffer. […] How can you tell me there is no God, Mister Golub? How can you believe such — " (*SwSn*: 68-69)

An explanation of hunger as God's curse is also present in *Maria*, in the peasants' expression of the view that Ukraine's tribulations are punishment for the Bolsheviks' ruination of churches and their disregard of faith. Christopher Morash notes that 'the expectation of an imminent and dramatic supernatural intervention in history is by no means new', reminding us that '"the sense

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[60] Charles Baudelaire quoted by Peter Verstraten, Giovanna Fossati, Leo van Hee, Frank Kessler, Patricia Pisters, Dan Streible, Nanna Verhoeff, 'From Ludic Humour to Cosmic Irony', Chapter 7 in *Humour and Irony in Dutch Post-war Fiction Film*, pp. 229-259, p. 249.

of an ending" has been prevalent throughout the cultures heir to the Judaeo-Christian tradition' since at least the 6th century BC.[61] This observation can be regarded as a connecting thread, showing and strengthening the similarity between the Irish and Ukrainian literary expressions of the divine playing a role in their famines. In the Irish case, Morash explains, 'the Anglican millenarianism [...] flourished in the half-century before the Famine',[62] and was considered by contemporary religious figures as 'the commencement of the seventh vial of wrath, and of the last period of twenty years immediately preceding the millennium.'[63] For them, 'the Black Horse of Famine in Ireland was perfectly in keeping with the biblical narrative.'[64]

Morash also notes that the Irish famine compounded the 'sense of crisis',[65] and shaped 'the concept of national sin'[66] as 'an explanation of the prime cause of the Famine'.[67] To strnghten his claim that 'as a reading of the Famine, the concept of "national punishment for sin" is by no means idiosyncratic or unorthodox', he presents Queen Victoria's declaration that 'the "heavy judgement" of "God Almighty" was a chastisement for "the iniquities of this land', made on 24 March 1847 — the day pronounced as 'a day of public fasting and prayer for the victims of the Irish Famine.'[68] From the start of An Gorta Mór, its interpretation as 'supernatural punishment for "national sin" developed into a justification for starvation, disease, immigration, and death',[69] and became entrenched in many contemporary literary artefacts and non-literary texts.[70] Laying the blame on providence was convenient for those in power. Charles Trevelyan's attitude to the Irish famine reflects the perspective of many members of the contemporary British establishment:

> 'Supreme wisdom', announces Trevelyan at the beginning of *The Irish Crisis*, 'has educed permanent good out of transient evil'; indeed, the Famine for Trevelyan is 'a great opportunity offered us by an all-merciful Providence.'[71]

In contrast to these examples, conveying a sense of providentialism about the famine and highlighting people's helplessness in the face of God, works of famine fiction present a view that the responsibility lies with the authorities. Interestingly, in *Sweet Snow*, immediately after

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[61] Christopher Morash, *Writing the Irish Famine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.85.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[63] J.H. Frere quoted by Morash, p. 89.
[64] Morash, p. 90.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2.
[69] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[70] It can be found, for example, in the novels by Annie Keary's *Castle Daly* (1875), Anthony Trollope's *Castle Richmond* (1860), Elizabeth Hely Walshe's *Golden Hills: A Tale of the Irish Famine* (1865), Margaret Percival's *The Irish Dove* (1849) and other works.
[71] Trevelyan quoted by Morash, p. 84.

having expressed her belief that the famine is God's will, Kateryna Fedorivna provides information on what really happened, and affirms that everything was confiscated by the Bolsheviks.[72]

Motyl's novel clearly shows that the destruction of the village and the entire country was caused by the Soviet regime. In *The Hungry Land*, Frederick Cavendish places the blame on the 'laissez-faire policies', practised by the authorities (*HL*: 253), and Myles Prendergast echoes this viewpoint by saying: 'It is an evil system!' (*HL*: 133) Brian Burke, then, explains how in practise this 'evil system' works, and why hunger is spreading:

> They bring in the corn from America in the ships and store it. When the price is right they sell it on the markets. At the end of the harvest they export the barley, oats and butter to England. (*HL*: 133)

Finally, a connection between hunger and the authorities is voiced by one of the peasants:

> They say it is the curse of the Lord for their sins. I tell them that the kings of England have committed sins and the Lord did not visit harsh punishment upon them. (*HL*: 255)

These contrasting views indicate that an understanding of the reasons of the famine changes. The 'allusions to the Famine as an "act of God"'[73] yield to the realization of the damaging consequences of British rule, and its impact on the famine's magnitude. Moreover, the characters' reflections on life in the past suggest that British colonial policy has become more destructive over the course of time:

> When I was a young girl we tasted meat three times a year, but my children have not tasted meat that often. They will have to eat it slowly so as not to vomit up the goodness. (*HL*: 261)

> I saw better times, good lady. My father had six acres and a cow. We had milk on the table and butter on our potatoes. But the rents became a burden and another took his farm. The landlord's cattle graze on the ground where our house once stood. (*HL*: 262)

The plural form of the word 'famines' in the following quotation acccentuates the recurring nature of food shortages, experienced by the Irish poor: 'Before the famines, they had been a healthy-looking people; now they were gaunt and hollow, particularly the women.' (*HL*: 255)

Unsurprisingly, prolonged misery and unjust treatment strengthen the Irish people's desire for freedom. Echoing Mark C. Stoddart's statement that 'the exercise of power always implies the possibility of resistance',[74] *The Hungry Land* shows that frustration with British rule

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[72] See the quotation on p. 151 in the nalysis of *Sweet Snow*.
[73] Morash, *ibid*.
[74] Mark C. Stoddart, 'Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse: A Critical Review of Theories of Knowledge and Power', *Social Thought & Research*, Vol. 28, Social "Movements" (2007), pp. 191-225, p. 212.

fuels the Irish nationalist spirit — it is omnipresent at the time of the famine, when 'The laughter had left people's faces, and there was a fear in government circles that this area of Mayo was the breeding-ground for an upheaval.' (*HL*: 18) It is detectable also from Barrett's encouragement of an upheaval: 'We need more anger in this country, and that might shake the British government and vipers like Kenrick who use the courts and the police for their advantage.' (*HL*: 181) Yet, the characters' resistance to British oppression is not depicted as uniform. Within the auto-image, there is uncertainty whether the people are strong enough to rise up and struggle for freedom. Brian Burke shares his doubts with Myles: 'They have been beaten into the earth. They live like animals. No revolution would set its seeds here.' (*HL*: 131) This lack of homogeneity in image construction convinces us of the flexibility of images, and their ability to shift furnishes writers with numerous possibilities in their artistic endeavour. Significative of the impossibility to catalogue people, it challenges the very stereotypes at the heart of the Other's perception.

The literary representation of the Irish national character in *The Hungry Land*, unlike the traditional negative stereotype of the Irish, is thus based upon a combination of three elements: the use of the Irish language, eagerness for learning and patriotism. This can be viewed as 'a crystallization of various elements into a coherent structure of group identification, leading to the emergence of a national self-image of non-British Ireland.'[75] Consequently, it is expected that a portrayal of the Other would include opposite qualities, that is, the Other *prima facie* will be a wealthy, English-speaking character, a representative of the dominant class. Looking at the novel's villains, the best example of a clearly delineated image of the Other is Colonel Spiker — 'a tyrant' (*HL*: 65), who orders that the 'half-idiot' (*HL*: 56) and 'simpleton' (*HL*: 66) Ned Kenny be whipped a hundred times.

The hetero-image

Colonel Spiker's contempt for the Irish, mentioned at the beginning of this analysis, is almost caricatural. This character is portrayed in a one–sided manner, and his most noticeable trait is cruelty: it infiltrates his remarks and thoughts and is certainly detectable from descriptions of his conduct. In fact, the novel depicts only those sets of circumstances that highlight the examples of his cruel behaviour. Showing Colonel Spiker entirely in a bad light, with no indication of any positive attribute, the text reads: 'Men feared and hated him', 'he was ruthless with his enemies', 'if Spiker had a heart, then it is made of gunmetal' (*HL*: 58), to mention just

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[75] Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, p. 251.

a few unsparing comments. The exceeding superiority of this high-rank British officer over the Irish is another negative feature presented in *The Hungry Land*. Colonel Spiker arrives in the barracks in Castlebar to replace the late Colonel Richardson, a bloated, seventy-year old heavy drinker, and sets to bring to order the 29th Regiment 'at a convenient time', when the situation in Ireland is ready to flare up, and when 'precautions must be taken in time' in case the country becomes 'rebellious' (*HL*: 58). He begins his new post by punishing his predecessor's batman, Ned Kenny, for his disruption of a horse show, which was being watched by Colonel Spiker's friends. The Colonel does not conceal his satisfaction, when Ned is sentenced to a hundred 'lashes of the cat-o'-nine-tails' by the court martial: 'He took delight in the expression on Ned Kenny's face. The very fact that he vomited in fear would help secure the discipline he wanted.' (*HL*: 60) It is made known that other officers are 'stunned' by the harshness of the verdict in the barracks where they had no whipping 'for the past ten years', while Spiker is described as the one who feels 'deep satisfaction glowing inside him.' (*ibid*.) The juxtaposition of the Colonel to the rest of his military colleagues suggests that no one else in the regiment equals him in his ruthlessness. This is validated by another episode, when Colonel Spiker sees the coffin with Ned Kenny, whose death is staged by his friends. Spiker casts a look at the coffin that 'trundled across the barracks square' and continues shaving, with 'no great pity stirred within him.' (*HL*: 67) At that moment, his thoughts about Irish people are revealed to the reader: 'A plague of famine was necessary to thin them out; they could not be sustained by the land.' (*ibid.*) His pitiless reaction to Ned Kenny's fear, pain and death, and his cunning tactics of taking advantage of people unmistakably display the Otherness of this loyal servant of the Crown, and enemy of the Irish. It can be said that his Otherness is 'set against the antithetical normality of the spectator',[76] that is, the auto-image in this case, and is symbolic of a typical contemporary English colonist, which serves to accentuate the 'most glaring excesses of British colonialism in Ireland'.[77]

Colonel Spiker's cruelty generates a reciprocal response: to avenge the wrongs of Ned Kenny, Myles delivers a hundred strokes on the Colonel's back, counting them in Irish. The timing of this strengthens the idea that it is retaliation — it follows Spiker's conversation with another character, Henry Massingham, in which the former calls the Irish 'barbarians', 'hungry and subservient' and their land 'a country without leaders' (*HL*: 70). The ultimate manifestations of the Colonel's uncanny cruelty make him a grotesque figure, which makes his

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[76] Greg Dening, *Performances* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 123.
[77] Jack P. Greene, Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 255.

symbolic meaning even more pronounced, for 'all symbolism is intrinsically grotesque.'[78] Considering that this quality is 'usually attributed to objects, the strange conflation of disparate elements not found in nature',[79] its deployment in the creation of this character suggests that Colonel Spiker is a projection of the antipathy, felt by the Irish towards their Other, as he is perceived as less human due to his incomprehensible cruelty. In other words, the English negative perception of the Irish rebounds, and is transferred onto the Colonel, who represents the collective image of the English. Supportive of this view is Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr.'s explanation of a capacity of the grotesque:

> The grotesque is a projection of fascinated repulsion/attraction out into objects that consciousness cannot accommodate, because the object disturbs the sense of rational, natural categorization. In both cases, the reader/perceiver is shocked by a sudden estrangement from habitual perception, and in both cases the response is to suspend one's confidence in knowledge about the world, and to attempt to redefine the real in thought's relation to nature.[80]

The grotesqueness of the hetero-image in *The Hungry Land* provokes a sense of repulsion, indicating that this process of generating negative images is interchangeable. The Irish are aware of the English perception of them: 'Spiker like all his ilk thinks we are vermin, a peasant race with a barbaric language.' (*HL*: 68) Therefore, Myles' symbolic use of the Irish language to count the strokes on Colonel Spiker's back indicates the possibility of inverting the balance of power roles. This is yet another indication of a connection between power and culture, and of their contextual ambivalence — while Colonel Spiker's cruelty is condemned, in a different situation, cruelty is positively perceived and justified. This is evident from John Burke's approval of Myles's action in punishing Spiker, as it serves the cause of liberation: 'Myles understood military tactics and he was ruthless.' (*HL*: 72) Paraphrasing Csicsery-Ronay, it can be suggested that the process of 'othering', based on the trait of cruelty, uses 'a recuperative recoil, allowing us to see the disorderly and repulsive as a part' of the Other; and the construction of the Self lets us 'believe that we have established a better, more encompassing mental order, more resistant to the shock of the anomalous.'[81] Colonel Spiker is a symbolic figure of the Other, through which the novel calls attention to one of the most troubling periods in Ireland's history. His grotesqueness allows us to recognize that the essence of Otherness lies in cruelty,

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[78] Ruskin mentioned in Landow, George P., *The Victorian Web*, 'The Symbolical Grotesque (I). The Invented Grotesque — Carlyle's Grotesque Symbols and Symbolical Grotesques',
<http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/ej/2.html>.
[79] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., 'On the Grotesque in Science Fiction', *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Mar., 2002), pp. 71-99, p. 71.
[80] *Ibid*.
[81] Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., p.81.

unjust treatment and oppression. The construction of another fictional character, land agent Dick Kenrick, reinforces the notion that Otherness is determined by depictions of inhumane behaviour.

Kenrick's nicknames 'Bastard Dick', 'Dirty Dick', 'Crooked Nose', 'Brandy Belly', which make him 'cringe every time he recalled them' (*HL*: 82), speak for themselves, highlighting his unappealing qualities from the outset. Every scene, in which this land agent appears, reveals his moral or physical corruption. Kenrick is a dishonest person, and it is not without reason that one of the epithets used in his nickname is 'crooked'. He squanders rent payments, and adopts ruthless methods in trying to extract more money from the tenants. The agent raises the rents 'to such a degree that the tenants could not pay them' (*HL*: 82), and then evicts them from their homes, sentencing them to a dreaded existence in the workhouse, destroying in this way entire villages. Moreover, Kenrick physically abuses people — the reader learns that Liam Joyce has a weal on his face, which is 'the mark of Kenrick', and also 'his signature' on the back (*HL*: 181). The text proliferates with phrases indicating his cruelty, such as: Kenrick 'will not rest until he has cleared us out. […] Kenrick will bleach the land' (*HL*: 74), 'Kenrick's clearances', he 'who flattened the village' (*HL*: 143), 'Kenrick the leveller' (*HL*: 180). The Irish regard him as a merciless villain and are terrified of him: 'always there was the fear of the land agent, Kenrick.' (*HL*: 75)

Kenrick is a debaucher and uncouth drunkard, and his immorality is shown in the descriptions of his drinking habit and sexual promiscuity. It is mentioned several times that he drinks from the bottle and becomes intoxicated: 'his mind was dull with whiskey', 'raw whiskey always cleared his mind in the morning' (*HL*: 81). He engages in sex indiscriminately and uses his position to sleep with the maids for whom he arranges work in the landlord's house:

> He had to draw his thoughts together to remember who had been in the bed. It had been Bridie Farrell. Her father made up part of his evicting team. 'Well, what did Farrell expect when he asked me to give her a job? She was swinging her fat haunches before me.' (*HL*: 81)

In addition, Kenrick's cynicism towards women considerably taints his image. This is clear from a juxtaposition of his sexual conduct with his judgment of Eileen Horkan's relationship with Lord Lannagh. A consequence of Kenrick's conduct is venereal disease, tellingly described in the following sentences: 'Kenrick had picked up the pox from one the soldiers' prostitutes. He knew that he was blighted like the potato tubers: there was a rot in his testicles.' (*HL*: 250) This darkly humorous remark, connecting the potato blight with Kenrick's 'rot', alludes to the dependence between Ireland's plight and those who add to it. Yet, when speaking of Eileen, Kenrick exudes anger with her relationship with Edward Lannagh: 'So Miss Horkan is an

Englishman's whore!'; and, smacking 'his lips in satisfaction', he concludes that she meets with Lannagh for money: 'I bet she's humping to get it.' (*HL*: 331) Kenrick's depravity is perceived most clearly when compared to Liam Joyce, a cottier from Carrighrua:

> He was a man of exceptional strength and appearance. His eyes had a sharpness which showed a quick mind. He was fortunate that he had had a good basic education: he had attended a hedge school where he had picked up the rudiments of reading and writing, so he could read the papers which not only gave local news but also news of what was happening in the House of Commons in America. (*HL*: 73)

A number of positive features, assigned to Liam, such as a pleasant appearance, good luck, inquisitiveness and a modest but useful education, make him an exemplary representative of the auto-image. Moreover, Liam's intelligence is depicted as a natural and typically Irish trait: Joyce 'had accumulated both cunning and wisdom from the soil and the politics of the time.' (*HL*: 73) His goodness is furthermore enhanced by the descriptions of his love for his wife Oonagh, and the mention of their dignified relationship: 'He loved this woman who had shared his life. Their sexuality came easily to them out of the Irish phrases.' (*HL*: 75) All the attributes assigned to Liam are in a sharp contrast to Kenrick's portrayal, showing the land agent as an ultimately evil figure. The proliferation of passages describing his deplorable character traits and conduct leads to an assumption that he is more depraved than Colonel Spiker, supported by the remark that Kenrick is 'the most feared and hated man in Mayo' (*HL*: 107). Perhaps the difference between the novel's two villains can be highlighted by John Timmerman's reflection that 'the badness of a sin can be measured by the degree of harm inflicted upon others'.[82] The degree of harm, extorted by Kenrick, appears to be greater due to a larger amount of unflattering descriptions of his actions in the novel.

An interesting detail in the depiction of the land agent is his Irish origin. It is highlighted in the following remarks: 'The worst type of Irishman ever created. A sullen ox perfectly bred to serve his English master.' (*HL*: 146) Notably, this opinion about Kenrick is provided by the Englishman, Frederick Cavendish. Also, another Englishman, Edward Silken, expresses his own perception of the land agent: 'I was almost sick in his presence. […] He was repulsive.' (*ibid*.) The knowledge of Kenrick's nationality undermines the expectation of the Other to be English, and triggers the assumption that there is no interrelationship between national belonging and negative character traits. In this, *The Hungry Land* reveals a remarkable range of quality of images: while the rhetoric of national character serves to distinguish the Self against the Other, *de facto* the distinction between them largely depends on power relations. This echoes

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[82] John Timmerman, *Fatal Choice: A Pilgrim's Guide to Hell* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), p. 163.

Neumann's point that the rhetoric of national character is used 'not only to define themselves collectively against others, but also to influence political controversies at home',[83] which is particularly apposite in the time of the Irish struggle for independence from British rule. Indeed, the novel shows that it is not easy to distinguish between the Self and the Other. Whether Kenrick belongs to the hetero-image can be gleaned from the following quotation, which demonstrates that he himself realizes the truth of his position:

> Kenrick knew that he was despised both by the British and by the Irish. He was an in-between man, isolated from his own and never on a certain footing with the people of the town, and so he sought the company of the soldiers. (*HL*: 251)

Kenrick is perceived as the Other by the Irish group; and for the British group, he is also the Other. There are more characters that bear a resemblance to Kenrick. One of them is a young Irish man attending the historical society gathering, whom pub owner Molly Ward characterises as follows:

> Michael Kilcoyne. I would keep an eye on him. They go with every side, but they have the British mentality. His father is half merchant, half gombeen man. He is one of those you learn to despise early. (*HL*: 301)

The construction of the above-mentioned characters demonstrates that there is no clear-cut division between opposing groups of images, and brings to the fore such image qualities as layering, fluidity, liquidity and mobility, enhancing thus the sense of the novel's closeness to reality, in which Self/Other relations are never unambiguous or unchanging. These qualities have a contemporary relevance to the problem of stereotypes and stereotyping 'in a world perceived to be increasingly "disorganised" and "complex"',[84] because they reflect social and cultural processes. Zygmunt Bauman suggests that 'fluidity' or 'liquidity' are 'fitting metaphors when we wish to grasp the nature of the present, in many ways novel, phase in the history of modernity'.[85] His insight encourages the thought that assigning specific traits to people and categorizing them on the basis of their national belonging is highly subjective.

The ambiguity of Dick Kenrick's standing prompts an enquiry into the array of the novel's characters, whose ambivalent characteristics hinder their identification with the Self or the Other. Keith McCloy suggests that 'ambiguity can arise through a lack of knowledge, but it can also arise through the difficulty of making decisions based on complex inter-

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[83] Neumann, p. 275.
[84] Mimi Sheller in 'The Mechanisms of Mobility and Liquidity: Re-thinking the Movement in Social Movements', published by Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, LA1 4YN, UK, <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/sheller-mechanisms-of-mobility-and-liquidity.pdf>, p. 1.
[85] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge, UK, Malden, MA: Polity, 2000), p. 2.

relationships',[86] and his point can be applied to an analysis of images, too. It is precisely the complexity of the long-term Anglo-Irish conflicting relations that has resulted in the entanglement of the identity elements on the one hand, and the emphasis on their separateness on the other; while a lack of understanding of the processes that have led to these, propels the creation and dissemination of stereotypical perceptions. A clear example of the refutation of stereotype is comprised in the conversation between Frederick Cavendish and Edward Silken:

> 'But *somebody* must have compassion somewhere!'
> 'The Quakers have set up soup kitchens in Castle Street.
> But a rumour has got about that they will have to change their religion for a bowl of soup.' Cavendish was exasperated.
> 'And that keeps them from eating Quakers food?'
> 'Yes. To change one's religion is to mark yourself with the mark of Cain. You are cursed in the hereafter.'
> 'And what of the Quakers?'
> 'I have spoken to these people. They only wish to do good. Their charity is direct and without any obligations.' (*HL*: 352)

The Quakers' sympathetic attitude towards the starving Irish substantiates the idea that Otherness cannot be firmly associated with any group. Once the templates of the images of the Self and the Other in *The Hungry Land* have been adopted, it becomes manifest that most of its characters are constructs of complex intermixed identities, incorporating 'ingredients capable of interpenetrating and mingling'[87] and showing 'a combination of both closeness and autonomy.'[88] This is reflected in the depictions of differences both between and within the groups' images. To identify and explain them, it is necessary to discuss the concept of hybrid identity.

Hybridity of images

Defining identity as 'a set of meanings about oneself (content)', and 'a process which incorporates identifying oneself and being recognised by others', Eleni Andreouli notes that it can be seen 'as embedded in social relations and as dynamic, contextual and relational.'[89] In *The Hungry Land*, the characters are situated in the contemporary Anglo-Irish colonial context,

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[86] Keith R. McCloy, *Resource Management Information Systems* (Boca Raton London New York: CRC Press, 1995), p. 443.
[87] Leerssen, 'Identity/ Alterity/ Hybridity' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 341.
[88] Claudia Manzi, Vivian L. Vignoles, Camillo Regalia and Eugenia Scabini, 'Cohesion and Enmeshment Revisited: Differentiation, Identity, and Well-Being in Two European Cultures', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 68, No.3, (Aug., 2006), pp. 673-689, p. 674.
[89] Eleni Andreouli, 'Identity, Positioning and Self-Other Relations', *Papers on Social Representations*, Volume 19, pp. 14.1-14.13, p. 14.1.

with the 'ongoing English-Irish antagonisms surrounding religion, ethnicity, culture and land — all manner of conflicts that persisted across the decades',[90] and their behaviour and aspirations reflect its societal norms and social developments. From the novel's presentation of 19th century Anglo-Irish society, it is clear that one of its characteristic features is a mixture of two identities: the Irish and the English. Forming a 'contextual entity that is partially fluid and partially solid',[91] it reflects the nature of social relations, and the complex ways in which people or groups of people interacted during the colonial period. Moynahan observes physical proximity of Britain, her dominance over all Irish classes, the religious difference between most of those who own and those who work the land and the steep disproportion of numbers between native majority and settler minority as some of distinctive aspects of the Anglo-Irish situation.[92] The examination of the onset of the process of hybridization of Irish identity, which goes back to the 12th century Norman invasions, is too extensive to be addressed within this imagological analysis. Yet, for the understanding of its complexity, and the linkage between literary images and power, some elements need to be examined.

Investigating the collapse of the Munster plantation in 1598, Joan Redmond's study touches upon the extent of English control of Ireland. Redmond strengthens her points by using Nicholas Canny's outlooks from his *Making Ireland British* to remind us of the English crown's plan 'to attract high-status, wealthy English as "undertakers"', with a further agenda to establish 'firm English control of the province militarily'.[93] The mention of the divergence from this agenda reveals a strategy in which control was achieved:

> where it departed from previous English settlement schemes was in its aim to effect wider cultural change, particularly through the examples of English civil living: the planners envisioned gradual civilizing of the Irish through contact and eventual copying of the (evidently superior) English way of life, including the adoption of English law and customs, among other things.[94]

By the time of An Gorta Mór, such policies had produced their effects and added to the process of hybridization. The result of 'the English way of life', forced upon the Irish, was the desire of some of them to be associated with the English, who behaved and were regarded by some Irish as superior. Redmond points out that 'alongside adopting English customs, the renouncing of

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[90] Joan Redmond, 'Memories of violence and New English identities in early modern Ireland', *Wiley Online Library*, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-2281.12143/full>, p. 729.
[91] Toni Sandset, 'Hybrid Identity: Dictionaries, Identities and "Are we all hybrids"?',
<https://newnarratives.wordpress.com/issue-1-hybrid-identity/some-thoughts-on-hybrid-identity/>.
[92] Moynahan, p. 18.
[93] Nicholas Canny mentioned by Joan Redmond, 'Memories of violence and New English identities in early modern Ireland', *Wiley Online Library*, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-2281.12143/full>, p. 710.
[94] *Ibid.*

Irish ones [...] was key.'[95] The 'civilizing' mission of the English, which in fact spawned from the desire for power and an aim to retain it, calls to mind a change in the Irish perception of perspectives on their heritage that, as Shane Nagle explains, can range from 'overly eager to indifference, and even to rejection of Irish roots in favour of a British or English identity'.[96] In *The Silent People*, Una's rejection of her English identity demonstrated that apostasy can also take the opposite direction.[97] An indication of the closeness between 'British' and 'English' is important, for it ispecifies that even though the complex construct known as the British Empire comprises four nations, the English are regarded as 'the linchpin of the entire structure'.[98] Nagle's mention of a 'conscious choice'[99] prompts reflection on the reasons leading to a change of identity. John Edwards rightly notes that 'the essence of identity is similarity: things that are identical are the same, after all, and the word stems from the Latin *idem*'.[100] However, in combination with the term 'hybrid', it presupposes distinctions and dissimilarities. In *The Hungry Land*, the hybrid property is allotted at personal and collective levels, representing individual characters and collective character sets. Frederick Cavendish, Myles, Dick Kenrick, Gráinne and Michael Barrett constitute the first group, while the second one comprises merchants, soldiers, and the police.

On an individual level, each character's choice of identity is presented as a unique exploration. The portrayal of the novel's most vibrant character, Gráinne Barrett, includes some stereotypical attributes that are often associated with Irishness, indicating the author's 'awareness of the wild Irish girl as a literary construction.'[101] Gráinne is a strong, open-minded and rebellious young woman, with 'the wild Barrett anger and independence' (*HL*: 18). Discussing stereotypical presentations of Irish girls in her analysis of L. T. Meade's work, Susan Cahill mentions certain characteristics, which mirror Mullen's character. Cahill notes that Irish girls

> owe much to late-nineteenth-century stereotypes of Irishness, particularly Matthew Arnold's sentimental feminine Celt and the exaggerated brogue of stage Irishry. They are often wild, rebellious, frank in speech, unruly in manners and overemotional…[102]

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[95] Redmond, *ibid.*, footnote 11.
[96] Shane Nagle, 'Am I Irish or British? Or something in between?', *The Irish Times*, April 14, 2014, <http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/generationemigration/2014/04/14/am-i-irish-or-british-or-something-in-between/>.
[97] See 'Questions of Religion' in the analysis of *The Silent People*, p. 104 of this thesis.
[98] Krishan Kumar, 'Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (Oct., 2000), pp. 575-608, p. 576.
[99] *Ibid*.
[100] John Edwards, *Language and Identity: An introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 20.
[101] Susan Cahill, '12 Where Are the Irish Girls?: Girlhood, Irishness, and LT Meade', *Berghahn Books* (2016), pp. 212-227, p. 220.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

Indeed, the image of the Irish as 'wild and unruly'[103] is presented in many works of fiction with reference to the Irish national character. In addition, Gráinne's allegedly typical Irish looks — a 'wild red shock of hair' (*HL*: 19)[104] strengthen the widespread 'stereotypes of Irishness in the popular imagination'.[105] Gráinne bears a striking resemblance to Una from *The Silent People*, not least due to the features, often assigned to literary characters representing the Irish. Also, both characters come from Anglo-Irish families, and their lives are shaped by their mothers' deaths. Una takes her identity from her Irish mother, who taught her the Catholic faith and Irish traditions. While Una nurtures warm and positive memories of her late parent, Gráinne's perception of her mother, an English lady, is that of 'always a shadowy figure in her life' (*HL*: 20), mainly because she was an obstacle to the girl's identification with her Irishness. Gráinne remembers her mother's objection that her daughter 'should be given free access to the servants' quarters where she would only learn a barbaric tongue and all the superstitions of the Celtic race.' (*HL*: 21) The girl follows in the steps of her Irish father: 'In nature and temperament Gráinne Barrett was very close to her father, and he was proud both of her beauty and of her free strong character.' (*HL*: 20) Interestingly, Gráinne's hybridity is not two-fold but multi-layered, as her identity is influenced also by some French elements that she takes from her teacher in the Convent, a French nun. Validated by Frederick Cavendish's remark that she 'belongs easily in three cultures. She has a dignity that you could never acquire.' (*HL*: 12), Gráinne's hybridity conveys positive meaning, indicating that one's national belonging is not the decisive factor of the Self/Other divide in the novel. However, because Gráinne chooses to be Irish, and her image imbues the best qualities ascribed to the Irish, her choice enhances the perception of the Irish in *The Hungry Land*. This point is clear from numerous passages throughout the text:

> She had picked up the language and the culture of the people. Her nurse, Mrs Cassidy, was an Irish-speaker, like all other servants. (*HL*: 20)

> Gráinne moved freely among small two-roomed houses chattering with the people. Here she discovered a joyful chaos and tolerance which she would not discover at the great house or from the Protestant lady who taught her good behaviour and elementary music on the piano. (*HL*: 21)

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[103] Elmer Andrews, 'Aesthetics, Politics and Identity: Lady Morgan's "The Wild Irish Girl"', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Special Interdisciplinary Number (Dec., 1987), pp. 7-19, p. 10.

[104] References to red hair as a stereotypical Irish feature can be found, for instance, in Dale Knobel's exhaustive study of a composite image of 'Paddy stereotype' in his *Paddy and the Republic*. This author and his book are mentioned by Anna Engle in 'Depictions of the Irish in Frank Webb's "The Garies and Their Friends" and Frances E. W. Harper's "Trial and Triumph"', *MELUS*, Vol. 26, No. 1, *Varieties of the Ethnic Experience* (Spring, 2001), pp. 151-171, p. 152.

[105] Cahill, p. 216.

> She is one of our own. She speaks the tongue and knows our ways. Her ancestor was queen of the islands and had many ships under her command. (*HL*: 49)

> Her father wished to make her a lady after the English manner, but she was always a lady after the Irish manner. (*HL*: 49)

The Irish image is given positive connotations of independence, cheerfulness, and 'moral forthrightness'[106] in many other episodes, which deepens the sense that the Irish are unjustly oppressed.

Another aspect that closely links Gráinne with the Irish auto-image is her resemblance to the pirate queen of Connacht, Grace O'Malley (sometimes known as Gráinne NíMáille or Gráinne Mhaol). The novel's 'wild sea-woman' (*HL*: 19), as Gráinne's father jokingly calls his daughter, mirrors her legendary fellow countrywoman in her beauty, fearlessness, striving for independence, and love of the sea. A parallel between O'Malley and Michael Barrett's daughter is seen from Theresa Denise Murray's description of the former:

> She was an extraordinary woman who lived, loved, fought and survived during a pivotal period of Irish history that saw the collapse of the Gaelic order and the ruination of Ireland's ruling élite.[107]

O'Malley's 'mythical status'[108] is suggestive of Gráinne Barrett's extraordinariness, which serves to reinforce the reader's favourable perception of her. Her closeness to the legend implies that she, too, is part of Ireland's history. In this way, just as legends — 'oral narrations that pass from person to person through time',[109] Irish virtues are shown to pass from generation to generation. It is necessary to observe that the motif of the cultivation of virtues of national character and their intergenerational transmission is another important aspect deployed in the construction of the positive image of the Self in famine fiction. Bearing in mind that 'legends can also explain patriotic symbols in a culture',[110] Gráinne's identification with her ancestor reveals the role of cultural elements in image construction. This identification is highlighted by her use of the Irish language that acquires a symbolic meaning in the characters' struggle for Ireland's independence from British rule:

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[106] Leerssen in Beller and Leerssen, p. 343.

[107] Theresa Denise Murray, 'Gráinne Mhaol, Pirate Queen of Connacht: Behind the Legend', *History Ireland*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Mar. - Apr., 2005), pp. 16-20, p. 16.

[108] *Ibid*.

[109] Mónica Rodríguez, 'Ideas: Using Legends in the Spanish Classroom', *Hispania*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (Dec., 2004), pp.784-787, p. 784.

[110] *Ibid*., p. 785.

> She had been compared with her ancestor the sea Queen Grace O'Malley. Yet when she talked to him in Irish, so native was her accent that she concealed her English upbringing. (*HL*: 226)

Gráinne's similarity to the queen of the sea elevates the positive perception of the Self. This technique reminds us of *The Silent People*, in which the elevation of the Irish auto-image is provided by Una's semblance to Mary Mother of God. Similar to Grace O'Malley, Gráinne Barrett also lives during an important time in Irish history and fights for Ireland's independence. Therefore, readers may surmise that, having followed in O'Malley's steps — 'a warrior who would come over the sea with Irish soldiers to rout the English',[111] she will see the end of British rule in Ireland. Cahill suggests that 'through the figure of the Irish girl […] an interrogation of both the colonial imagination (the wild Irish girl who embodies frivolous girlhood) and the nationalist masculinist narrative of early twentieth-century Irish culture'[112] is made. Showing 'the complex ways, in which nationality and popular fiction intertwined',[113] her view is fitting to an investigation of the male characters' feelings about their identity.

Michael Barrett's feelings about his own identity reveal an uncertainty, which is commented upon by his friend, Frederick Cavendish: 'You are complex in mind and emotion, Michael Barrett, never certain where your allegiance lies.' (*HL*: 16) Barrett's awareness of his hybridity is perceptible from his thoughts about his forebears: 'there was more than salt in their blood. The blood had become mixed, and their allegiances were too many things.' (*HL*: 13) Indeed, he is proud of his diversified ancestry:

> We are Irish and Spanish and English, Protestant and Catholic' […]. It is as important to have a Barrett in the House of Commons, in France and in Spain as to have one on the sea. (*ibid*.)

Relevant to the view that cultural hybridization refers to 'the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices',[114] Barrett's statement shows his concern about his social position. To secure his status and wealth, the prosperous landowner and successful businessman adopts English norms and identity, distancing himself from those ancestors, whose unappealing qualities may be a threat to his position. Their description is highly unflattering:

> the penurious hard-working squireens, relics from the eighteenth century. They were a bastard race with their tally-women, their wild drinking parties, their domestic filth and

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[111] Theresa Denise Murray, p. 16.
[112] Cahill, p. 223.
[113] *Ibid*., pp. 216-217.
[114] Pieterse quoted in Keri E. Iyall Smith and Patricia Leavy, eds., *Hybrid Identities. Theoretical and Empirical Examinations* (Leiden and Boston: Brill NV, 2008), p. 3.

their brawls. They were never invited to his house or his table; the old lusts, irrational as the Irish part of his mind, were now dead… (*HL*: 14)

This positioning confirms that, being a matter of personal choice, hybrid identity is rooted in power relations. Yet such a fragmentation of Barrett's identity, which can be regaded as an 'exile' from himself,[115] confirms that one's identity is an unsettled construct that can be reformed and influenced by national, ethnic, religious considerations, or its other constituents. Memmi points to the impossibility of envisaging people's choices: 'We don't actually know what man is, or just what is essential to him'.[116] The ambivalence of one's identification and the fluidity of images expressed by hybridity are wittily indicated by a remark on the pub owner Molly Ward's 'foul tongue':

> She could swear both in Irish and in English, and only soldiers and the lower classes frequented her bar. Her outward vulgarity, however, belied the fact that Molly Ward was a highly intelligent woman. […] she played many parts and knew more of what was happening in the town than the constabulary. (*HL*: 159)

The binary opposition between the Self and the Other is blurred by Molly's prowess to use two languages and her ability to behave in a lowly or well-becoming manner, tailoring either to her needs, which endorses the point that one can choose what suits best. In a time of turmoil, some of them can trigger a re-evaluation of one's identification with a group. This is highlighted in John Burke's reflection on Barrett's strong connection with his Irish heritage:

> You might have all these mixtures, Michael Barrett, and you might have the polish of the English gentry, but in your blood is the sea, and your mind and your tongue are Irish. (*HL*: 13)

Barrett forsakes his Irishness to be somebody he is not. Yet during the famine, he oscillates towards the oppressed Irish. His reinstatement of identity brings to mind Memmi's views on the significance of one's lineage: "You know, one never completely gets rid of one's origins" [...]. "You never completely escape your parents".[117] *The Hungry Land*'s emphasis on the importance of national belonging echoes von Mecklenburg's confession that he cannot stop being German, depicted in Motyl's *Sweet Snow*. Bhabha's observation that cultural hybridities 'emerge in moments of historical transformation'[118] is affirmed in the image construction in *The Hungry Land*, whose characters' choice of identity is heavily influenced by significant moments

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[115] Irele in Irina Dzero, 'Meanings of Hybridity in Aimé Césaire's Discours sur le colonialisme', *The French Review*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (October 2011), pp. 102-114, p. 104.
[116] Memmi, pp. 8-9.
[117] Memmi quoted by Lara Marlowe, 'Chronicler of the conflicts of colony', *The Irish Times*, March 27, 2004, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/chronicler-of-the-conflicts-of-colony-1.1137266>.
[118] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 1994), p. 3.

in history. As can be seen, the mechanisms that activate one's choice cannot be presaged, or, as Ricca Edmondson puts it, 'the formation of identity cannot be predicted or controlled.'[119] In Mullen's novel, while Barrett's identity is clearly affected by his national belonging, other characters' nationalities do not guarantee predictability of their choices of identity.

Representative of the higher social class, 'educated in England' and 'well bred' Englishman Frederick Cavendish is Michael Barrett's best friend (*HL*: 82). Having arrived in Castlebar from England in 1820, this Protestant, 'known to have aristocratic connections', sets up the *Connaught Telegraph*, in which he publishes his 'merciless and often libellous' editorials about the absentee landlords (*HL*: 17). For his activity, Cavendish was even imprisoned twice in Castlebar gaol. His conscious disconnection from his class, shown in a conversation, in which Barrett points out his friend's distinction from the Irish, presents his choice of identity as a politicized issue:

> 'But you are British. You belong to the British earth.'
> 'I do not. I belong in Revolutionary France. I have always preached revolution.' (*HL*: 15)

Cavendish's rejection of his British identity, expressed by his ardent support of the Irish in their struggle against British rule, positions him in the group of hybrid images. Even though Barrett's choice of identity has, in the first place, materialistic purposes, unlike Cavendish's *raison-d'-être*, manifested in an endeavour for justice and equity, these two characters' hybridity has similar results: it brings out their humanity, and strengthens their sympathetic attitudes and empathic identifications with those who suffer from oppression, injustice and hunger. The hybrid nature of the novel's characters, therefore, adds to our understanding that a distinction between the Self and the Other lies in the presence or absence of humanity.

Reflecting on the characters' choices, the question, then, arises as to what makes Englishman Cavendish draw towards the Irish self-image, Michael Barrett rediscover his Irishness, and Irishman Kenrick, discussed earlier in this part of the thesis, deviate towards the Other. Clearly, hybridity can represent opposing features, and therefore, different meanings produced by hybridity should be considered. Irina Dzero explains the development of the contrary meanings brought about by hybridity:

> In a general and neutral sense, hybridity designates the mutual influence and interpenetration of two cultures brought into contact through colonization. This cross-cultural exchange destabilizes the notion of identity as uniform and consistent. For partisans and critics of hybridity, this fact has positive or negative implications. Some argue that hybridity weakens personal identity [...]. Hall calls hybridity "the site of a

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[119] Ricca Edmondson, ed., *The political context of collective action. Power, argumentation and democracy* (London/New York: Routledge 1998), p. 67.

profound splitting and doubling" [...] Bhabha refers to this identitarian ambivalence as: "not Self and Other but the otherness of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity" [...].[120]

In *The Hungry Land*, it can be seen that hybridity can weaken or empower the images represented. While the self-image benefits from Barrett's identity restitution, Cavendish's rejection of his British identity suggests a deficiency of the Other. Yet, essentially hybridity highlights the liquidity of images, conveying both positive and negative meanings. This point is evident from the portrayals of the individual characters and strengthened by the collective sets of hybrid images. This is how Fallon, one of Kenrick's men, characterizes the police: 'black well-fed bastards', 'the Queen's men they are, castrated Irishmen every one of them' (*HL*: 88). Irish soldiers serving the English crown are depicted with a note of understanding: 'They are neither English nor Irish, [...], but royal fodder marked to march into battle at the behest of the Queen.' (*HL*: 160) Notably, the reasons for the soldiers staying in the British army are economic:

> The boys would have deserted, but where would they go? They have signed up for the duration and they feel that the famine is about to strike. Better be up in the barracks than out in a scut of a shelter. (*HL*: 167)

This quotation provides an explanation for such a choice, and in this way, the negative meaning of those who serve the enemy is toned down. Another group of hybrid characters are merchants, whose Otherness stems from their wealth. They are mentioned in an ultimately negative light throughout the novel: as 'a plague upon the backs of the people', and those who 'will bleed every penny from the peasantry' (*HL*: 270). Michael Barrett knows them well, as he is acquainted with the system, they are part of:

> He was familiar with the merchant class. They followed the English customs, spoke like Englishmen, had their daughters play pianos, and sent them on visits to London, the centre of the Empire. They lived in the towns, kept their own company and looked upon the peasants as vermin. (*ibid.*)

In the context of the impoverishment and oppression of the Irish, this characteristic is manifest of the damaging British system. From Myles' reflection, the merchants' hybridity comes into view as its lynchpin: 'The power was in the towns; the middle class belonged to the British culture, and it gave them cohesion.' (*HL*: 300) The interconnectedness of power and identity, emanating from this quotation, corroborates the Foucaldian tenet extended by Denis Sindic that

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[120] Dzero, p. 104.

'there is no identity without power — and the reverse could also be advocated.'[121] In *The Hungry Land*, the merchants' position makes them tilt towards the Other, bringing to our attention that most of the novel's characters belonging to this group of images are not English. Their efforts to achieve financial security and wealth show that at the core of the formation of their Otherness lie economic reasons:

> The landlords' agents and the gombeen men grew strong. They were middlemen, rapacious and cruel, and the peasants trembled at their names, for they held power over life and death. They could raise the rents at a whim; they could destroy the cabins and throw the peasants on to the roads. (*HL*: 9)

Memmi also refers to the economic advantages of colonialism: 'the idea of privilege is at the heart of the colonial relationship — and that privilege is undoubtedly economic.'[122] With the consideration that identity is 'primarily a psychological construct' whereas power is 'primarily a political concept',[123] the merchants' position shows the ways in which psychology of identity interacts with the political dynamics of power.

Hybridity of the images in this Irish novel parallels the theme of disintegration of the Ukrainian peasantry in Samchuk's *Maria*. However, while Ukrainian disintegration conveys the meaning of explicit despair, in the Irish context, hybridity does not have an inherently negative connotation. In a way, it brings promise and evokes a hope of survival. This is particularly palpable from the presentation of the protagonists, Myles and Gráinne. The two young people are brought together by their Irish identity that evolves into patriotism. They are contrasted to another couple, Eileen Horkan and Edward Lannagh, whose romantic affair, based on physical attraction, does not stand the test of time. During An Gorta Mór, Eileen cannot 'enjoy a selfish happiness' (*HL*: 262) with the man whom she sees as 'part of the cause of the starvation which now spread deeper into the valleys and the villages' (*HL*: 259). Eileen and Edward Lannagh are set apart by their identities: Eileen is proud of her Irish ancestry and Lannagh explicitly abhors the Irish. Lannagh's thoughts on the inferiority of the Irish race were provided earlier in this chapter.[124] Yet, likewise the aspect touched upon in *The Silent People*, when, having developed a friendly relationship with Wilcocks, Dualta realizes that the Other can be likeable, there is a sense that it is possible for Lannagh, too, to develop acceptance of the Other. At the intersection of two cultures in *The Hungry Land* is a child to be born to Eileen and Lannagh. Revealing

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[121] Denis Sindic, Manuela Barreto and Rui Costa-Lopes, *Power and Identity* (London and New York: Psychology Press, 2015), p. 2.
[122] Memmi, p. 8.
[123] *Ibid.*
[124] See p. 195.

Ireland as 'a confused and devastated place, suspended between two languages', [125] the meanings produced by hybridity can both encourage and dishearten. The mention of the child, then, can be seen as symbolic of the Anglo-Irish position that

> emerges from the imaginary fusion between two contradictory and hostile cultural traditions. The Anglo-Irish national self-image partakes in both Gaelic- and English-oriented viewpoints and merges them into an intermediary Irish hybrid.[126]

Readers can hypothesize on what will prevail in the child's moulding in the future, Irish or English identity. From Eileen and Lannagh's exchange, one surmises that Lannagh is prepared to love his child despite its Irish roots.

> 'This child will be both Irish and English. It will carry the strains of two races in its blood.'
> 'It will have a double advantage, then!' (*HL*: 265)

It is likely that by 'advantage' Lannagh means a better social position and financial stability, which he promises to Eileen because she is the mother of his child. Her understanding of the 'strains' suggests that she sees identity as 'not so much a possession as a way of being in the world'. [127] Eileen's rejection of Lannagh's intent to keep her as a mistress in England demonstrates that sharing the fate of her race is more important to her than this relationship, with its potential for personal happiness and security. In this way, highlighting the idea of continuity, solidarity and the strength of Irish identity, the spiritual preponderance of the auto-image is established. Importantly, the presentation of the relationship between Eilleen Horkin and Edward Lannagh, and the mention of their child suggest that there are no simple distinctions, as there will be none in the future, between the Self and the Other. Thinking of hybridity as a position which 'can take shape of cross-cultural stereotyping: the dynamics of adoption and exchange rather than mutual polarization and "othering"'[128] allows for a better understanding of the nature and development of hybrid identities, concurrently increasing our awareness of human fallibility and the flaws of black-and-white thinking.

Reflecting on the novel's images, it is possible to regard Otherness as a social construct, for the process of 'othering' entails class divisions and often ignites social conflicts. This process results from humankind's desire for domination, which 'far from being alien to human psychology, is common in human beings.'[129] The desire to dominate others triggers oppression

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[125] Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland,* p. 48.
[126] Joep Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 383.
[127] *Ibid.*,p. 164.
[128] *Ibid.,* p. 382.
[129] Jean-Jacques Rousseau's point, explained by Frederick Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 130.

and unjust treatment and is obtained through violence. This is shown in *The Hungry Land*'s construction of its complex auto-, hetero-, and hybrid images that are products of their contemporary time period and its socio-political context. These images feed into portrayals of the traumatic experiences of the Great Famine, presenting it as a result of British colonial rule. The awareness that 'living conditions in Ireland were the breeding ground for the Famine', allows O'Sullivan to conclude that An Gorta Mór is 'best understood as a hundred-year event rather than a seven-year one — an outcome of systematic neglect by government.'[130]

The silence of famine

Similarly to the previously discussed works of fiction by Samchuk, Macken and Motyl, the concept of silence is used to depict the famine's damaging effects in Mullen's literary work. In his analysis of the causes of An Gorta Mór through the prism of political economy, Tadhg Foley makes an interesting observation that silence can be aggressive:

> The Famine subjected the Irish poor to [...] "silent violence" and [...] "slow violence", killing them softly, discursively, and seemingly without human agency.'[131]

Mullen presents the horrors of hunger incorporating silence within such elements as space, disgust, poverty, death, immigration, and fear. Their literary amalgam brings a fuller picture of An Gorta Mór to readers' attention. Silence deepens the bare desperation of the novel's spaces. Emptiness and lifelessness brought about by the famine, whether set in large terrains or in small areas, become more pronounced when enveloped in silence:

> Whole villages were deserted. The wind blew through the small rooms and began its subtle work of destruction. There was silence over the land and no animal moved across the snow-covered fields. They had been killed to provide meat. Even the rats were hungry: the final predators were dying. (*HL*: 419)

In this passage, the spatial void is highlighted by the absence of inhabitants, followed by the mention of the rat, creating a sense of disgust. This sensation is strengthened by another image of predators in the last sentence, which also produces the feeling of fear by means of the word 'final', signalling an apocalyptic end. In this mix of images and perceptions, *The Hungry Land* is strikingly similar to *Sweet Snow*, in which the same techniques are deployed in Motyl's accounts of the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine. At the same time, *The Hungry Land*'s silence approximates it to the excruciating soundlessness conveyed in the descriptions of the

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[130] O'Sullivan, *The Tombs of a Departed Race: Illustrations of Ireland's Great Hunger*, p. 6.
[131] Michael Watts and Rob Nixon quoted by Tadhg Foley in *Death by Discourse? Political Economy and the Great Irish Famine* (*Irish Famine* (Hamden, CT: Quinnipiac University Press, 2016), p. 40.

Holodomor in *Maria*. Silence participates in the descriptions of the physical and emotional states of the poor, who are dying from cold and starvation:

> The villages fell strangely silent. Neighbours said their last goodbyes and went indoors. Then the families lay huddled together close to the fire. One by one they died, and as they died they were pushed aside. They had no protective heat left in their bodies. When they began to putrefy the others wished that death would come quickly. During the final days of death there was no fire on the hearthstone. Some had a strange exultation of mind before they died, but most died mutely, their minds empty of images. (*HL*: 359)

Silence is inseparable from death and suffering. Spreading out from the villages and people's homes, it accompanies the dead to their final resting places: 'The dead were no longer counted outside the workhouse. They were buried without blessing or decorum in long narrow graves.' (*HL*: 419) The images of the famine victims in *The Hungry Land* remind us yet again of *Sweet Snow*, with its many sorrowful passages detailing the perished Ukrainian peasants.

That silence and fear are closely connected is shown by the disturbing soundlessness, which strikes Michael Barrett's consciousness, when he reflects on the fate of his native land on his deathbed: 'It will be only a wasteland like Raleigh's Munster. There will be no voices. They will perish from the earth, and their bones will bleach the sides of the roads.' (*HL*: 277) Barrett's trepidation about the end of Ireland and not his own death also reinforces the perception that devotion to their native land is ingrained in the Irish national character.

Fear of poverty and starvation is looming over the fields and peasants' huts, and rises above John Burke's ship with immigrants, for whom the sea journey to America is filled with risks and insecurity. Even the strongest passengers are not immune to this distressing sensation: during a big storm, Gráinne 'tasted fear in her mouth, like fine dust' (*HL*: 232-3). In the depictions of the sea journey, the representations of fear and disgust are particularly pronounced, suggesting a parallel between *The Hungry Land* and *Sweet Snow* once more. The hardships, which the immigrants encounter on their way to America, are described with such words as 'vomit', 'stench', 'latrines' (*HL*: 218), 'filth' (*HL*: 222), 'the stench of bodies' (*HL*: 231), creating repulsive images in the reader's imagination:

> The stench of their vomit filled the cabin. (*HL*: 218)

> He knew that many of them would already be sick and that within two days the ship would reek of vomit and excrement. (*HL*: 220)

> He could only recall [...]; the screech of the children in the confused world of the small cabin and the groaning of the old as they vomited and soiled themselves in fear. (*HL*: 235)

> He retched several times on the floor, and became nauseated by his own vomit. (*HL*: 236)

It can be seen that the images associated with disgust are increasingly intensified. The response of disgust develops from Michael Barrett's notice of 'the fetid smell of decay everywhere; the fields were black with rot' (*HL*: 271) to his discovery of 'the first direct effect of the famine' awhile later:

> In a ditch at the side of the road he found an old man dying. His body was fleshless, his eyes deep and lustrous and looking madly from black sockets. He looked very old. Starvation had tightened the flesh about his forehead and his teeth. (*HL*: 272)

The text draws upon disgust also in other episodes, with no apparent connection to famine. For instance, the Irish Bar in New York, situated in 'the sinful entrails of the city', is known for its 'dosshouses and prostitution' (*HL*: 242). The description of the place entails the use of such unpleasant epithets as 'drunken women, with careless hair and filthy clothes', 'the air stale with smoke and spit and the heat of unwashed bodies' (*ibid*.). This approach allows the writer to channel the way of expression of disgust, by indicating its different stages: from least to greatest, especially that juxtaposition, as our previous analyses show, is characteristic to famine fiction. Following this, the most powerful images evoking disgust are found in the portrayals of the starving and dying poor, when, as Eileen Horkin observes, 'the stench of death was in her nostrils' (*HL*: 267). Having provided the reader with numerous heart-rending passages depicting the effects of famine, the climactic stage of the manifestation of disgust is most effectively shown in the scene, which Kate Brady encounters in a village enveloped in hunger:

> The mother had died. The child, no more than a year old and purple with cold, was feeding off a dead nipple. She took him and carried him away from the village. The smell of corrupting flesh filled the air and seemed to cling to the nostrils. Fifteen people had died in fifteen weeks, and the others had lost interest in living. They lay on the floors and let hunger eat the substance of their bodies. They grew skeletal and followed each other quickly to death. (*HL*: 315)

The striking similarity of this passage with the descriptions of the corpses of perished peasants from *Sweet Snow* demonstrates that language and images of Ireland's and Ukraine's famines are similar. Supporting this point is the way in which an emphasis on the great numbers of famine victims in all four novels is made. There is a clear parallel between the descriptions of those starved to death in *The Hungry Land* and in *Maria*. In fact, from the following quotations, one cannot be certain if they refer to An Gorta Móror or the Holodomor:

> The names of the first victims were recorded, but by winter nobody remembered any more. (*HL*: 273)

> Every night he could hear the human wail outside the walls, sharp and shrill. In the morning many would be dead, their bodies rigid with frost. The grave-diggers would collect them and bring them to the mass graves where, unnamed and uncatalogued, they were buried. (*HL*: 356)

The absence of victims' names points to the sheer scale of the tragedy. However, the aspect of namelessness is used not only in relation to the dead; it is extended to the living, too. In those parts depicting the fear of famine, Mullen's novel echoes those passages in *Maria*, in which Samchuk's characters reflect that death from starvation is the worst way to die. A farmer in *The Hungry Land*, whose name is not given, articulates his dread: 'What will we do in a month's time when the final potato has rotted and we are starving? Eat grass, is it? Give me a gun, sir, and I'll die standing up rather than lie down and starve.' (*HL*: 255) Another nameless character's protest is generated by fear of death by starvation: 'Better to rebel than to starve.' (*HL*: 299) This connection with *Maria*, whose protagonists also express a view that death from a bullet is an easier way to end one's life, as well as these characters' anonymity, make them symbolic figures of the peasantry in general; and their feelings, therefore, become representative of social perceptions. In this way, a multitude of people who share the same experiences and emotions is highlighted.

While the namelessness of the victims is most effectively deployed in *The Hungry Land* and *Sweet Snow*, there is an element of analogy found in all four novels: they structure their plots and construct their characters in such a way as to identify those responsible for their plight. Numerous references to London and Moscow point to Ireland's and Ukraine's wrongdoers respectively. It is interesting to observe how the characters' awareness of Britain's accountability for the famine is transformed throughout *The Hungry Land*. Initially, the blame pertains to an unnamed person or unidentified groups of people: 'Somebody was making money out of the poverty and famine.' (*HL*: 97) As the events unfold, the accusations are directed to the system: 'Well, you can see the price wool is fetching and what they are doing with grain. Good grain going out and bad grain coming in. A queer system...' (*HL*: 97) As already indicated in this chapter, under the system, those who embody it and implement British rule in Ireland are targeted: land agents, the police and soldiers. Patrick Gill's reflections on the changes in the countryside that signal the impending famine can be understood as an implication of London's inefficiency to deflect it. According to Gill, the lack of provision in this part of the British Empire is recurrent; and failing to address the problem means that nothing is done to forestall possible starvation: 'Each year during the early 1840s the hunger increased. There was always the fear that the potato crop might fail, and when it did the people, undernourished, would quickly die.' (*HL*: 9) Gill's observation is strengthened by Cavendish's concern about the

inevitability of 'a great famine', which will lead to the situation when 'the whole country would be thrown into turmoil' (*HL*: 18). Cavendish's dark premonition is reiterated on several occasions. He emphasizes that people's impoverishment is 'only the beginning of things', and reminds the master of the workhouse, Edward Silken, that he 'described exactly what would happen' ten years ago, and that all that he had forecast 'has already come true' (*HL*: 147). Multiple indications of the effects of the blight should have provoked the authorities to provide aid in order to ease the famine. This point finds expression also in Michael Barrett's remark, in which he echoes his friend: 'Again and again I said that the British government should be prepared for this. It has been coming a long time.' (*HL*: 293) Cavendish's anxious thoughts encapsulate the elements of fear, poverty, disgust, and death, which add to the literary representation of famine:

> What really worried him was that he had discovered the fact that famine was already beginning. He had examined some of the potato crop in the locality, and some of the seed potatoes were beginning to rot. If the blight which had already attacked the potato crop in mainland Britain was carried to Ireland, and if it were virulent, then peasants, weakened by previous famines, would perish in thousands. (*HL*: 145-146)

The reference to 'previous famines' is particularly important, as it highlights the British government's heedless attitude to its Irish colony, and, hence, its responsibility for Ireland's plight. Realizing that 'each week would be a further step towards ultimate starvation', the English gentleman regrets that the only thing he can do is write articles 'which would draw the attention of London to the plight of the starving peasantry.' (*HL*: 256) The biting remark 'the Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine"[132] that frequently resurfaces in discussions about the Great Famine, resonates with the characters' understanding of the role of the English in *The Hungry Land*. It can be seen how the mood of the novel changes towards its end, when their hope that 'Things will get better — the English Parliament will not let us starve.' (*HL*: 299) is contrasted to their certitude of London's lack of interest in the fate of the Irish:

> The Parliament in London was aware that it now had a problem on its hands, and reports appearing in all papers indicated how extensive it was. But in London, with its wide streets and the order of civilised living, it seemed distant and academic. (*HL*: 317-318)

By specifying the Parliament as 'English', and one that is placed 'in London', the interrelation of power and Otherness is pinpointed. Its impact on the construction of the negative image of London, and therefore, Britain in general and the English specifically, reinforces the suggestion

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[132] John Mitchell quoted by Michael de Nie in *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798–1882* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), pp. 84-85.

that cultural and national differentiation is strongly influenced by political developments. This can be strengthened by Leerssen's observation that 'the national division of Ireland is defined by (rather than *defying*) the adoption of cultural patterns and of a political stance.'[133] The deployment of the elements of space, disgust, poverty, death, immigration, and fear throughout the text of *The Hungry Land* facilitates a deeper underpinning of Otherness. Expressed through the novel's depiction of the most negative social processes, revealing of the degrading position of the Irish, the angry rhetoric towards the Other appears justified. The mockingly-ironic tone, which highlights London's awareness of Ireland's catastrophic situation, corresponds closely with the passages condemning Moscow for Ukraine's destruction in *Maria*. The analysis of the image construction in *The Hungry Land* makes it clear that the characters' traits and behaviour are shaped by their socio-political, economic, and cultural environment — and all these aspects are determined by power relations.

Conclusion

Creating compelling pictures of human suffering, *Sweet Snow* and *The Hungry Land* focus on the most tragic moments in the history of Ukraine and Ireland — times of abject famine. The two novels appear very different in their literary expressions of national traumas. A number of distinctly opposing elements in their representations of the Holodomor and An Gorta Mór can be identified. The novels' beginnings differ. In *Sweet Snow*, the reader is plunged into a dramatic atmosphere from the outset, with the opening scene depicting a grimy prison cell; whereas in *The Hungry Land*, the events unfold slowly, gradually approaching the main theme of famine. Motyl's set of thought-provoking male protagonists is in stark contrast with Mullen's evocative female characters. Both novels vary in their representation of humour: the Ukrainian narrative is ultimately sorrowful, with few examples of bitter irony, while the Irish text contains many examples of the characters' jocular remarks and utterances. Throughout the two texts, there is much more dissemblance in their portrayals of famine. The imagological analyses of these works of fiction, however, show that both involve the effective use of the rhetoric of national character in similar ways, evincing parallels in image construction. The application of Neumann's framework allows us to discern four features that emphasize cultural differences between the Self and the Other in *Sweet Snow* and *The Hungry Land*.

First, the novels assume a despairing stance from the beginning, which becomes particularly strong in their accounts of the effects of famine. Motyl dedicates *Sweet Snow* to his

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[133] Leerssen, *Mere Irish*, p. 37.

unnamed uncles, implying that they became victims of the Soviet regime, and opens the first chapter with the description of a Soviet cell, in which his characters are imprisoned. Establishing a despondent atmosphere in *The Hungry Land*, Mullen begins his famine narrative with a portrayal of a destitute poet reflecting on poverty of Irish people. Both novels present their national Self as victim and the Other as its oppressor and adopt a compassionate approach to the auto-image, while creating an unsympathetic attitude towards the hetero-image.

Second, the semanticization of space intensifies a polarity between the Self and the Other. In *Sweet Snow*, the representations of space and place are arranged in a pattern from smallest to biggest, facilitated by the use of various literary devices and techniques, and consolidated by a number of graphic details, appropriated from Soviet reality. These details include both the descriptions of physical objects, such as furniture in the interrogation room or the cell, the van and the huts in the village, and also the practices, for instance, the methods used during detentions and interrogations, the behaviour of the police, and the sounds — all reproducing the contemporary Soviet context. The enlargement of space involves the disclosure of more particulars that confirm the ruthlessness of the Soviet regime. While the Soviets' cruelty intensifies, the characters' fear of the cell, the village and, finally, the empire, magnifies, and in this way, the reader's understanding of its scale grows.

Spatiality in *The Hungry Land* has many applications. It is used to highlight a contrast between the destitute position of the Self and the wealth of the Other. In this case, the quality of being small characterizes the conditions in which the Irish find themselves: they live in tiny indigent huts or leave the country in cramped ship cabins. These are juxtaposed to the landlords' spacious and affluent estates. Also, spatiality has an opposite function: it is deployed to show that small places can bear an aura of positive meaning, like the O'Hares' little hut; while big places can trigger negative sensations, as in the case of Lannagh's house under Kenrick's rule. Moreover, within spatiality, both small and large places are used to express the characters' sense of hope. The small cabins of the ship, and the large-scale spatial environments, such as 'a vast expanse of ocean and a promised land' (*HL*: 217) — America, promise survival for their passengers. Participating in image construction, the novel's spatial elements thus function differently for their respective purposes. Despite the novels' contrasting approaches to spatiality, both *Sweet Snow* and *The Hungry Land* reveal the ambiguity of spatial thought, confirming that space perception is shaped first and foremost by its context. In dealing with famine, space and place are deployed as means to highlight the devastation that the calamity had wrought on people and their land. To simplify the identification of the Other in terms of spatiality, the novels avail of real geographical names, and these also create a sense of authenticity.

Third, emphasizing the rhetoric of Otherness, the character constellations are organized in line with the 'us/them' dichotomy. In both novels, the characters belonging to the auto-image are assigned positive traits and modes of conduct, which strengthens their favourable perception; while those comprising the group of the hetero-image are allotted antithetical attributes, facilitating their unfavourable distinction. The view that 'the "them/others" are legitimized as the evil "enemy" — especially in the context of war'[134] is fitting to the context of famine, for it differs little from warfare, particularly as shown in the Ukrainian novel, whose representation of Otherness is in contrast to *The Hungry Land*'s socio-cultural Otherness.

In *Sweet Snow*, the unlawfully imprisoned characters constitute the auto-image, and they are contrasted to their Other: the Bolsheviks/ Soviets. The Russian language is a definitive attribute of the Other, however, the cultural difference between these two groups of images is obscured by the lack of homogeneity within the auto-image, for its characters belong to different nationalities and speak different languages. The complexity of cultural separateness is evident in *The Hungry Land*, too, in which the Irish language is presented as the language of the Self. Here, the distinction between the Self and the Other is blurred by hybridity, which 'seems to have obfuscated consistently the neatness of the original "us vs. them" divisions'.[135] The novel makes it clear that hybrid images are products of social, political and cultural developments in Ireland throughout the colonial period, demonstrating that in famine fiction image construction, image mobility, as well as discernment between images, are power-related.

These three features listed above fit well within the fourth key feature pointed out by Neumann: a plot-design pattern. *Sweet Snow* and *The Hungry Land* have composite, dramatic plot-structures — evolving into a tragedy in *Sweet Snow* — that mobilize the stance, spatiality and character constellation to bring into focus the trauma of the famine years. The dramatic plot structure ultimately dominates the text of *Sweet Snow*, from the beginning to its end; and the novel's rather limited scope of events is filled with a great number of examples of cruelty of the Other. Its Self/Other opposition is in contrast to *The Hungry Land*, whose intermediate hybrid images somewhat etiolate the conflict between the Self and the Other. The passages that demonstrate the atrociousness of the famine in *Sweet Snow* are in ascending order, culminating most dramatically towards the end, with the novel's resolution involving the death of all of the protagonists. By contrast, in *The Hungry Land*, the scenes describing the characters' suffering are mitigated by the novel's ending with the hope that its protagonists will survive. The differences in the two works' dramatic expression do not hinder the 'authorial conscious

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[134] *CARFMS – ORTT*, Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) Online Research and Teaching Tools (ORTT), 2017, 'We/Us vs. Them/Others', <http://rfmsot.apps01.yorku.ca/glossary-of-terms/weus-vs-themothers/>.
[135] Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-ghael*, p. 13.

intention':[136] to highlight the magnitude of the famine and to name the guilty. Butcher's interpretation of Aristotle's views on the plot in a tragedy is fitting to these works of famine fiction:

> To the plot we look in order to learn what the play means; here lies its essence, its true significance. Lastly, the plot is "the end of a tragedy" as well as the beginning. Through the plot the intention of the play is realized.[137]

The imagological analyses of *Sweet Snow* and *The Hungry Land* demonstrate that in the essence of their plots is the authors' intention to depict Ukraine's and Ireland's national traumas caused by the famines that resulted from colonial rule. The techniques deployed in these two works of famine fiction facilitate the identification of the Self and the Other and bolster their portrayal as the oppressed and the oppressors respectively in order to highlight one group's wrongful treatment of another, less powerful. The technique of juxtaposition, most cogently arranged within the novels' interpretations of famine events, makes the imagological constructs particularly persuasive and powerful in their representation of the immensity of Ireland's and Ukraine's most tragic famines.

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[136] Fredson Bowers, 'Dramatic Structure and Criticism: Plot in Hamlet', *Shakespeare* Quarterly, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring, 1964), pp. 207-218, p. 207.
[137] *Ibid.*

Conclusion

This study concerned itself with An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor — events of the past, whose significance remains pertinent to this present day. Current developments from around the world show that memories of the past have a powerful influence on people's lives, as they continuously shape their perceptions and attitudes in literature. To better understand their nature, it is crucial to examine the impact of the past. Focusing on the literary expression of Ireland's and Ukraine's national traumas, this research offered a comparative study of national character images in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions. Having developed from a confluence of personal circumstances, encounters with culturally diverse environments, and learning and teaching experience, the research topic was prompted by an awareness of the importance of fixed images on human interaction.

Irish and Ukrainian works of famine fiction lend themselves to a comparative study. In their historical, socio-political and cultural experiences, affected by colonial legacies, Ireland and Ukraine have issues indicating both their uniqueness and universality that can be used in further comparative and imagological studies. In a context where the European Union faces multiple challenges and new political divides are emerging across geographical boundaries, as well as ideological and cultural terrains, with Russian-Ukrainian relations as probably the most troublesome, an analysis of causes and dynamics of the formation and dissemination of national stereotypes may offer possible elements to conflict-resolution processes. Leerssen's view on the advantages of application of imagological method is fitting to this purpose: 'Europe's literary record is a long-standing and voluminous one, and can be fruitfully searched (and placed alongside the historical record of social action and political decision-making) for *longue-durée* topics like the provenance and spread of attitudes and mentalities.'[1] Having developed in response to Europe's national and racial ideologies that led to the outbreak of the World War II, Imagology reflected 'a real scholarly urge to solve problems of our European multinationality'.[2] Over the past decades, it aided Europeans in identifying mutual antagonisms by bringing cultures and literatures together. Leerssen points out that in 'the current climate of intense "identity politics" and resurging nationalism, imagology is quickly regaining the urgency it had in the post-1945 years'.[3]

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[1] Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 26.

[2] Dyserinck, 'Imagology and the Problem of Ethnic Identity', *Intercultural Studies*, No. 1, 2003, p. 1.

[3] Leerssen, 'Imagology: On using ethnicity to make sense of the world', *Iberic@l, Revue d'études ibériques et ibéro-américaines*, Numéro 10 – Automne 2016, pp. 13-31, p. 14.

This thesis is the first comparative imagological study of representations of oppressor and oppressed in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions. Its main aim was to demonstrate that negative perceptions of a given group result from power relations and are upheld by the ruling class. Imagology proved a fitting research methodology for this study. It enabled a comprehensive identification and investigation of stereotyped representations, or mental images and ideas, developed before and at the time of the famines in question. The aptness of Imagology for this task is validated by the choice of the novels which abound in national character images. The interdisciplinary examination of their forms and functions in the context of the famines added to the observation that, while working primarily on literary representations, Imagology 'furnishes continuous proof that it is in the field of imaginary and poetical literature that national stereotypes are first and foremost formulated, perpetuated and disseminated'[4] with the finding that the practice of the formation of negative perceptions between people/ nations results from and reflects systems of oppression.

Chapter I, 'Famines in Ireland and Ukraine', presented an overview of historical, cultural, and socio-historical peculiarities of the contexts, in which images of the Self and the Other emerged and developed, and explained the relevance of the Irish experience to the discussion of Ukraine's circumstances. It showed that discord between nations involve preparatory actions aiming to estrange one group from another. This was shown in the outline of the English perception of the Irish as expressed in British literature and media prior to An Gorta Mór, and in the discussion of the attitudes towards the peasantry in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. As we could see from this chapter's three sections, the negative characterization of national characters was strengthened by the portrayal of violence and cruelty during British and Soviet rule. This chapter explained ways in which the ruling elites initiate the 'othering' processes in order to maintain influence and accumulate wealth. Confirming Timothy O'Herlihy's statement that 'Famine never works alone; it has many helpers',[5] we were able to understand how the magnitude of both famines could be linked to the rise of negative perceptions, and hence, attitudes, among groups of people, a rise originating in power struggles. Negative perceptions are peoples' fixed mental images of one another, and they are found in artistic production. Josh Broderick's observation that 'The literature of a nation is far more revealing than all the official histories ever written'[6] underlines the essential aspect at the core

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[4] Leerssen, 'History and Method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 26.

[5] O'Herlihy, T., Rev. C.M., *The Famine 1845-1847: A Survey of Its Ravages and Causes* (Drogheda, Ireland: Drogheda Independent, 1947), p. 53.

[6] John Broderick quoted by Gunilla Bexar, *The Great Irish Famine in History-Writing and Prose Fiction: "The Mutual Interplay of Two Narrative Genres"* (Finland: Åbo Akademis förlag/Åbo Akademi University Press), p. 1.

of the ensuing chapters, which addressed the literary representations of images formed within specific historical circumstances.

Chapter II presented the analyses of *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* by Ulas Samchuk and *The Silent People* by Walter Macken, and Chapter III, the analyses of *Sweet Snow* by Alexander J. Motyl and *The Hungry Land* by Michael Mullen. In all four works of fiction, the rhetoric of national character is one of the most important aesthetic techniques, deployed for the literary expression of Ireland's and Ukraine's national traumas. By highlighting the tragic experience and suffering of the Irish and the Ukrainian people, it served to draw attention to the unjust and ruthless British and Soviet systems, and to demonstrate that both famines' outcomes were aggravated by Ireland's and Ukraine's positions as colonies. The comparative imagological analyses of these novels, underpinned by Leerssen's and Neumann's methodologies, revealed the mechanisms of the development of negative stereotypes between nations, here intensified by the circumstances of the famines, and established the interdependence between power and images. From the discussion of the themes specified in each novel, we could see how the principles of image construction relate to other disciplines and fields of knowledge. The variety of themes reveals the complexity of the representations of famine in fiction, making Raphaël Ingelbien's emphasis on the need to widen the scope of the study of famine fiction pertinent for this study of images:

> We also need to move away from the twofold critical emphasis on the representability of physical devastation and on the traumatic impact of the event on those who witnessed it at first or second hand. We need to recognize that the Irish Famine generated literary responses beyond issues of representatibility [*sic*], and that some authors found it both possible and desirable to tackle issues of economic policy and moral accountability in ways which bypassed the traumatic nature of the experience of Famine.[7]

The novels by Samchuk, Mullen, Motyl and Macken provide multifarious images of famine, which are not limited solely to descriptions of physical devastation and survivors' traumatic experiences. Indeed, the novels' scope and concerns are wide, and they encourage contemplation on various points for consideration: political, ideological, cultural and psychological. Reflecting on them, readers develop their own thoughts on the famines' causes and consequences, and consider the reasons for the emergence of images and their role in a society. The novels' comparative imagological analyses demonstrated that the process of 'othering' follows a similar pattern in both the Irish and Ukrainian contexts, highlighting a remarkable quality of Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions — their ability to utilize the rhetoric

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[7] Raphaël Ingelbien, 'Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Poor Clare" and the Irish Famine', *Irish University Review,* Vol. 40, No. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2010), pp. 1-19, p. 16.

of national character in order to convey a clear message that the blame for the famines lies with the system, and with those who establish, control and support it. While drawing attention to the scale of the trauma caused by the famines, the strategy of constructing the positive Self and the negative Other serves to pinpoint the main gauges and markers in the construction of national Otherness — cruelty and violence. Numerous examples from the texts, presented in these two chapters, showed that these phenomena are key in the formation and dissemination of images.

From the analysis of the national character images in the selected Irish and Ukrainian novels, it was established that images are changeable, that a clear demarcation line cannot be drawn between them, and that belonging to the spected or spectant depends on many factors. Distinctions between the Self and the Other are power-related, and cultural elements are the most convenient and easily accessible aspects used in the process of the construction of national stereotypes. Chapters II and III brought to our attention that in famine fiction, literary representations are deeply rooted in real figures and events. This complicates a distinction between a stereotype and a statement of fact, which explains stereotypes' persistence, durability, and their perceived credibility. The imagological approach applied to the study of images in Samchuk's, Macken's, Motyl's and Mullen's literary texts, interpreted in light of historical factors, highlighted that national characters are 'a matter of commonplace and hearsay rather than empirical observation or statements of objective fact'.[8] The imagological analyses demonstrated that the novels' images are constructed on clichés, and not on empirical reality. Yet, at the same time, their effectiveness is connected to factual oppressive rule, which strengthens the point that the formation and dissemination of stereotypical constructs depend on the distribution of power and are rooted in historical reality. It can be concluded, therefore, that the impetus behind the negative portrayal of the Other lies in oppression and cruelty indictment. This view is justified by the attribution of some positive characteristics to the Other alongside certain negative features attributed to the Self. All this indicates the authors' aim — their call for freedom and humanity, and their wish to restore historical truth in some cases.

The dangers of typecasting are illustrated by Paul Martin Lester's observation on the influence of stereotyping on relations between people: 'History has shown that stereotyping can lead to scapegoating, which can lead to discrimination, which can lead to segregation, which can lead to physical abuse, which can lead to state-sponsored genocide.'[9] Lester's warning suggests that an understanding of the emergence, dissemination and potential effects of stereotyping should receive more attention from various disciplines, and promote debates open

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[8] Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 26.
[9] Paul Martin Lester, Susan Dente Ross, eds., *Images that Injure: Pictorial Stereotypes in the Media* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003), p. 2.

to wide public participation. To this purpose, Comparative Literature can be used 'as a scientific tool with which to explore and analyze cultural dissimilarities and correspondences worldwide according to their historical, literary, and social circumstances.'[10] Considering the ability of national images not only to describe 'a pre-existing reality of national others' but to 'actively construct that very reality',[11] a comparatist perspective can be usefully applied to areas of image investigation in different cultural environments, at regional, national and international levels. Conclusions drawn from comparative image analyses will help raise awareness of the subjectivity of image formation and develop critical thinking to allow identification of the intentions behind the emergence and dissemination of images. This is in line with Beller's outline of the aim of Imagology: 'It is the aim of imagology to describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them.'[12]

This thesis facilitates stimuli for further joint investigations of An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor, and suggests a variety of possibilities for multidisciplinary research of Irish and Ukrainian historical, cultural and socio-political landscapes. While analyses of images in Irish and Ukrainian short stories and poems on famine themes are worthy of examination, there are also other compelling areas of prospective research. Consistent with this research topic, and following Christine Kinealy's thought-provoking investigation of the Irish case, a comparative study of private relief in Ukraine in the 1930s would be valuable to Holodomor studies. Moreover, the theme of hybridization and the representations of the Ukrainian image in the Soviet press, encouraged by Michael de Nie's broad and in-depth analysis of the Irish image, would be particularly interesting to explore, for they might add to an understanding of an interrelation between images and political agendas. For this task, there are hundreds of thousands of newspapers from the Soviet era in Ukraine's archives, which have not yet been studied through the prism of image construction. In addition, artistic Holodomor representations demand to be explored, and promise to be an enthralling opportunity for an Irish-Ukrainian research. Here, again, the Irish experience is advantageous. The *Coming Home: Art and the Great Hunger* exhibition of the world's largest collection of famine-related art, brought from Ireland's Great Hunger Museum in Quinnipiac, Connecticut, that was held in Dublin in March-June 2018, could inspire a similar event in relation to Ukraine's 1932-33 Famine. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to glean from Ireland's Great Hunger Museum's publishing enterprise

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[10] Brigitte Le Juez, 'Positive Uncertainty and the Ethos of Comparative Literature', *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, Volume 15 (2013), Issue 7, p. 3.
[11] Neumann, p. 277.
[12] Beller, 'Perception, image, imagology' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 11-2.

such as the publication of a series of essays *Famine Folios*, examining the issues of An Gorta Mór from various standpoints and in different disciplines.

A deeper, multi-angled and multi-thematic examination of the Holodomor will help disprove its Soviet interpretations which had been obdurately imposed by Moscow since the 1930s and re-establish Ukraine's connection with the European academic realm. A hope that this will become reality was expressed by Ukrainian writer and poet Mykola Khvylovy, who committed suicide on May 13, 1933, unable to endure the destruction of his country: 'The previous generation of Ukrainian authors was already oriented toward the West. […] Our generation will probably not be so successful, as a result of various circumstances. The generation to come must succeed.' [13] This idea is apparent from Marples' call for a comprehensive investigation of the Holodomor: 'What is needed now is a renewed and determined focus on the famine of 1932-1933 in the English-speaking academic community that includes active engagement between the different schools of thought.'[14]

In view of the close connections between literature, history and politics that have emerged from this study, and in line with Said's explanation of 'the constitution and the early aims' of comparative literature — 'to get a perspective beyond one's own nation, to see some sort of whole instead of defensive little patch offered by one's own culture, literature, and history',[15] it can be concluded that comparisons and contrasts of images in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions, presented in this thesis, provide a meaningful contribution to the discipline of Comparative Literature. With Imagology as a critical tool, they make it possible to apply the knowledge of these two examples to other case studies and examine imagological constructs from other geographic and cultural environments. The imagological method will be apt for other disciplines, such as history, psychology, religion and trauma studies, political science, international relations and ethnography. This is indicated by the wide variety of material, used as secondary sources in the process of work on this research. The view that 'the study of national images is in and of itself a comparative enterprise: it addresses cross-national relations'[16] can be supplemented with the observation that it is an interdisciplinary venture, too.

Combining theoretical knowledge with its practical application in texts, this research can be, therefore, used as a possible template for an examination of images in other applied studies. With its findings, literary Imagology will 'enrich […] the wider field of the human

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[13] William Henry Chamberlin, *The Ukraine: A Submerged Nation* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 55.
[14] Marples, 'Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine', p. 515.
[15] Said, p. 49.
[16] Leerssen, 'Imagology: History and method' in Beller and Leerssen, p. 29.

sciences and their interest in identity constructs.'[17] Beller's indication of the contemporary relevance of Imagology highlights its ability to be a uniting concept for diverse academic schools of thought:

> Imagology is not a new scientific specialism, but a fresh way of asking a long-standing question, which may involve philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and literary scholars. This interdisciplinary import is already indicated by the relevant arguments and concepts used in the various disciplines, which can cross over, stimulate and inspire each other reciprocally.

Finally, prompted by Coogan's view of a land that endured famine, 'A land that could survive the Famine can survive almost anything', used as the epigraph to this thesis, an appropriate and hopeful way to conclude is with the wish that traumas of the past will only add to the development of theories and methodologies in academic studies of famine rather than continue to create ways perpetuating stereotypes in practice.

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[17] *Ibid*.

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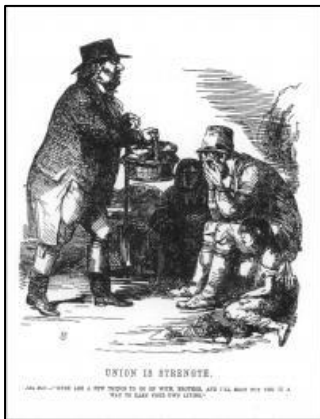
Appendix

Illustrations

'The English Labourer's Burden' (17 February 1846)

'Young Ireland in Business for Himself' (1846)

'Union is Strength' (10 October 1848)

'The New Irish Still' (11 August 1848)

'A Physical Force Chartist Arming for the Fight' (26 August 1848)

'The British Lion and the Irish Monkey' (1 April 1848)

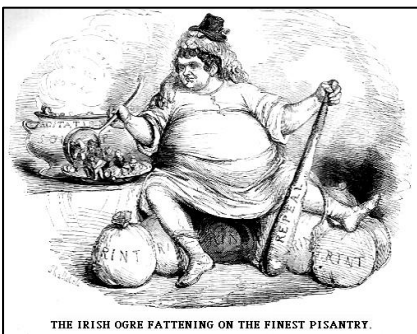'The New St. Patrick' (7 April 1849)

'The Real Potato Blight of Ireland' (1845)
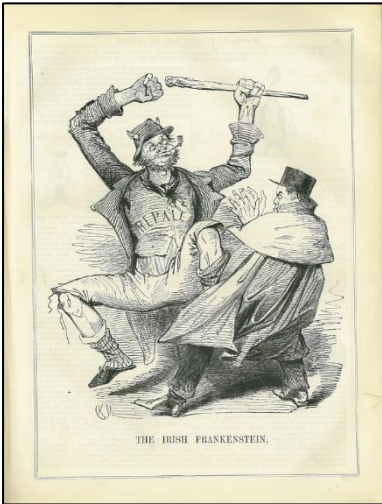
'Peel's Panacea for Ireland' (1849)

'Gog and Magog Giving Paddy a Lift Out of the Mire' (1849)

'The Irish Ogre Fattening on the Finest Pisantry [*sic*]' (1843)

'Irish Physiognomy' (*The Illustrated London News*, 1843)

'The Irish Frankenstein' (*Punch*, 1843)

'Connaught Man' (*The Illustrated London News*, 1843)