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Fear of the Other

Representations of Otherness in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions

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Fear of the Other is one of the most deep-rooted types of fear in any society. It often adds to political and ideological conflicts that can lead to dramatic developments with immediate and far-reaching consequences. Ireland and Ukraine have suffered the catastrophic consequences of Otherness, resulting from colonial oppression. Ireland's *An Gorta Mór* (1845–52)[1] and Ukraine's *Holodomor* (1932–33)[2] can be thought of as historic periods characterized by the emergence and greater dissemination of stereotypical perceptions of national Others, which awaken in times of unrest and conflict. Phenomena that shape people's

[1] *An Gorta Mór* means 'the Great Famine' in Gaeilge.

[2] Literally, *holodomor* means 'death by starvation'. It is a compound of two words: 'holod', which means hunger and 'mor' meaning death.

Kaukiainen, K., Kurikka, K., Mäkelä, H., Nykänen, E., Nyqvist, S., Raipola, J., Riippa, A. & Samola, H. (Eds) (2020). *Narratives of fear and safety.*
Tampere: Tampere University Press, 229–248.
http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-359-014-4

perceptions of ethnic and national characters are transformed into images, transmitted by texts, in particular, by literary aretefacts. Therefore, imagology – 'the critical analysis of national stereotypes in literature' (Beller & Leerssen 2007, xiii), is befitting for an understanding of Ireland's and Ukraine's famine discourses. The examination of images that can be defined as 'the mental or discursive representation or reputation of a person, group, ethnicity or "nation"' (Beller & Leerssen 2007, 342) in these discourses is especially interesting, for in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions, images transmit the 'historical memories and aesthetic emotions' (Weretiuk 2017, 52) related to these two nations' most tragic experiences. The fact that the famines resulted from detrimental policies of the governments of their states, implemented 'without any consideration whatever of the consequences in human suffering' (Carynnyk 1983) at critical periods, underscores their tragic outcomes. Moreover, it allows us to investigate the reasoning behind the enhancement of negative perceptions of the Other.

The appositeness of comparative method to research across national boundaries is pointed out by Elise Nykänen and Hanna Samola: 'Comparative literary studies serve as one of the most relevant theoretical frameworks in those essays that map the transnational, "international literary space" (Casanova 2004, xii), which transcends the national borders of European literatures' (Elise Nykänen & Hanna Samola, 'Introduction: Affective Spaces in European Literature and Other Narrative Media').

An examination of the deepening of a boundary between the Self (or auto-image) – the image that refers 'to a characterological reputation current within and shared by a group', and the Other (the hetero-image) – the image representing 'the opinion that others have about group's purported character' (Leerssen in Beller & Leerssen 2007, 342–343) in literary representations

reveals that the 'othering' process is closely linked to the emotion of fear. Bearing in mind that the construction of Otherness resulting from fear can be viewed as a bilateral process, which involves both sides in the oppressor-oppressed divide, it should be indicated that this paper discusses the emergence of fear from the perspective of the oppressed.

Walter Macken's *The Silent People* and Ulas Samchuk's *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life*[3] are among the best-known works of fiction on Ireland's and Ukraine's Great Famines respectively. In both novels, the Self/Other divide reflects a power imbalance between the ruling and the ruled classes, which manifests itself in the characters' social status: those who belong to the former, exercise power, and are in a privileged position; and those who represent the latter, are subjugated, and reduced to dire straits. A line of distinction within this power-laden relationship is reinforced by the representations of a complex discord arising from religious domain. In *The Silent People*, the Catholics are largely associated with the Irish, belonging to the self-image, while the Protestants mainly refer to the English comprising the group of the Other. To define the Self against the Other in *Maria*, the Ukrainian peasants' piety and faith are contrasted with the Bolsheviks' blasphemy, expressed by their vehement destruction of all religious symbols. The deployment of the rhetoric of national character strengthens a profound divide between the two images: the virtues of the national character of the Self are directly opposed to the vices of the Other, thus giving substance to the observation that 'constructions of foreign national characters provide an essential quality of difference against which cherished self-images materialize with greater clarity' (Neumann 2009, 275).

3 Henceforth, this novel is referred to as *Maria*.

Fear of the Other in *The Silent People*

The Silent People is part of a trilogy, written over a century after An Gorta Mór, that chronicles the lives of several generations of one Irish family. The adventures of its protagonist, a young Connacht man, Dualta Duane, narrated in a sequential timeline, offer the possibility of an investigation of the processes of image construction and development of relations between the English and the Irish at the outset of the famine. The novel shows that even though Irish negative perceptions of the English existed before An Gorta Mór due to centuries of British oppression, they increased in the period between 1845 and 1852. Revealing the damaging impact of British colonial rule in Ireland, *The Silent People* presents two opposing images using well-established clichés for their construction. The hard-working, quick-witted, good-humoured, freedom-loving and devoted to their land and religious beliefs Irish represent the Self. They are contrasted with the avaricious and uncaring landlords – the novel's Other. The distinction between the two images is sharpened by the use of language: the characters belonging to the Self speak Irish, and those who constitute the Other are portrayed as English-speaking. Yet, in a remarkable way, readers are made aware that cultural dissemblance, drafted to heighten the contrast between the Self and the Other, is not an actual divider of people. Macken demonstrates that cultural characteristics can be interpreted in different ways, and acquire both positive and negative meanings, which, in turn, can be used to either embellish or denigrate the image of a group of people. Such ambivalence of cultural elements is clear from two scenes that take place at the fair. In the first, Dualta Duane and his friend Sorcha are watching an English pedlar selling a coat. The two youths note that most people are entertained by his comic antics, when displaying the coat:

> 'I have here a small coat of a noble lord,' a loud voice suddenly shouted in English. It brought a hush over the fair. They turned their heads. It came from a beefy man standing on a box at an old-clothes stall. He was holding up a coat of red cloth with brass buttons on it. 'You can dress and go and dine with the Lord Lieutenant in it. You can drive the cows in it. You can go to Mass in it. You can get married in it. You can be buried decently in it. You can hand it on as an heirloom to your great grandchildren. What am I offered for it? Who'll propose a sixpence for a start?'
>
> Sorcha and Dualta laughed. Most people didn't understand the English, but the pedlar mimicked all the virtues of the coat. (*The Silent People*, 9.)[4]

This episode portrays the pedlar as the Other among the Irish who do not understand the English language, reminding us of the tendency of humans to attribute specific characteristics to different societies or races: 'anything that deviated from accustomed domestic patterns is "Othered" as an oddity, an anomaly, a singularity' (Leerssen 2007, 17). Yet the pedlar's Otherness causes amusement and laughter, and not hostility. It is interesting to juxtapose this event with another Anglo-Irish encounter, which follows shortly thereafter. It presents the confrontation between Dualta and the Half-Sir, son of the local landlord, who violently strikes Dualta with a whip for no reason. The Half-Sir's unreasonable behaviour is revealed to readers in a passage describing his feelings: 'Suddenly a wave of distaste and frustration came over him. He raised the whip, and, harder perhaps than he had intended, he brought it down across the face of the youth' (*SP*, 10). This act fuels Dualta's resentment

[4] Henceforth, all page numbers in parentheses, placed after quotations and preceded by *SP*, refer to this text.

and generates fear in people who are helplessly witnessing the incident. They are unable to help their fellow countryman because they are terrified of the landlord's son and his entourage.

Similar patterns that show the emergence of negative perceptions of the Other evolving from fear are provided by multiple episodes throughout the novel. The most dramatic example of cruelty of the Other is the execution of two young Irish men, who supposedly shot a bailiff. One of those men who were to be hanged is Dualta's friend Paidi, and his death is particularly emotional, because it is undeserved. It is revealed that the young man 'happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time' (*SP*, 64), and that there is proof of his innocence: Paidi was caught when 'coming home from courting a girl' (*SP*, 65). Yet, to Dualta's astonishment, those who knew that Paidi was not guilty of the bailiff's death, did not 'come forward and say so' (*SP*, 67). Another character, Cuan, voices what every Irish person in the large crowd that gathered to see the execution realizes: they were afraid to bear witness to their fellow countrymen's innocence, for they knew in advance that if they spoke up, they would have hanged, too. Revealing the methods used by the ruling class to instil fear in people in order to achieve their obedience, the scene of the public execution highlights the inferior position and vulnerability of the Irish:

> Paidi is gone out like a light, just like a light you quench, and not in fair time. So now you know what murder really is, whether it is by the hand of a civilian or by the hand of rulers with all the outward show of justice and impartiality. This was no law. It was law without reason or hope for the people who came under its shadow. (*SP*, 67.)

Dualta's feelings about his friend's hanging connect his personal grief with a larger picture, showing the system's unfair treatment of the Irish people. The quotation implies that the authorities, indicated by the word 'rulers' in the text, are deemed culpable for numerous cases of blatant injustice towards them. The representatives and administrators of the cruel system – the wealthy landlords, landowners, bailiffs and policemen, fulfil the role of the Other. Because the authorities are largely associated with the English, fear evokes negative assumptions about this national group in particular, and hence, strengthens its negative perception by the Irish. One may wonder about the reasons underlying the British Empire's cruel treatment of one of its colonies. The examples of cruelty in *The Silent People* may provide us with an indication, possibly one of many. It appears that the socio-political context, in which the characters are immersed, sustains a set of relations that makes it possible for the ruling class to treat an inferior group with disdain and violence. In other words, cruel treatment of the oppressed group is authorized by those in power. Impunity stimulates the oppressor's moral corruption; this point is discernible in the episode with the Half-Sir. Dualta's encounter with the Half-Sir convinces us that cruelty and injustice generate fear and resentment, which inevitably stir a desire for vengeance. This idea is encapsulated in Cuan's ruminations on his attack on the landlord: 'Out of persecution would come bitterness, a lust for revenge' (*SP*, 108). The text of *The Silent People* includes numerous examples that demonstrate ways in which the Irish negative perception of the English develops from fear and, evolving into anger and animosity, leads to the nation-wide resistance. In these, cultural aspects are marked components of the 'othering' process. At the same time, the text provides a clear signal that, as in the episode with the English pedlar, in a non-threatening environment, free from injustice

and violence, Otherness does not trigger fear, and can be genially dismissed. Leerssen fittingly remarks that "the encounter with other cultures, languages and customs" can inspire curiosity, stimulate the imagination, and evoke 'fascinating images in people's minds' (Leerssen in Beller & Leerssen 2007, 6).

An understanding that fear results from oppression increases throughout the novel due to copious portrayals of the plight of the Irish people. First, it is provided by the depictions of the impact of colonialism on Irish cultural context: the lack of education opportunities, the poor state of Irish schools and the denigrated position of the Irish language. Second, it is revealed in the scenes of physical violence carried out by British authorities against the Irish. Finally, it is shown in multiple passages describing poverty and physical privation of the Irish versus the affluence of the English, *inter alia*, contrasting descriptions of food and dwellings. Interestingly, while demonstrating that cultural distinctions, such as language, are used as the most convenient instruments in defining Otherness, the imagological analysis of images of Self and Other in *The Silent People* leads to the assumption that the factors shaping the characters' fear of the Other are power-related.

Fear of the Other in *Maria: A Chronicle of A Life*

The Ukrainian novel *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life*, written shortly after the 1932–33 Famine in Ukraine, is arguably the first work of fiction about the Holodomor. Since 2011, its translation by Roma Franko, a Canadian translator of Ukrainian origin, has been available to English readers. The novel narrates the life story of a Ukrainian peasant girl Maria from the village of Hnyloryby,

which is presented sequentially during the disquieting times of the Russo-Japanese war, years of World War I, the 1917 Socialist revolution in Russia and finally, the 1932–33 Famine. The sequential structure of the novel allows us to see the transformations in the Ukrainian perception of the Russian national character between the 1860s and the 1930s. Despite differences in time and socio-historical processes between An Gorta Mór and the Holodomor, the analysis of the Ukrainian novel reveals similar patterns of image construction. As in the case with Anglo-Irish relations, Ukrainian stereotypical perceptions of their powerful neighbour have evolved over a long period of time due to its colonial past. In a way similar to *The Silent People*, commonly held beliefs are utilized in Samchuk's novel to construct the image of the Other. A line of distinction between the Ukrainians and the Russians is drawn by means of three features: a bad language habit, indolence and cruelty. These negative traits are ascribed to the Russians, the Bolsheviks, and the Komsomols – these names are synonymous, and applied to identify the Other. It should be observed that prior to the forcible seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian perception of the Russians in *Maria* is depicted as rather neutral. This is conveyed in the portrayal of Ukrainian villager Korniy Pereputka, one of the novel's main characters. Korniy is drawn to the Russian navy, where he serves as a sailor for seven years. During his time in the army, he acquires some 'Russian' features: idleness and a swearing habit, and therefore, in his native village, Korniy is positioned as the Other. His Otherness, however, does not trigger fear but rather light teasing. At times, his outlandish manners are even regarded as cultivated, for example, his use of a handkerchief, which seems to elevate him above his countrymen. Yet, in juxtaposition with the images of the emaciated villagers, Korniy's healthy appearance increases the reader's understanding of his Otherness:

> After completing his military service, the sailor Korniy Pereputka came home hale and hearty. Robust, with a ruddy complexion, speaking Russian, and blowing his nose in a handkerchief. All the neighbours rushed to see him, and he just stood there – a strong oak among the skeletons crushed by typhus – and spouted off a lot of nonsense. […] He had a moustache curled up at the tips, a shaved nape, a watch on his pale, hairy arm. (*Maria: A Chronicle of a Life*, 95.)[5]

As can be seen, language is one of the elements deployed for the construction of Otherness. Its importance in the image formation is reaffirmed by the fact that when Korniy undergoes transformation and regains the qualities characteristic of the Self, he parts with 'the Muscovite language' and speaks 'in the way that normal people speak' (*Maria*, 104). The emphasis on the 'normality' of the language of the Self brings out the deficiency of the language of the Other. In this way, the depravity of the Other is suggested, which is further strengthened in the novel's copious accounts of violence and cruelty.

Furthermore, it is interesting to observe the emergence of fear of the Other in *Maria*. A change in the Ukrainian perception of the Russians becomes noticeable in the passages describing Russia's involvement in military conflicts, such as the Russo-Japanese war, and the First World War, in which Ukraine has perforce to participate as part of the empire. This is demonstrated in the emotionally expressive scenes of the protagonist's grief over 'multitudes of sons, husbands, and sweethearts' sent to war:

5 Henceforth, all page numbers in parentheses, placed after quotations and preceded by *Maria*, refer to this text.

> 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.)

Maria's bitter irony, used to express her feelings of injustice about the Ukrainians' involvement in fighting for Russia's faraway territories, draws attention to Russia's responsibility for Ukraine's tribulation. The negative perception of Russia and the Russians escalates then in the episodes showing the forceful imposition of Bolshevik rule after the 1917 Russian revolution that brings chaos and grief to Ukraine. With the Bolsheviks' arrival in the village of Hnyloryby, it becomes prevalent in the accounts describing the demeanour of the aggressive invaders. In parallel with the imagological constructs of the Other in *The Silent People*, here, too, a cultural detail contributes towards the image formation. The Bolsheviks' brutality is shown in association with the Russian language. One of the scenes depicts them 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 scene showing Maria's objection to the Bolsheviks' confiscation of clover marks the transition to a more belligerent mood in the novel. It attests to the interdependence and interpenetration of politics, power, and the process of image formation. When the Bolsheviks cry out, 'Shut up, granny!' They shouted in Russian. 'Lenin will pay you for everything!' (*Maria*, 171), a connection between an ideological element suggested by the word 'Lenin', and a cultural peculiarity indicated by the mention

of the language, is achieved. In this way, an understanding that the Bolsheviks' unlawful deeds are justified by their leaders is provided. In addition, numerous references to the Russian language accentuate the point that detrimental Bolshevik ideology is imported from Russia.

Nonetheless, there is an important detail that somewhat alters the image of the Other. Even though it is provided in a relatively brief paragraph, it should not escape readers' attention. One of the Bolsheviks – 'a bearded Tambovets',[6] is shown to take a great care of a Kirghizian trotter. Clearly fond of the horse, the Tambovets is described as someone who 'looked after him, fed him oats, gave him hay that he stole from peaceable women' and who 'gently called him Vaska and curried him with a currycomb and a brush' (*Maria*, 157). Sadly, the horse dies, as the Tambovets abandons him and 'everything' else, 'for he heard the call of the revolution' (*Maria*, 157). This passage encourages readers to think that people's behaviour is shaped by the environment, in which they operate. Under other circumstances, in non-violent conditions, the Tambovets' life would probably not have differed greatly from the peaceful existence of the Ukrainian peasants before Bolshevik rule, as portrayed in *Maria*. It can be suggested, then, that changes in discourse entail changes in the construction and interpretation of images. Leerssen's indication of the variability of images, which he discusses in terms of Anglo-Irish discourse, prompts to consider that within the Russian-Ukrainian context, the Self/Other duality could produce a less threatening Other, provided that the discourse is devoid of cruelty:

> The relationship between auto- and hetero-image is not one of static polarity. […] the images themselves are subject to extreme vicissitudes (taking place, all the

[6] 'a man from the Tambov district in Russia' (*Maria*, 246).

> same, within the basic parameters of the underlying native-foreign polarity) and the relation between them is, if any, a dialectical one, where auto- and hetero-images sometimes polarize in mutual antagonism, sometimes impart certain characteristics to, and mutually influence, each other. (Leerssen 1996, 11–12.)

The point that the ruling class delineates and controls the discourse, shaping people's convictions and behavioural patterns, can be strengthened by Brian H. Bornstein and Richard L. Wiener's reference to Roger Barker's theory that links environment and bevahiour: 'The current environment influences the behavior of the inhabitants of those environments as much, if not more, than do the characteristics of the inhabitants' (Bornstein & Wiener 2014, 74). From this, it appears that aiming 'to understand a discourse rather than a society' (Beller & Leerssen 2007, xiii), imagology inevitably facilitates our understanding of a given society.

In *Maria*, it is shown that having destroyed Ukraine's peaceful rural life, the Bolsheviks instead create a hostile environment. In the eyes of the local peasants, their malevolence is highlighted by their unsightly appearance: '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 protagonist's exclamatory remark 'But after all, you're not Tartars!' (*Maria*, 171) suggests a comparison between Bolshevism and a different historical period in Ukraine's history, also steeped in violence. The mention of Tartars manifestly alludes to the Tatar invasions of Ukraine in the past, implying their barbarous behavior. This detail strongly corroborates the point that the emergence of negative perceptions between nations or groups of people is

power-related, and arises from fear.[7] Equally important, it shows that stereotypes outlast political systems and ideologies. Leaders and social orders change, yet old-established images remain embedded in national memories and can be retrieved and restored in times of crisis. Stenzel notes that 'political conflicts and even wars sink into oblivion more easily than the images of others' (Stenzel mentioned by Leerssen 2007, 11). In the 1930s, fear of the Other is induced by threats that spring from Bolshevik rule. In other words, fear of the Other is fear of the Bolsheviks. Resulting from the emotion of fear, negative images of the Bolsheviks and Russians develop and intensify throughout the Soviet period. While there seems to be an obvious connection between images and power, it is pertinent to consider stereotypes as tools of power. In famine fiction, they are used to accentuate the depravity of the Other by highlighting the righteousness of the Self. In doing so, they denounce injustice and oppression.

Stereotypical clichés in *Maria* aid the author in his depiction of the Bolsheviks' culpability for Ukraine's tragedy, reinforcing readers' awareness that their presence is dangerous and harmful for Ukraine. The Bolsheviks' cruelty permeates the text: '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). Military clothing, warlike sounds – all these elements, attributed to characterize the invader, and strengthened by the word 'hordes', draw attention to the aggressiveness of Ukraine's oppressor. In response, the

[7] For more information on Tatar invasions of Ukraine see, for instance, Serhii Plokhy (2015) *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine*. UK/USA/ Canada: Allen Lane an imprint of Penguin Books, and Alexander Basilevsky (2016) *Early Ukraine: A Military and Social History to the Mid-18th Century*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers.

derogatory name for the Russian – *moskal*,[8] emerges. It is used by Maria's eldest son, Lavrin, in his remark about the ruination of Ukraine's statehood: '"The moskal was never our brother", Lavrin argued. "They destroyed our kozak state …"' (*Maria*, 161). The allusion to the abolition of the Cossack Hetmanate by Russian Queen Catherine II in the eighteenth century prompts the existence of contentious issues in Russian-Ukrainian relations in the past. Another pejorative term characterizing the Russians, *katsapy*,[9] appears in the episodes dealing with the 1920–21 smaller-scale famine: 'You fiendish katsa-a-apy! You've befouled all of Russia, and now you're pushing your way into Ukraine!' (*Maria*, 175). In both cases, this discharge of deprecatory names labelling the Bolsheviks affirms that the characters' hostility is directed towards those, who bring violence and destruction. It can thus be assumed that while generating anger and resentment, fear of the Other is ignited by the issues related to power and are not brought about by cultural differences.

This point is corroborated by the passages describing an increase of fear. In the early 1930s, fear of the Other magnifies during collectivization: a forcible grain-collection campaign, which the Ukrainian peasantry resists *en masse*. The Bolsheviks pillage the villagers' houses and yards in search of grain, and indeed all kinds of edible products. The villagers hide their food supplies in order to survive; then, the Bolsheviks resort to violence to extract information about the whereabouts of the hidden grain, including torture:

> 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.

8 'soldier; Muscovite; Russian' (*Maria*, 245).

9 the plural form for 'a billy goat' (Hiroaki Kuromiya 1998, 43).

> 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 descriptions of the Bolsheviks' torture methods highlight the detrimental outcomes of Bolshevik rule, and signal that the Ukrainians' fear of their Other is justified. The novel provides a clear message that no other system was as bad as Soviet rule: '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). Considering the Bolsheviks' extreme violence, it can be suggested that in *Maria*, Bolshevism is depicted as an ideology that appeals to people bereft of empathy and morality. Interestingly, this point is expressed in an unambiguous way in the Bolshevik leader's concept of a revolutionary: Vladimir Lenin insisted that 'The best revolutionary is a youth devoid of morals' (Shaw Crouse 2012, 145). Bolshevik ideologists, clearly, have succeeded in creating the right conditions for groups of people with certain behavioural traits. The Soviet leadership deftly used those, who had a propensity for violence, which, naturally, cannot be attributed to one nation. Anne 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' (Applebaum 2017). In many cases, people who strongly adhere to an ideology, its frontline workers, or 'a mob of supporters' (ibid.), do not realize that they are being 'deliberately' used by their leaders in order to secure support and hold onto power. In *Maria*, this view is prompted

by the sentence about Bezpalky, one of the novel's villains, and his henchmen, who actively participate in the collectivization process and behave violently towards their fellow countrymen: 'The sly-eyed ones simply do not know what those at the top are planning' (*Maria*, 198).

Following the scenes of torture, the monstrosity of Soviet rule in Ukraine during the Holodomor is bolstered in the parts of the novel that present the apocalyptic images of famished, dying people. Particularly poignant is the portrayal of 'emaciated pathetic-looking little children', picking grain in the field in order to survive: '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). In this final section of Samchuk's novel, the reader is shown the most disturbing act of cruelty – the callous killing of children. Once again, Ukraine's aggressive neighbour is identified as her Other, in the description of the soldiers arriving from the north to secure grain fields from the starving peasants: 'They are the soldiers of "the great and brilliant future" who have come here from the distant north. 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 levelled' (*Maria*, 210–211). Bitter irony brings into sharp focus the false slogans proclaimed by the Bolsheviks, which, in juxtaposition with their actual deeds, amplify readers' realization of the deceitful nature of their rule. A sense of Otherness along with the propagation of fear that emanates from their belonging to a military group, the remoteness of their land, and especially from their harrowing brutality – all these are used by the writer to accentuate Russia's role in Ukraine's tragedy. Revealing Moscow's oppressive rule

in Ukraine, the novel's representation of the events between the 1860s and 1930s in Ukraine demonstrates how the Ukrainian perception of the Russians transforms, and, developing into fear, further leads to resentment. Leerssen's observation that the direction of image formation processes 'is determined at least in part by power relations' (Leerssen 2007, 343) allows us to assume that in the context of the Holodomor, there is a good reason to suggest that this process is governed by power relations solely.

This paper addressed the theme of fear through an examination of literary representations of images of Self and Other in Irish and Ukrainian famine fictions. The imagological analysis of the novels *The Silent People* by Walter Macken and *Maria: A Chronicle of a Life* by Ulas Samchuk allowed for the discernment of similar patterns in their image construction, revealing that in the Self/Other dichotomy, fear is an element of Otherness. The selected episodes, in which the 'othering' process was discussed, demonstrated that under conditions free from oppression, Otherness appears innocuous and non-threatening, and can be a source of amusement. Within the context of oppression, by contrast, violence and cruelty, which result from the abuse of power and are often authorized by the ruling class, generate fear and resentment of the oppressed. Hence, brought out and deepened by cultural elements, fear of the Other is a power-related phenomenon, whether under colonial rule or in the context of a totalitarian regime. While Irish and Ukrainian works of famine fiction constitute remarkably valuable sources for the study of the development and dissemination of perceptions and stereotypes between nations and groups of people by providing 'insight into the way specific historical events shape a society, and the attitudes, morals and behaviour of its members' (Weretiuk, June 2017, 53), they undoubtedly provide rich ground

for an examination of the representation of fear of the Other within the local and transnational contexts.

This paper is part of the research project *An Imagological Study of the Depiction of the Irish and Ukrainian Great Famines in novels by Samchuk, Macken, Motyl and Mullen*, supervised by Dr. Brigitte Le Juez and Dr. Áine McGillicuddy, defended in December 2018 at Dublin City University.

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