Gothic Pastoral

Terrible Idylls in Late Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature

Inauguraldissertation zur Erlangung des Grades eines
Doktors der Philosophie an der Neuphilologischen Fakultät der
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

von
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Acknowledgements

I would first of all like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Peter Paul Schnierer, for his continual advice and encouragement, as well as my second examiner, Prof. Dr. Vera Nünning.

For their attentive and thorough proofreading, I am indebted to Daniela Kugler and Stefanie Mainitz.

Many thanks also go to the 'Gothic group' and the participants of the *Oberseminar* at the English Department for their help and constructive feedback on various aspects of this thesis.

Finally, I am grateful to those people who, having supported me beyond the scope of English literature throughout the last years, have played no minor role in the completion of this project: All my friends, Ivancho Spiroski and my parents.

Heidelberg, June 2013

This dissertation was submitted with the title "Gothic Pastoral: Terrible Idylls in Late Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Gothic Fiction" at the Faculty of Modern Languages at Heidelberg University in October 2011.

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1. Introduction

The title of this study appears contradictory. At first sight, it seems to combine literary forms which are diametrically opposed to each other. In common usage, the pastoral is often associated with aspects like an idyllic nature, the Golden Age and nostalgia, whereas the Gothic is connected to a dark age of superstition and anarchy threatening any idyllic and enlightened order.

In the recent edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, the term *pastoral* is among other things defined as "a literary work portraying rural life or the life of shepherds, esp. in an idealized or romantic form" or "a rural and idyllic scene or picture" in general.[1] The dominant idea often related to this type of literature is a search for simplicity away from either a particular place (e.g. the city or the court) into the rural retreat of Arcadia, or from a particular period (e.g. adulthood) into the age of childhood.[2] The form originates in the *Idylls* of Theocritus, who wrote a collection of poems for the Alexandrian court in the third century BC. It was later taken up by the Roman writer Virgil, who, with his *Eclogues*, established the form which became influential in the European literary tradition.

By contrast, the Gothic has, since its inception with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, been frequently associated with the darker aspects of the world and human nature. The *OED* characterises the general term as designating anything "barbarous, rude, uncouth, unpolished, in bad taste" or "savage"; as a literary form, it is described as "a genre of fiction characterized by suspenseful, sensational plots involving supernatural or macabre elements and often (esp. in early use) having a medieval theme or setting".[3] Unlike the Gothic revival in architecture in the eighteenth century, which indeed revealed a kind of nostalgia for the past, in Gothic texts, the latter is not a Golden Age but rather a site of terror haunting the

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1 John Simpson (ed.). O*xford English Dictionary (OED). OED Online.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, s.v. "Pastoral". 24.09.2011. <http://www.oed.com>. Cf. also the definition in the *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*: "For the most part pastoral tends to be an idealization of shepherd life, and, by so being, creates an image of a peaceful and uncorrupted existence; a kind of prelapsarian world". J.A. Cuddon (ed.). *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, s.v. "Pastoral".

2 This association of pastoral with the notion of childhood innocence has been particularly influential since Peter V. Marinelli's famous treatise on pastoral writing. Cf. Peter V. Marinelli. *Pastoral*. The Critical Idiom, 15. London: Methuen, 1971.

3 Simpson, *OED*, s.v. "Gothic".

present.[4] This insistence on a more savage time stage is often regarded in connection with a whole range of other stock features, e.g. medieval castles, vampires, wicked tyrants and all kinds of supernatural or terrific occurrences.[5]

Despite this seeming incompatibility of the Gothic and the pastoral, there are numerous instances in English literature where both forms co-occur. In H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), for example, the protagonist, after his journey to the London of the future, finds a landscape typically associated with the pastoral ideal.[6] In this *locus amoenus*, the Eloi live a seemingly innocent existence in harmony with an idyllic natural environment. However, the Time Traveller soon finds out that this bucolic idyll is merely a facade, behind which Gothic dangers lurk. Beneath the green pastures, there is a labyrinthine underworld, populated by the Morlocks, horrible half-beasts which come to the upper world at night to devour the helpless Eloi. What initially seemed an inviting setting quickly turns out to be a dangerous prison: After the stealing of his time machine, the protagonist must fight against the infernal beings, who threaten to take his life.

Such an overlap between both modes, i.e. the paradoxical portrayal of a rural environment as both idyllic and a place of sinister dangers, can be found from the beginnings of the literary Gothic tradition. It is not before the late nineteenth century and after, however, that a proliferation of what will be termed a *Gothic-pastoral mode* occurs. Authors like H.G. Wells, Bram Stoker, H.P. Lovecraft or Stephen King all include features assigned to the pastoral and the Gothic within their novels. The large number of texts exhibiting a closeness of these forms suggests that the assumed incompatibility as outlined initially results rather from an intuitive suggestion that equates *pastoral* with 'idyllic country' and *Gothic* with 'darkness and chaos' than from a precise definition of both concepts.

Indeed, this problem of delimitation is not only widespread in common usage but even in many critical accounts on the two modes. Here, they often seem to have become vague concepts designating either all types of idealised rural environments or anything sinister and fearful. Brian Loughrey complains that *pastoral* has become a "contested term" in twentieth-century criticism, which includes any depiction of a rural retreat in combination with a kind

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4 Chris Baldick therefore states that "literary Gothic is really anti-Gothic". Chris Baldick (ed.). *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, xiii.

5 Cf. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary*, s.v. "Gothic novel/fiction".

6 The term *pastoral ideal* subsumes the idealised features usually associated with pastoral writing, e.g. the Golden Age, innocence, nostalgia, *locus amoenus*, etc. Cf. Peter Lindenbaum. *Changing Landscapes. Anti-pastoral Sentiment in the English Renaissance*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986, ix.

of simplification and idealisation; in his view, the result is a "bewildering variety of forms".[7] Likewise, Alexandra Warwick argues that nowadays, every text containing gloomy elements or negotiating anxieties in a certain way is labelled as *Gothic*.[8] The extreme transformation and diversification of both forms, particularly in postmodern times, has even led to considerations whether they have become obsolete or have developed into something else.[9]

The present study will focus on the question why a blending between the Gothic and the pastoral is possible. The primary aim is to demonstrate that already in antiquity the pastoral contains several features whose continuation in English literature allows for a co-occurrence with the Gothic. By investigating a selected body of texts which exhibit the resulting Gothic-pastoral mode, the analysis will give an overview of its constituents and different manifestations in the English literary history. The main focus will be on the period of the *fin de siècle* and the twentieth century, where most of these hybrid instances can be found.

By tracing the fields of intersection between the two modes, the study also intends to contribute to the much-debated question of how to define such abstract concepts as *Gothic* and *pastoral*. It will be shown that, far from being such disparate terms as the definition provided by the *OED* suggests, both are flexible categories which are even capable of including elements from a (seemingly) different mode. Against this background, it will even turn out that one can arrive at a new definition of the more general term *mode*.

Finally, the analysis aims at shedding new light on the recent controversy whether the Gothic and the pastoral are extinct nowadays and if it therefore makes rather sense to speak of a "post-pastoral" or a "post-Gothic" mode. As will be argued, instead of having become obsolete or been transformed into something else, the two forms have survived in a specific way; this becomes particularly obvious when looking at their mutual overlap.

In order to achieve these aims, the analysis will first provide a theoretical fundament (chapter 2). After an overview of the four basic areas in which the Gothic and the pastoral overlap, the current state of research concerning a combination of both modes in English literature will be outlined. Against this background, the major theses and the methodological approach this analysis is based on will be introduced, followed by a summary of the criteria underlying the selection of primary texts to be investigated.

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7 Bryan Loughrey. *The Pastoral Mode: A Casebook*. Casebook Series. London: Macmillan, 1984, 4.

8 Cf. Alexandra Warwick. "Feeling Gothicky?" *Gothic Studies* 9.1 (2007): 6-7.

9 Cf. Fred Botting. "Candygothic", in *The Gothic*, ed. Fred Botting. Cambridge: Brewer, 2001, 133-151; John Barrell and John Bull. *The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse*. London: Allen Lane, 1974, 432.

In chapter 3, the historical development of the features allowing for a blending of the two forms will be traced from antiquity up to the mid-nineteenth century. The study will focus first on Virgil's *Eclogues* and a selection of excerpts from Homer's *Odyssey*. Afterwards, it will proceed to the English literary tradition. The subchapter "Gothic-Pastoral Precursors" will treat texts from the Renaissance to the mid-eighteenth century which already exhibit preliminary traits of a hybrid form; it is followed by an investigation of the emerging early Gothic-pastoral mode from Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) up until Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).

The fourth chapter will deal with a selection of Gothic-pastoral texts of the *fin de siècle*. As will be demonstrated, the tradition as outlined so far reaches a climax at that time. The analysis will place its emphasis on four authors in whose writings this mixed mode occurs; besides H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), it will also include Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899).

Chapter 5 will, with the help of a selection of texts written by British and American authors, focus on the continuation of the Gothic-pastoral mode in the twentieth century. For this purpose, it will be divided into two parts. The first part will deal with the development of this form in Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan" (1894), Algernon Blackwood's "The Willows" (1907) as well as H.P. Lovecraft's "The Colour out of Space" (1927) and "The Dunwich Horror" (1929). The second part will concentrate on the persistence of this mode in the second half of the century; here, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and a selected body of Stephen King's rural fiction, including "The Mist" (1980), *Needful Things* (1991) and "Children of The Corn" (1978), will be scrutinised under this aspect.

In the concluding chapter, the main results of the analysis will be summarised, followed by a definition of what the term *Gothic pastoral* designates. Afterwards, the consequences for the definition of the term *mode* will be investigated. Moreover, current theories declaring the obsoleteness of the Gothic and the pastoral will be examined in light of this redefinition, by which the continuity of both forms in postmodern times can be accounted for. The study will finally close with an overview of more texts exhibiting this mixed form.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1. Gothic and Pastoral: A Seeming Incompatibility

If one follows definitions of *Gothic* and *pastoral* such as those provided by the *OED* which have been outlined in the previous chapter, an approach towards the question in how far there can be overlaps between these concepts seems to be completely impossible: Regarding the pastoral as solely portraying shepherds within an idyllic countryside and the Gothic as a form emphasising nothing but darkness and terror, these classifications do not even admit the slightest closeness of both modes. However, such generalising and rather simplifying conceptions of the two forms fail to explain their enormous flexibility and complexity. As will be demonstrated, with the help of critical accounts that go beyond these views, it is possible to trace several commonalities.

To be more precise, one can find four fields in which the Gothic and the pastoral intersect. Three of these refer to their conventional character; it means the employment of a certain repertoire of features which are taken up repeatedly and modified in the history of these writings. The fourth area describes a certain worldview or attitude at the heart of them, i.e. a specific view of human strength and possibilities within the fictional and – by implication – the reader's own world.

2.2. Gothic-Pastoral Overlaps

2.2.1. Convention

2.2.1.1. Gothic and Pastoral as Conventional Forms

In order to account for the three conventionalised features which allow for a blending of both modes, it first makes sense to state what is actually meant by *convention* and why this term particularly applies to Gothic and pastoral writing. In *What is Pastoral?* (1996), Paul Alpers establishes the idea of the pastoral as a conventional form.[10] Although this is a characteristic

[10] Cf. Paul J. Alpers. *What is Pastoral?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 79-134.

trait of all literary works to some extent, this mode places special emphasis on convention. To begin with, this notion is fundamental to the pastoral mode in the literal sense. After all, the word is derived from Latin *convenire* 'to come together'. In Theocritus's *Idylls*, herdsmen convene for song and colloquies in order to explore fundamental human problems such as absence, separation or loss.[11] Moreover, convention lies at the heart of the song contests many of these poems focus on. Here, the second singer must accept the terms set by the first one while at the same time using his own images and claims.[12] Convention hence does not rely on mere imitation but always also includes an individual modification.[13]

This second meaning of the term not only applies to the content of single poems but to the general relation of pastoral texts to each other within the whole tradition as such. Similarly to the singers of the aforementioned competitions, these writings have repeatedly taken up features from their predecessors; in the course of time, this process has resulted in the establishment of a particular repertoire of certain traits, whose occurrence within a piece of writing indicates the presence of this mode (e.g. the Golden Age, idealised landscape and simple figures). Since many of these features have constantly reappeared, their employment has acquired an increasingly artificial character.[14] At the same time, they have not merely been imitated but usually also been modified to a certain extent, resulting in manifestations of this mode in ever newly adapted forms.[15] The concentration on simple figures, for instance, has always been a feature of pastoral writing; however, as Alpers notes, whereas they were represented by shepherds in antiquity and Renaissance times, from the seventeenth century on, they could be typified by any characters whose social inferiority and humbleness stands in the tradition of the classic herdsmen.[16] Although Leo Marx, who regards shepherds as

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11 In the first *Idyll*, for instance, Thyrsis, in the company of a fellow goatherd, sings about the death of his beloved Daphnis.

12 *Idyll* VI, for example, features a singing challenge between Damoetas and Daphnis. Since the latter has initiated the challenge, he is also the one who decides upon the topic and begins with the subject of Polyphemus's lamentation for Galatea. Whereas Daphnis directly addresses the unhappy Cyclops, warning him of the dangers of unrequited love, Damoetas takes up the topic of Polypheme but modifies the narrative situation: In his monologue, he speaks in the first person from the perspective of the Cyclops himself, describing his inner life, i.e. his attempts at overcoming his love for Galatea.

13 Cf. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 86.

14 Cf. Ibid., 80.

15 In order to account for the historical continuity as well as permanent modification of the pastoral mode, Alpers uses Kenneth Burke's term of the "representative anecdote", which "is a typical instance of an aspect of reality and […] by being typical, […] serves to generate specific depictions, or representations, of reality". Ibid., 13-14; cf. Kenneth Burke. *A Grammar of Motives.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969, 59.

16 "The dramatis personae of pastoral can be extended to include other rustics or socially inferior persons on the grounds that they are the equivalent, in a given society or world, of shepherds, or that the more truly

absolutely necessary for pastoral literature (a view which he subsumed under the formula "no shepherd, no pastoral"), would contradict such a statement,[17] this analysis will argue alongside Alpers in this respect. However, it will not support his idea that the idyllic elements relating to the pastoral ideal do not belong to the conventional repertoire of the pastoral mode, which in his view only concentrates on the lives of humble figures.[18] Rather, it will view pastoral as a more flexible form which includes these idealised elements but at the same time often subverts them.

The Gothic can also be regarded as a highly conventionalised form. Like the pastoral, it makes use of a stock of artificial elements it frequently takes up. Due to its recurrent emphasis on artifice, Jerrold Hogle even speaks of a "counterfeit Gothic".[19] The term refers to the fact that there is actually no 'original' Gothic, since this form has from its beginnings always been the revival of something else. Already the initial novel of the Gothic tradition, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), falsely claims to be the translation of a manuscript written by a Renaissance priest. Moreover, the spectres in the story are ghosts of something that is already artificial, e.g. the effigy of an underground tomb or the walking figure of a portrait.[20] This use of elements relating to a past which is emptied out of meaning and counterfeit is a feature repeated again and again within the Gothic tradition. The result is a constant reappearance of typical Gothic stock features (e.g. the medieval castle, the vicious count, the Gothic heroine, etc.) within the history of this mode. This corresponds to the pastoral's steady reiteration of elements like the Golden Age or an idealised nature.

Similarly to the latter mode, the Gothic's conventional character does not mean a mere imitation but usually includes a certain degree of modification. An example is the development of the feature of the haunted castle in the twentieth century: Although certain traits typical of this element have been preserved at this time, e.g. labyrinthine corridors, the containment of a savage threat within, etc., it is not merely represented by a medieval fortress anymore; instead, there are manifold continuations of this notion, ranging from haunted

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have the representative status that traditional pastoral ascribes to its herdsmen" (Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 27).

17 Leo Marx. "Pastoralism in America", in *Ideology and Classic American Literature*, eds. Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 45.

18 Cf. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 27.

19 Cf. Jerrold E. Hogle. "The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit and the Progress of Abjection", in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 293-304; ---. "Introduction: The Gothic in Western Culture", in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 1-19.

20 Cf. Hogle, "Western Culture", 15.

hotels (cf. Stephen King's *The Shining* [1977]) to sinister spaceships, where extraterrestrial monsters prowl (cf. Ridley Scott's *Alien* [1979]).

In the following, the three conventional features which allow for an overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral will be introduced. A commonality of these elements is that each of them explores a certain tension – be it between civilisation and nature, an ideal order and its disturbance or the support of dominant discourses and their subversion.

2.2.1.2. Convention I: Civilisation versus Nature

One of the basic features of pastoral convention is the contrast between the urban/courtly world and that of the country/an untouched nature. Frank Kermode subsumed this distinction under the nurture-nature or art-nature opposition.[21] It is realised in terms of style and content. Stylistically, it denotes the fact that 'low' (or 'natural') themes and images, e.g. humble shepherds and their work, are depicted in a 'high' (or 'courtly') style which underlines the artificiality of the fictional world, e.g. by the deployment of a sophisticated language. Indeed, already at its inception, pastoral literature was a form which presented a supposedly 'inferior' rural world in a decidedly more stylised lyric form to an aristocratic audience (the Alexandrian court).

The opposition of city/court versus country is also included thematically within these texts. Typically, a tension is established between rural simplicity, innocence and roughness/savagery on the one hand and urban/courtly sophistication, refinement as well as corruption on the other. Raymond Williams notes that in antiquity "it was especially in relation to Rome that the contrast crystallised, at the point where the city could be seen as an independent organism".[22] It was not only the vastness of the city with its overcrowded streets, noise and traffic but also its atmosphere of flattery and bribery that was often felt to have a life of its own, rendering it a dangerous place which was regarded to be out of control.[23] By creating a bucolic counter-world, defined by a more original simplicity as well as roughness due to its distance from the more civilised but also corrupted city/court, the pastoral mode has since its beginnings explored the opposition between both spheres.

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21 Cf. Frank Kermode (ed.). *English Pastoral Poetry. From the Beginnings to Marvell*. London: George G. Harrap & Co, 1952, 37.

22 Raymond Williams. *The Country and the City*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1973, 46.

23 Cf. Ibid.

In a more general sense, this contrast between civilisation and savagery/nature as represented by the pastoral city-country dichotomy is also central to the conventional repertoire of Gothic literature. Like its pastoral counterpart, it has since its inception been associated with a stylistic blending of 'low' and 'high' elements.[24] Examples of the former would be the various gory and horrible stock features mentioned initially while aspects like its narrative complexity[25] or the reflection of fundamental cultural anxieties[26] can be seen as manifestations of the latter.

More importantly, it has been thematically linked to the Germanic tribe of the Goths, whose migration across southern Europe in the fifth century AD and 'barbaric' intrusion fatally weakened Roman 'civilisation'. Thus, it has usually been characterised by various dichotomies like primitive versus civilised or barbarism versus culture.[27] Like the pastoral, which depicts the context of the city – and by implication the civilised world - often as a place of both culture and corruption, the Gothic reveals doubts concerning the concept of civilisation in general by exhibiting its unclear demarcations from the sphere of a more 'natural' barbarism. As David Punter notes,

> time and time again, those writers who are referred to as Gothic turn out to be those who bring us up against the boundaries of the civilised, who demonstrate to us the relative nature of ethical and behavioural codes and place over against the conventional world a different sphere in which these codes do not operate, or operate only in distorted forms.[28]

This tension between culture and barbarism has taken various forms in the history of the mode. Whereas in the earliest period of Gothic fiction, for instance, it was expressed by the theme of a feudal past reaching into an enlightened present,[29] in the late nineteenth century, it manifested itself prevalently in images of racial degeneracy.[30] In the course of this study, it

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24 Cf. Hogle, "Western Culture", 8-9.

25 Cf., for instance, the complex arrangement of various narratives in a labyrinthine fashion in novels like Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) or Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

26 This aspect will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 2.2.1.4.

27 Cf. Catherine Spooner. *Contemporary Gothic*. Focus on Contemporary Issues. London: Reaktion Books, 2006, 12.

28 David Punter. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. New York: Longman, 1996, 405.

29 Cf., for example, the recurring theme of the aristocratic villain pursuing the middle-class heroine in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) or in most of Ann Radcliffe's novels.

30 Cf., for example, R.L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), which takes up late nineteenth-century fears of degeneration by portraying the development of a respectable middle-class gentleman into an atavistic figure.

will turn out that this employment of a Gothicised oscillation between civilisation and nature makes it possible for the Gothic to easily include the pastoral city-country opposition.

2.2.1.3. Convention II: Order versus Disturbance

The second conventional feature the Gothic and the pastoral have in common is a dichotomy between order and disturbance. It refers to the previously mentioned fact that these forms do not, as certain scholars claim, *either* insist on portraying only the dark side *or* an idyllic state of the world and human nature respectively. Instead, both are flexible forms that are able to include aspects standing in contrast to these elements.

In the case of the pastoral, many critics have argued that its main function since antiquity has been the portrayal of an idealised refuge. In their view, this type of literature has frequently served to offer a retreat from the city's depravity into the unspoilt nature of a *locus amoenus*, where man can regain his former unity with the natural world. Particularly important to these scholars is the notion of the Golden Age, a mythical existence during which mankind lived in complete happiness and which preceded the atrocities of a harsh present.

In his *Dissertatio de Carmine Pastorali* (1659), for instance, one of the earliest treatises on the pastoral mode, René Rapin comments on the necessity of a mood of simplicity and innocence in connection with the portrayal of a Golden Age:

> As for the *Manners* of your *Shepherds*, they must be such as theirs who liv'd in the Islands of the Happy or Golden Age. They must be candid, simple, and ingenuous; lovers of Goodness, and Justice, affable, and kind; strangers to all fraud; contrivance, and deceits; in their love modest, and chast, not one suspitious word, no loose expression to be allow'd.[31]

This identification of the pastoral with an idealised past has been extremely popular among later critics.[32] A very prominent text in this respect is Friedrich Schiller's *On Naïve and*

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31 René Rapin. "A Treatise de Carmine Pastorali" [1659], trans. Thomas Creech, prefixed to the *Idylliums of Theocritus* [1684], reproduced by the Augustan Reprint Society, No. 3. New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1967, 67.

32 For examples of critics who were influenced by this view before Schiller, see Bovier de Fontenelle and Alexander Pope. The former sees the main aim of the pastoral "in exposing to the Eye only the Tranquility of a Shepherd's Life, and in dissembling or concealing its Meanness, as also in showing only its Innocence, and hiding its Miseries". For the latter, "pastoral is an image of what they call the Golden age. So that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceiv'd to have been". Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle. "On Pastorals" [1688], trans. Mr. Motteux, in *Treatise of the Epick Poem* [1695], ed. René Le Bossu. London: General Books LLC, 2009, 284;

Sentimental Poetry (1795-6).[33] Defining the character of the sentimental idyll in the works of several eighteenth-century German poets, Schiller regards their main aim to be "the poetic representation of innocence and contented mankind".[34] He argues that with such a background, poets logically seek settings which are far from tumult, education, and refinement. Moreover, he links the state of idyllicism in the Golden Age not only to a spatial but also to a temporary retreat with regard to the life stages of humanity: Apart from their idealised surroundings, he notes, these texts portray "the period before the beginnings of civilization in the childlike age of man".[35]

Such a sentimentalist idea of pastoral literature has had a tremendous influence and can still be found in twentieth-century criticism. At times, there are even definitions of this mode as a purely escapist form. W.W. Greg, for example, perceives the general aim of pastoral works to be their portrayal of an "escape […] to a life of simplicity and innocence from the bitter luxury of the court and the menial bread of princes".[36] For this reason, the mode acts "purely as a solace and relief from the fervid life of actuality, and comes as a fresh and cooling draught to lips burning with the fever of the city".[37] Although Greg admits that there are works that include references to the actual conditions of the city and the current reader, he views these instances as contaminations of the original, purely escapist form as established by Theocritus.[38] Likewise, Renato Poggioli argues that "the psychological root of the pastoral is a double longing after innocence and happiness, to be recovered not through conversion or regeneration, but merely through retreat".[39] According to him, the pastoral impulse results from the desire for the escape from the harsh realities of urban life into an imaginary and

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Alexander Pope. "A Discourse on Pastoral Poetry" [1717], in *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. Norman Ault. Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1936, 298.

33 Because of its enormous influence on later pastoral criticism, Alpers calls Schiller's text an "anatomy of modern thinking about pastoral". Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 28.

34 Friedrich von Schiller. *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, along with *On the Sublime* [1795-6], trans. Julius A. Elias. New York: Ungar, 1966, 146.

35 Ibid.

36 Walter W. Greg. *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama. A Literary Inquiry, with Special Reference to the Pre-Restoration Stage in England*. London: A.H. Bullen, 1906, 6.

37 Ibid., 7.

38 Cf. Ibid., 7-8.

39 Renato Poggioli. *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975, 1.

dream-like existence based solely on wishful thinking;[40] hence, the main task of this kind of writing is to "exalt the pleasure principle at the expense of the reality principle".[41]

Consequently, it has become obvious that the conception of the pastoral as an overall escapist mode, which only portrays an idyllic context and celebrates the early stages of mankind, has a long tradition within the critical history of this form. Indeed, the longing for the flight into an unspoilt nature, resulting from a dissatisfaction with a fast-moving, urbanised world, is certainly an important aspect of this concept. Nevertheless, the idea that it *merely* concentrates on these features or that it is completely escapist is an oversimplification, which fails to account for its complexity. From their beginnings, pastoral works have paradoxically established the image of such an idealised existence but at the same time expressed doubts about the possibility and permanence of it. Peter Lindenbaum argues that this kind of literature posits the pastoral ideal as a preliminary working hypothesis, which is used as a basis for further discussion; he therefore comes to the conclusion that there is "considerable criticism and questioning of the pastoral ideal in all pastoral writing".[42] According to Marinelli, "the pastoral is not by the widest stretch of the imagination an escapist literature in the vulgar sense", since "a note of criticism is inherent in all pastoral from the beginning of its existence".[43] Such criticism of the bucolic way of living has often been included in the form of anti-pastoral features, which constitute all kinds of disruptions of the bucolic lifestyle or reveal its shortcomings. In *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), Leo Marx argues that

> most literary works called pastorals – at least those substantial enough to retain our interest – do not finally permit us to come away with anything like the simple, affirmative attitude we adopt toward pleasing rural scenery. In one way or another [...] these works manage to qualify, or call into question, or bring irony to bear against the illusion of peace and harmony in a green pasture.[44]

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40 Cf. Ibid., 2.

41 Ibid., 14.

42 Lindenbaum, *Changing Landscapes*, ix.

43 Marinelli, *Pastoral*, 11-12.

44 Leo Marx. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 25. In his view, this questioning of the sentimentalist image associated with the pastoral ideal does not apply to all pastoral works. He distinguishes between the "complex and the sentimental kinds of pastoralism" (Ibid.). Whereas the former refers to the definition of pastoral as escapist mode portraying a simple idyll, the latter requires "an effort of mind and spirit" (Ibid., 70.). Since Virgil's *Eclogues*, however, on which the following pastoral tradition is grounded, are an example of the complex use of pastoral, the analysis will neglect the sentimentalist forms of this mode (whose occurrence is much more rare in any case).

He further notes that against the simple, idyllic vision of the pastoral ideal, this mode brings up an anti-pastoral counterforce which is more real. This force may impinge upon the green pastures not only from the side of civilisation but also from the surrounding wilderness.[45] Hence, he concludes that the pastoral space becomes a middle ground between the repressions of a restrictive urban world on the one hand and the dangers of an untamed nature beyond its borders on the other.[46]

In a general sense, it can thus be argued that the pastoral mode contains a contrast between the pastoral or idyllic elements often associated with it and an anti-pastoral component, which works against their harmony or reveals their shortcomings. As will be demonstrated, this dichotomy can already be observed within one of the earliest texts of the pastoral tradition, Virgil's *Eclogue*s; in the first poem, for instance, it is linked to the fate of two shepherds, one of which may live a life within the harmony of the pastoral ideal while the other is excluded from it and must leave his lands to the devastation by forces from the city.[47] In the English literary tradition, this idea of a two-sided pastoral enclave is also widespread. Examples include Spenser's sixth book of *The Faerie Queene*, where the idyllic rural existence is destroyed by a horde of savage bandits, or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which deals with man's loss of harmony with nature due to the intrusion of the agent of evil.[48]

On a more abstract level, such an oscillation between an idyllic order and its disturbance is also central to the Gothic. In fact, it usually exhibits not only traits which are destructive and give rise to fear but also upholds the belief in an ideal order. The latter often represents Enlightenment values, technical progress and various notions related to the general concept of western civilisation. Since this order stands in contrast to the disturbing elements commonly associated with this mode, one could argue that it should, in correspondence to the anti-pastoral features which oppose the idyllic traits normally connected to the pastoral, be labelled an anti-Gothic component. Indeed, since its inception in the eighteenth century, the Gothic has in many cases not entirely subverted Enlightenment ideas of rationality and culture. Rather, there has often been their establishment, followed by their subversion through a Gothic counterforce and an ending in their re-establishment. Fred Botting notes that

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45 Cf. Ibid., 24-26.

46 Cf. Ibid., 22.

47 Cf. chapter 3.1.1.

48 Cf. chapter 3.2.2.; 3.2.4.

> the terrors and horrors of transgression in Gothic writing become a powerful means to reassert the values of society, virtue and propriety: transgression, by crossing the social and aesthetic limits, serves to reinforce or underline their value and necessity, restoring or defining limits.[49]

Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), for instance, initially sets up the anti-Gothic image of a rational, civilised and progressive west, which is then increasingly undermined through the depiction of the western world's invasion by a Gothic monster which represents everything diametrically opposed to it. With the defeat of the vampire, the former order appears to be finally reconstituted. In this context, Christopher Craft speaks of the novel's "tripartite structure"; according to him, the text

> first invites or admits a monster, then entertains and is entertained by monstrosity for some extended duration, until in its closing pages it expels or repudiates the monster and all the disruption that he/she/it brings.[50]

Hence, it can be concluded that the Gothic and the pastoral are characterised by a self-conscious awareness of conventionalised features, whose opposite they are able to include, giving rise to a dynamic and flexible form which oscillates between an ideal order and its disturbance. The Gothic depicts a world defined by sinister traits (a Gothic component) which nevertheless usually needs some kind of structure (an anti-Gothic component); the pastoral at first establishes the image of an idyllic and peaceful environment (a pastoral component) that is disturbed by a counterforce or has its shortcomings (an anti-pastoral component). The subsequent study will show that if both modes are combined, a seemingly paradoxical form is the result, in which an extreme state of harmony and innocence coexists with a world of terror and chaos. This is due to the fact that in these instances the order is represented by the idyllic component typical of the pastoral while its disturbance is epitomised by a Gothic component.

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49 Fred Botting. *Gothic*. The New Critical Idiom. London: Routledge, 1996, 7.

50 Christopher Craft. "'Kiss Me with Those *Red Lips*': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*". *Representations* 8 (1984): 109.

2.2.1.4. Convention III: Opposition of Two Voices

The incorporation of opposing elements also refers to the relation of the Gothic and the pastoral to the respective historical conditions in which they arise. In fact, as has become obvious above, both are not purely escapist forms depicting artificial spaces completely removed from the problems of the larger world; rather, there is always a tension between the constructed nature of the fictional world and the reader's socio-cultural context. A particular strategy the two modes share in this respect is the way they negotiate contemporary dominant discourses, which they simultaneously confirm and subvert by deploying two conflicting voices.

The general link between the fictional space as portrayed in the pastoral mode and the larger world outside has been noted by several critics. Already George Puttenham, in one of the first English definitions of pastoral, argued that this type of literature is

> not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rusticall manner of lovers and communication, but under the vaile of homely persons and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to have beene disclosed in any other sort.[51]

For him, the depiction of a Golden Age in an idyllic rural setting provides a means of criticising the present conditions at court by offering a veil through which these things can be perceived in displaced form. In modern criticism, several scholars have taken up this idea in different ways. In William Empson's view, the simplicity of the pastoral environment, in particular of its inhabitants, serves to investigate more complex issues of the reader's context. Hence, he argues, the main function of pastoral writing lies in the process of "putting the complex into the simple":[52]

> The essential trick of the old pastoral, which was felt to imply a beautiful relation between rich and poor, was to make simple people express strong feelings (felt as the most universal subject, something fundamentally true about everybody) in learned and fashionable language […].[53]

In a more general way, Andrew Ettin defines the pastoral enclave as a microcosm of human concerns, which are magnified so that they can be better scrutinised.[54] Likewise, Alpers states

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51 Quoted in Loughrey, *Pastoral Mode*, 34.

52 William Empson. *Some Versions of Pastoral*. A New Directions Paperbook, 92. New York: New Directions Pub. Corp., 1974, 22.

53 Ibid., 11.

54 Cf. Andrew V. Ettin. *Literature and the Pastoral*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984, 31.

that the concentration on the weakness of simple figures is a means to examine current issues and the human condition in general.[55]

A central feature in this regard is a motif Terry Gifford refers to as the movement of retreat and return. In his view, a major element of much pastoral writing is the protagonist's journey from city/court to country and his eventual return; during his stay among the rural society, whose way of living usually represents an alternative to the dominant courtly or urban existence, he gains a useful insight. In a figurative sense, this process can also be applied to the audience, for whom the depiction of the rural world, in particular the values it stands for, has a certain relevance; accordingly, like the protagonist, it learns something from 'moving' into the bucolic enclave and the final 'return'.[56] Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, for instance, which features the retreat of several courtiers into the forest of Arden, ends in their reconciliation. The pastoral setting provides a borderland space, where not only the possibility of an ideal and peaceful society but also, in particular through Rosalind's guise as Ganymede, contemporary ideas concerning the relation of the sexes are scrutinised. Like the fictional characters, who eventually re-embark for the court after exploring these notions, the audience 'returns' to its previous existence with a new awareness of these issues after the play's ending.[57]

In the case of the Gothic, some scholars have, as Greg and Poggioli did for the pastoral, seen its main function in creating an escapist environment far away from its respective historical conditions. William Patrick Day, for instance, argues that the fictional context of this mode is a "world of utter subjectivity", which "reject[s] the very idea of history".[58] Likewise, Coral Ann Howells notes that it "looks away from the here and now, into past times or distant locales (or to put it more accurately, into a fantasy world which is both timeless and placeless [...])".[59] Their views must be seen within a more general tradition of perceiving this mode as an inferior literary form devoid of any deeper meaning.[60]

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55 Cf. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 50. Since Alpers's view rather belongs to the subchapter on the attitude both modes have in common (2.2.2.), it is only briefly mentioned here.

56 Cf. Terry Gifford. *Pastoral*. The New Critical Idiom. London: Routledge, 1999, 81-82.

57 Cf. Ibid., 86-88.

58 William Patrick Day. *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985, 33.

59 Coral Ann Howells. *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction*. London: Athlone Press, 1978, 7-8.

60 In fact, such a disparaging attitude can still be found frequently within Gothic criticism. Cf., for instance, Ian Watt's statement that these works exhibit little artistic merit or Gary Kelly's opinion that this form lacks any degree of seriousness (cf. Ian Watt. *The Rise of the Novel. Studies in Defoe, Richardson and*

However, the Gothic, like its pastoral counterpart, deploys its conventional traits not to create an artificial space removed from the reader's own world but to simultaneously negotiate issues related to the latter. Already in 1824, Walter Scott commented on this aspect in his introduction to a collection of Ann Radcliffe's novels. He states that she had

> selected for her place of action the south of Europe, where the human passions, like the weeds of the climate, are supposed to attain portentous growth under the fostering sun; [...] and where feudal tyranny and Catholic superstition still continue to exercise their sway over the slave and bigot [...]. These circumstances are skilfully selected, to give probability to events which could not, without great violation of truth, be represented as having taken place in England.[61]

The fact that he judges Radcliffe's portrayal of the setting by the criterion of "probability" and the question whether there was no "great violation of truth" with regard to events which could also have taken place in England rejects the idea of a merely escapist world of fantasy. The use of southern European countries in her novels surely aimed at depicting an environment of Catholic superstition and medieval feudalism which stood in contrast to the current British reader's context; at the same time, however, it served to expresses contemporary fears that the barbaric past as typical of this fictional world could threaten his more 'civilised' existence.

Therefore, it can be argued that the pastoral retreat-return movement also applies to the Gothic, in which the reader 'moves' to a distant setting but from where he eventually 'returns' with an insight as regards his own culture. In this case, however, the notions which are explored are particularly linked to current anxieties. In fact, this mode often also enacts this idea by portraying a literal retreat-return movement of the protagonist. This particularly applies to the Gothic novels of the *fin de siècle*. Characters like Stoker's Jonathan Harker, Wells's Prendick or Conrad's Marlow all travel to a fictional environment, where they are exposed to a monstrous reflection of current fears regarding a declining British Empire; their return from these places also goes along with the reader's insight into these issues.[62]

Fielding. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957; Gary Kelly. *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780-1805*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). Both critics, however, relativised such a strong disparagement in later publications; whereas Watt acknowledged that the Gothic opened up the domain of the unconscious in remarkable ways, Kelly praised it as "the most striking and dramatic form" (cf. Ian Watt. "Time and Family in the Gothic Novel: *The Castle of Otranto*". *Eighteenth Century Life* 10.3 [1986]: 169; Gary Kelly. *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830*. London: Longman, 1989, 58). Nevertheless, the view of the Gothic as an unserious form has persisted in later and even more recent publications (cf., for instance, Elizabeth R. Napier. *The Failure of Gothic. Problems of Disjunction in an Early Eighteenth-Century Form*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1987; James Watt. *Contesting the Gothic. Fiction, Genre, and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 5).

61 Quoted in Victor Sage. *The Gothick Novel: A Casebook*. London: Macmillan, 1990, 59.

62 Cf. chapter 4.

The idea of a mode which offers a retreat where the reader can gain an insight into the troubling areas of his society has been emphasised by several other critics. In *The Literature of Terror* (1980), for instance, Punter interprets this form in terms of a specific enactment of bourgeois anxieties; according to him, it functions as a vehicle by means of which "the middle class displaces the hidden violence of present social structures, conjures them up again as past, and promptly falls under their spell".[63] Kelly Hurley generalises this view even more by stating that

> the Gothic is rightly […] understood as a cyclical genre that reemerges in times of cultural stress in order to negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernaturalized) form.[64]

Likewise, Stephen Arata argues that in Gothic texts, "historically specific" concerns are "cast into narrative, into stories a culture tells itself in order to account for its troubles and perhaps assuage its anxieties".[65] The analysis will hence argue along with such approaches which underline the Gothic's creation of a space removed from but at the same time close to its specific socio-cultural context.[66]

To sum up, the Gothic and the pastoral enact a retreat into a transgressive space, where the problems of a certain society are scrutinised in a displaced form. The question is now what the result of this movement is. To be more precise, does the return from the subversive space

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63 Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 218-219.

64 Kelly Hurley. "British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930", in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 194.

65 Stephen D. Arata. *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian* Fin de Siècle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 1.

66 This historicist emphasis on the Gothic's potential for negotiating or even mitigating contemporary fears has been severely questioned by Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall. They argue that criticism on this mode has "abandoned any credible historical grasp upon its subject", resulting in "a collapse of history into universal psychology" (Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall. "Gothic Criticism", in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 218). Punter's view of a fearful bourgeoisie, which trembles at every deviation from their imagined middle-class ideology, is highly problematic for them, as from a Marxist perspective, this class is "the most restlessly dynamic and iconoclastic class in history"; its prevailing mood is hence not one of fear but on the contrary one of general complacency (Ibid., 226). Since both authors deny the Gothic any subversive qualities, it remains not much more than a sensationalist genre with the overall function to entertain. However, as Davison notes, their approach is unconvincing. In her view, it is not well grounded, since they fail to undermine the abundant evidence that supports the relation of this mode to the fearful aspects of its respective society which they negate so vehemently (Carol Margaret Davison. *Gothic Literature 1764-1824*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009, 10-11). Furthermore, she states that "none of the critics they mention actually engages in a *dehistoricized* psychoanalytic interpretation" (Ibid., 11). Admittedly, Punter's or Arata's statements that the Gothic responds to a constantly fearful bourgeoisie plagued by anxieties from all sides or that it can even remedy current anxieties may be somewhat exaggerated. In a more moderate sense, however, the Gothic's status as a response to those areas of society and culture which are marginal and tabooed or to times when upheavals in the fabric of society take place cannot be doubted.

these forms create also mean the complete re-establishment of the dominant values as typical of their cultural context? In fact, both modes share an ambiguity in this respect: The retreat-return movement ends in a state of tension, in which these values are paradoxically both reconfirmed *and* undermined.

Regarding the pastoral, this ambiguity can already be found in ancient times. As outlined above, in his first *Eclogue*, Virgil describes the contrary fates of two shepherds, one of whom may stay in his idealised landscapes while the other has been dispossessed and must leave them. Their fates are linked to the current system, by which they have been favoured or victimised respectively. By establishing such an opposition, Virgil consciously creates a contrast between two voices, one of which supports while the other subverts the current dominant ideology, without stating his own opinion in a third voice. Although no literal retreat-return movement is enacted in this poem, the contemporary reader could nevertheless 'return' with a new awareness of the advantages as well as shortcomings of the politics in Rome.[67] In the pastoral romance tradition, this idea is often expressed in the confrontation of two classes of people, urban/courtly and rural, who represent the hegemonic order and its subversive other respectively. In *As You Like It*, for example, the courtiers' eventual reconciliation and return to their former existence has only been made possible because of the previous undermining of the order they represent: After all, it is by the adoption of the notions related to the bucolic counterworld, e.g. its peace and harmony, that their mutual enmities are finally resolved.

For the Gothic, this notion has been commented on by Hogle. He notes that it confronts the protagonist with a monstrous image of some kind of other in its most extreme form, but by doing so reveals

> the hidden reality that oppositions of all kinds cannot maintain their separations, that each 'lesser term' is contained in its counterpart and that difference really arises by standing against *and* relating to interdependency.[68]

In his view, the previously mentioned process of counterfeiting enables the respective readership to distance itself from inconsistent and conflicting aspects of its own culture while at the same time learning that these 'othered' beings are a part of itself.[69] By this means, the Gothic performs the process of abjection, whereby disturbing anomalies of the hegemonic

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67 Cf. chapter 3.1.1.

68 Hogle, "Western Culture", 11.

69 Cf. Hogle, "Ghost of the Counterfeit", 295.

order within a respective society are 'thrown off' but actually turn out to be integral to it.[70] To return to the example of *Dracula*, despite the defeat of the monster and the concomitant re-establishment of the dominant belief system, i.e. late-Victorian ideas regarding civilisation and rationality, at the end of the novel, a state of tension remains. After all, this order cannot be clearly distinguished from the alien other which threatened it. In fact, the 'Crew of Light' has only been successful because it made use of things related to the vampire's Gothic existence, e.g. crucifixes, stakes and a 'barbaric' violence. This implies that the monster paradoxically opposes *and* represents a part of their supposedly civilised world. Like the pastoral, the Gothic can hence be regarded to contain two conflicting voices, which support and subvert current dominant ideas respectively, and whose antithetical relation it leaves unresolved. As will be demonstrated in the subsequent study, this creation of a displaced fictional space where contemporary discourses are maintained and undermined is a central feature within the Gothic-pastoral mode.

2.2.2. Attitude: Representative Vulnerability

Apart from the three conventionalised features outlined above, the Gothic and the pastoral also share an underlying attitude. The term denotes a specific view of human strength and possibilities within both the fictional and the real world. In fact, these modes place particular emphasis on the vulnerability of their characters, which is conceived of as representative of the reader's weakness within his own context. Although this feature is another strategy both forms employ in order to return an insight concerning their respective socio-cultural conditions, it is not treated as a fourth conventional trait within this chapter but as an instance in its own right. The reason for this will be shown in the course of the following study: As it will turn out, the insistence on representative vulnerability is, in contrast to the three other elements, which undergo an extreme transformation or even reduction in the history of both forms, the only aspect that remains stable. Thus, it will eventually be argued that it should be seen as distinct from the conventional repertoire of the two modes.[71]

In order to account for this feature, it is necessary to take a closer look at what it actually means to speak of these forms as literary modes. As has become obvious so far, in this

[70] Cf. Hogle, "Western Culture", 7.

[71] Cf. chapter 6.

analysis, both the Gothic and the pastoral are regarded as a mode, which corresponds to the view held by most contemporary critical accounts on these forms. Surprisingly, despite its frequent usage by many scholars, it is a term that has, at least as far as the Gothic is concerned, only been vaguely defined yet.

The category of *mode* is usually described in its opposition to *genre*. Whereas the latter is often viewed as a uniform and rule-governed entity with a fixed outer and inner form, the former is perceived as referring to a loose set of elements which are not confined to one genre but can appear in several different ones. According to Alastair Fowler, a "kind" (the term he uses for *genre*) is "a type of literary work of a definite size, marked by a complex of substantive and formal features that always include a distinctive (though not usually unique) external structure".[72] A mode, on the other hand, is perceived by him as an abstraction from a fixed parent kind to which it succeeds: "Mode is not only a looser genre collateral with the fixed kind, but also its successor. Its existence [...] presupposes an earlier kind of which it is the extension".[73] Since it is structurally dependent on an antecedent kind, a mode "always [has] [...] an incomplete repertoire, a selection only of the corresponding kind's features, and one from which overall external structure is absent".[74] As an example, Fowler notes that

> the gothic romance [...] yielded a gothic mode that outlasted it and was applied to kinds as diverse as the maritime adventure (*The Narrative of Arthur Golden Pym*), the psychological novel (*Titus Groan*), the crime novel (*Edwin Drood*), the short story, the film script, and various science fiction subgenres (already foreshadowed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*).[75]

This diachronic view of literary modes, which started as fixed genres and then turned into bundles of loose features, forms the basis of much criticism on the pastoral and the Gothic; it corresponds to the previously mentioned conventional character of both forms, which take up elements again and again in a modified form from a certain established repertoire. However, this idea of a collection of free-floating traits cannot completely explain the nature of a mode, which becomes obvious in the fact that there is often a fuzzy use of the term.[76] Writing about Augustan pastoral, for instance, Ralph Cohen states that

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72 Alastair Fowler. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982, 74.

73 Ibid., 167.

74 Ibid., 107.

75 Ibid., 109.

76 As Alpers notes with regard to criticism on the pastoral as mode, "there is positively a tradition of not defining the concept". Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 49.

> by this term 'mode' I mean no more than a range of special poetic uses of conventionalized figures, images, ideas and syntactical, metrical, or organizational structures in the poetry of 1660-1750.[77]

Likewise, Catherine Spooner refers to the postmodern continuation of the Gothic as mode in terms of "a flexible means of description that does not present a definite statement about its object, but can be applied to a variety of different kinds of texts".[78]

In fact, more can be said about a mode than that it is constituted merely by a repertoire of loose features. Apart from these conventional traits, there is always also an underlying attitude.[79] The term denotes a specific view of the human protagonist and his possibilities in the fictional world, which is seen as representative of the reader's powers within his own context.[80] This idea becomes particularly obvious when taking a look at Alpers's definition of the pastoral mode. He uses the view as outlined in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) and Angus Fletcher's comments on it and applies these thoughts to the pastoral. Frye states that

> in literary fictions the plot consists of somebody doing something. The somebody, if an individual, is the hero, and the something he does or fails to do is what he can do, or could have done, on the level of the postulates made about him by the author and the consequent expectations of the audience. Fictions, therefore, may be classified, not morally but by the hero's power of action, which may be greater than ours, less, or roughly the same.[81]

In the following, he continues by specifying five modes on the basis of the hero's strength relative to his world – myth, romance, high mimetic (epic and tragedy), low mimetic

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77 Ralph Cohen. "The Augustan Mode in English Poetry". *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 1 (1967): 32.

78 Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, 26.

79 Cf. Allan Roadway. "Generic Criticism: The Approach through Type, Mode and Kind", in *Contemporary Criticism*, eds. M. Bradbury and D. Palmer. London: Edward Arnold, 1970, 94; Robert Scholes. *Structuralism in Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974, 33.

80 This conception of *mode* as expressing a certain attitude differs from the usage of the term in current narratological theory, where it denotes "different types of representation within a narrative text" or "the manner in which textual information is presented" (Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning. *An Introduction to the Study of Narrative Fiction*. Stuttgart: Klett, 2008, 33). Moreover, the term *hybrid mode* as used in this analysis to refer to the overlap between textual forms of the Gothic and the pastoral must be distinguished from the concept of *multimodality*, which goes beyond the purely textual manifestations this study focuses on; according to Wolfgang Hallet, the term denotes the "integration of the narrative novelistic mode along with other written modes, as well as various non-verbal modes such as (the reproduction of) visual images like photographs or paintings, graphics, diagrams and sketches or (the reproduction of) handwritten letters and notes" (Wolfgang Hallet. "The Multimodal Novel: The Integration of Modes and Media in Novelistic Narration", in *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*, eds. Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009, 129).

81 Northrop Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, 33.

(comedy and the novel) and ironic.[82] He then argues that there is an intrinsic relation between the hero's abilities as depicted in the fictional world and that of the respective reader or the audience: "There can hardly be a work of literature without some kind of relation, implied or expressed, between its creator and its auditors".[83] Commenting on Frye's text, Fletcher concludes that literary works may generally be classified according to the way they portray the protagonist's power in comparison to his surroundings, which is seen as typical of any man:

> The term 'mode' is appropriate because in each of the five the hero is a protagonist with a given strength relative to his world, and as such each hero [...] is a *modulator* for verbal architectonics; man is the measure, the *modus* of myth.[84]

From these remarks, Alpers finally derives a more comprehensive definition of *mode*:

> Mode is the literary manifestation, in a given work, not of its attitudes in a loose sense, but of its assumptions about man's nature and situation. This definition in turn provides a critical question we implicitly put to any work we interpret: what notions of human strength, possibilities, pleasures, dilemmas, etc. are manifested in the represented realities and in the emphases, devices, organization, effects, etc. of this work? [...] The key to all these questions [...] is the implicit view of the hero's or speaker's or reader's strength relative to his or her world.[85]

He concludes that "pastoral has consciously modal interests", since "the figure of the shepherd is felt to be representative precisely in figuring every or any man's strength relative to the world".[86] In other words, he regards the main function of pastoral literature to be its concentration on the powerlessness of simple characters, who are unable to change their situation and must accept their lot; this powerlessness is understood as being characteristic of the reader's limited possibilities within his own socio-cultural context as well as the human condition in general. The inability of Virgil's shepherds in his first *Eclogue*, for instance, to prevent the expropriation of the lands one of them possesses, can be conceived of as representative: At the time when the poem was written, it was a fate many people shared who were dispossessed by land expropriations under Octavian.[87]

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82 Cf. Ibid., 33-34.

83 Ibid., 53.

84 Angus Fletcher. "Utopian History and the *Anatomy of Criticism*", in *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism*, ed. Murray Krieger. New York: 1996, 34-35.

85 Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 50.

86 Ibid.

87 Cf. chapter 3.1.1.

The definition of the pastoral as mode in terms of its insistence on representative vulnerability can also be applied to the Gothic. In fact, the latter has, in Alpers's terms, "modal interests" as well: After all, it also often centres on the helplessness of its protagonist, who is unable to alter or even escape the fate that awaits him. In this case, however, this notion is severely aggravated, since his feebleness is seen in relation to an extremely sinister fictional environment of Gothic horrors. Moreover, it is a specific means of reacting to the anxieties of a certain culture, which recognises its own weakness in a displaced form. The incapability of H.P. Lovecraft's protagonists, for instance, to fight against or even understand the cosmic horrors they are threatened by is clearly representative: It reflects – among other things - early twentieth-century and post-Darwinist fears concerning the marginal position of the human race within the universe.

Although the link between representative vulnerability and the Gothic has already been established in previous research, it has so far not been included within a general definition of this mode. Commenting on the volume *Counting to None* (1999) from the graphic novel *The Invisibles*, for instance, Punter and Byron state that "like any Gothic hero, the protagonists are doomed by forces beyond their control, and even their self-awareness and scepticism cannot help them to escape from the horror of their position".[88]

Whereas this rather appears as a side remark, the following analysis will show that the insistence on human weakness is a feature central to the Gothic; this becomes particularly obvious in texts where an overlap with the pastoral can be found.

2.3. State of Research

As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, there are four areas of overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral, three of which refer to their conventional character while one is related to an underlying attitude. Surprisingly, however, not much research has so far been done on the general question of what happens when both forms co-occur and what conclusions can be drawn from this. In the following, an overview of the existing critical

[88] David Punter and Glennis Byron. *The Gothic*. Blackwell Guides to Literature. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, 75. Cf. also Frank Manchel, who describes the figure of Jack in Stanley Kubrick's film version of King's *The Shining* as a "tragic person, dominated by powers greater than himself". Frank Manchel. "What about Jack? Another Perspective on Family Relationships in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*". *Literature Film Quarterly* 23.1 (1995): 69.

approaches concerning a Gothic-pastoral mode will be given, which will be treated in a chronological order.

The first comments on the overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral can be found in early twentieth-century accounts of the British novel.[89] In these cases, both modes are frequently equated: The Gothic is regarded as a pastoral nostalgia, which portrays a fictive idyll in a paradise-like past, where man can enter his former unity with nature. According to these authors, this idyll is far away from the sorrows and problems of the real world of history, politics and morals, from which it tries to offer an escapist refuge. If the idyll stands in any relation to its actual socio-cultural context at all, it is conceived of merely as a reaction to or revolt against an increasingly industrialised, urbanised world. For Devandra P. Varma, for instance, the Gothic,

> with its ruined abbeys, frowning castles, haunted galleries, and feudal halls, its pathless forests and lonely landscapes, records a revolt against the oppressive materialism of the time. Pictures of lofty and craggy hills, silent and solitary as the grave, stand as noble contrast to bustling cities dark with smoke. This escape was a complete reaction against the unpleasant murkiness of industrial civilization.[90]

This view is refuted by Alok Bhalla. In *The Cartographers of Hell* (1991), he argues that the Gothic novel does not depict a pleasing idyll but, on the contrary, confronts the reader with a "cruel vision of the dark underside of the pastoral myth".[91] In his view, the rural retreat within the Gothic is neither far away from the lived reality nor free from the current social situation; instead, it mirrors the complex political, economical and moral conditions which determine rural life at a certain time. In particular, by showing the exploitation of the rural poor, the pastoral elements address the problems of evil within man and the inequality within an unjust society.[92] Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, for instance, which stigmatises the cruel

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89 Cf. Richard Church. *The Growth of the English Novel*. Home Study Books. London: Methuen, 1951, 78-83; Hoxie Neale Fairchild. *The Romantic Quest*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1931; Elizabeth MacAndrew. *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979; Montague Summers. *The Gothic Quest; a History of the Gothic Novel*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964, 12; J. M. S Tompkins. *The Popular Novel in England, 1770-1800*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961, 208-213; Devendra P Varma. *The Gothic Flame; Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England, Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1966; J.R. Watson. *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*. London: Hutchinson Educational, 1970, 21-24.

90 Varma, *Gothic Flame*, 218. Likewise, Montague Summers calls the Gothic "reactionary in its revolt against the present since it yearns for the loveliness of the past". Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 18.

91 Cf. Alok Bhalla. *The Cartographers of Hell: Essays on the Gothic Novel and the Social History of England*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private, 1991, 21.

92 Ibid., 21-22.

conditions of the people in rural areas in the early nineteenth century, depicts the countryside as "part of the social and moral pollution of the age".[93]

Besides Bhalla's study, there are several more recent publications which deal with combinations of Gothic and pastoral elements in English literature. Often, however, these are restricted to certain works of single American or Canadian authors and do not aim at tracing a comprehensive tradition of the Gothic-pastoral mode.[94] If the terms *Gothic* and *pastoral* are used, no definitions are given on which the respective analysis of these much-discussed concepts and their intersection is based. Instead, it rather appears that these critics employ these terms in accordance with their current usage, i.e. as designating 'anything chaotic and dark' and as 'an idyllic depiction of rural life in general' respectively. In her analysis of Faulkner's use of Gothic and pastoral elements, for instance, Susan V. Donaldson notes that the author

> began his career as a pastoral poet [...], but over the years his evocation of pastoral green worlds and retreats underwent interrogation and transmutations into something like their 'dark twin' [...] – that is, into gothic quests for truth and identity amid ambiguous shadows, ruins, and social and familial upheaval.[95]

Instead of investigating why a blending of both modes is possible, she sees the increasing Gothicisation of the pastoral in Faulkner's texts as a deviation from the 'purer', idealised forms of this mode as exposed in his early writings. Since it has already been demonstrated that such conceptions of both forms fall short of reality, approaches like this will be neglected within the analysis.

In other cases of current research, studies are not conducted within a history of the pastoral but against the background of the more recent school of ecocriticism.[96] In fact, this theory originally derived from pastoral criticism, from which it took over the interest in the nature-nurture opposition. However, it is a much broader approach, which goes far beyond the

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93 Ibid., 26.

94 American literature: Cf. Susan V. Donaldson. "Faulkner's Versions of Pastoral, Gothic, and the Sublime", in *A Companion to William Faulkner*, ed. Richard C. Moreland. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007, 359-72; Thomas J. Hillard. *Dark Nature: The Gothic Tradition of American Nature Writing*. Ann Arbor: ProQuest LLC, 2006; Kenneth Vincent Jr. Egan. *Apocalypse against Progress: Gothic and Pastoral Modes in the American Romance*. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1984.
Canadian literature: Cf. Faye Hammill. "'Death by Nature': Margaret Atwood and Wilderness Gothic". *Gothic Studies* 5.2 (2003): 47-63.

95 Donaldson, "Faulkner", 360.

96 Cf. Hillard, *Dark Nature*; Hammill, "Wilderness Gothic"; Suzanne L. Roberts. *The Ecogothic: Pastoral Ideologies in the Gendered Gothic Landscape.* Ann Arbor: ProQuest LLC, 2008.

traditional pastoral city-country dichotomy. It concentrates on all kinds of aspects associated with the general interrelation between the human (e.g. cultural discourses, literature, theory) and the non-human world (e.g. the natural environment, animals):[97]

> Ecocriticism asks questions about the relationships between literary texts and nature: how is nature represented in texts, in the form of landscape descriptions or the representation of animals? What ideas about wilderness or civilisation are being communicated in a text? How are different concepts of 'nature' constructed in discourse, for example as the opposite of 'culture'?[98]

Many ecocritical readings of the Gothic rather focus on the general role the natural environment plays within this mode in terms of landscape portrayals and the way cultural mindsets are projected onto them; in most cases, they do not investigate in how far there is an overlap between the literary concepts of Gothic and pastoral against the background of aforementioned basic categories like human vulnerability or the opposition of pastoral and anti-pastoral (or Gothic and anti-Gothic) elements. In *Dark Nature: The Gothic Tradition of American Nature Writing* (2006), for example, Thomas J. Hillard analyses instances in which nature is a source of fear in the American literature from the early seventeenth up to the mid-nineteenth century.[99] Although he convincingly demonstrates in what way Gothic tropes are used to create the image of a sinister and threatening nature and how this is related to the anxieties prevalent at the time of the respective text, he does not include any references to the pastoral tradition at all. Since the present analysis will employ the more classic approaches to pastoral as referred to in the previous chapter, it will reject such readings, whose emphasis is too unspecific for its purposes.

The only ecocritical study which is of use to this analysis is Suzanne L. Robert's *The EcoGothic: Pastoral Ideologies in the Gendered Gothic Landscape* (2008).[100] It is partly based on the classical pastoral tradition, in particular Theocritus and Virgil, from whose works the author quotes frequently. Concentrating on Ann Radcliffe's romances, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Emily Dickinson's poetry, Roberts investigates the role of the Gothic heroine in pastoral contexts. She mainly argues that the traditional pastoral is a

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97 Cf. Ingo Berensmeyer. *Literary Theory: An Introduction to Approaches, Methods and Terms*. Stuttgart: Klett, 2009, 137-139; Lawrence Buell. *The Environmental Imagination. Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995; Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (eds.). *The Ecocriticism Reader. Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

98 Berensmeyer, *Literary Theory*, 137.

99 Cf. Hillard, *Dark Nature*.

100 Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*.

masculine domain, in which there is no room for women; as soon as the latter adopt the role of 'female shepherds', their desire for the out-of-doors and their entry into a natural context results in death or other fatalities. By its use of pastoral tropes, Roberts notes, the Gothic highlights the cultural constructs separating women from the world of nature and binding them to the domestic sphere. She therefore concludes that the pastoral elements within the Gothic serve as a vehicle to question historical and contemporary gender constructs.[101]

Accordingly, it becomes obvious that the studies by Bhalla and Roberts are most suited as a background for this analysis. After all, their arguments correspond to the previously-mentioned theories stating that the two forms create an artificial literary space which is disturbed by a counterforce or has its dark underside and where contemporary issues are negotiated by concentrating on the depiction of weak figures. The problem with both approaches, however, is that they are too narrow. Bhalla perceives the depiction of the rural context mainly as a mirror of the current agrarian conditions and not, as Alpers argues, of the human condition in general. Furthermore, it rather appears that Bhalla equates the term *pastoral* with any rural depiction and not with a fixed set of analytical categories derived from the literary pastoral tradition. Roberts puts her focus on the role of women, in particular their weakness in a patriarchal society. As it will turn out in the course of the analysis, this is indeed an important aspect in a text like *Wuthering Heights*, which outlines the contemporary situation of the female. The present study will argue, however, that from the late nineteenth century on, it is also the male protagonist for whom the entry into the pastoral context proves fatal; this change from female to male weakness will be related to the socio-cultural context of the time. Finally, both Bhalla and Roberts confine their analysis to texts from the late eighteenth up to the mid-nineteenth century; they do not pay attention to any occurrences of this hybrid mode after Victorian times.

Consequently, the following conclusions can be drawn concerning the current state of research on the Gothic-pastoral mode in English literature: First, although there are some critics who acknowledge its existence, there is no comprehensive depiction of a tradition which examines its manifestations in a structured way. Second, the existing analyses of this phenomenon have so far been confined to texts of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century or concentrate only on single works of a Canadian or American background. For the period of the *fin de siècle* or the twentieth century, there has been no study yet which investigates the development of this phenomenon within a uniform treatment and derives

[101] Cf. Ibid., 13.

regularities from it which can form the basis of a general definition. This is remarkable, since there is a proliferation of Gothic-pastoral texts during that time.

2.4. Theses

The afore-mentioned research gap will be filled by this study. It is based on four fundamental theses.

First of all, it builds on the assumption that with the help of the four fields of intersection between both forms, it is possible to trace a whole tradition of a resulting Gothic-pastoral mode. In fact, these traits can already be found within the beginnings of pastoral literature in ancient times. With the onset of the Gothic tradition in the course of the eighteenth century, however, they reach a new extreme, giving rise to the emergence of a hybrid form. During that time, the anti-pastoral elements within the pastoral/anti-pastoral dichotomy are Gothicised, which results in an extreme contrast between idyllic and terrible features. Moreover, the difference between city and country is expressed in Gothic images of civilisation versus barbarism. In terms of the interrelation of the texts exhibiting the Gothic-pastoral mode with their historical conditions, a high degree of pessimism can be observed. Here, the insistence on human vulnerability becomes representative of specific anxieties of the respective socio-cultural context. Thus, the retreat-return movement has devastating consequences for the city-dweller, whose feebleness in comparison to a monstrous threat he encounters in the Gothic country is regarded as typical of the civilised world he comes from. As far as the negotiation of the dominant discourses of their respective time is concerned, Gothic-pastoral writings often exhibit an extreme oscillation between conforming to and subverting them in two contrary voices.

Whereas the initial period of Gothic fiction still represents a preliminary stage of this hybrid mode, during which many of its features have not yet been fully developed or have only episodic character, in the late nineteenth century, it finally reaches its climax. The second thesis is that, since there is a proliferation of texts at the *fin de siècle* which not only blend the Gothic and the pastoral but are even uniform in terms of outer and inner structure, a fixed genre emerges at that time, which can be called the *Gothic-pastoral romance*. This genre is a specific means of reflecting on a broad spectrum of contemporary anxieties, stemming among other things from the perceived decline of the British Empire, the depravity found within a supposedly civilised London and post-Darwinist theories of degeneration. Moreover, due to

its employment of the Gothic-pastoral opposition of two voices, it is a useful device for the author to officially support while silently undermining the dominant imperial ideology without running the risk of exposing himself too much.

In the twentieth century, the Gothic-pastoral romance disperses into a manifold variety of various modal forms; with the extreme transformation and reduction of many aspects typical of the previous tradition, particularly in the second half of the century, it could be argued that it becomes doubtful whether one can still speak of terms like *Gothic*, *pastoral* or even *Gothic pastoral*. The third thesis contradicts such statements: Against the background of tracing the historical development of the features both the Gothic and the pastoral have in common, it is possible to account for their respective continuity into postmodern times. This is mainly due to the fact that, in contrast to the three conventional traits, which are either transformed in an extreme way or disappear entirely, the insistence on representative vulnerability remains stable within all the texts of the twentieth century and beyond; the result are highly reduced manifestations of the Gothic-pastoral mode (and hence also of the Gothic and the pastoral respectively), which are nevertheless linked to this tradition by the preservation of their attitude.

The fourth thesis refers to the more general definition of *mode*. Since there are elements within a certain mode which are subject to change and those which remain stable, it can be argued that there is a binary structure at the heart of the term. The first element within this structure is the *conventional component*; it refers to the conventionalised features usually taken up and commodified within the history of a respective mode. The second one is the *attitudinal component*; it describes the attitude at the heart of a respective text, i.e. the way it explores human strength relative to the world.

2.5. Method

In order to support these theses, the analysis will first apply the four features arguing for an overlap between both modes to the earliest occurrences of the pastoral in antiquity. By way of a tradition, the development of these elements will then be traced throughout the English literary history. The main emphasis will be on texts from the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. In the end, the results of the analysis will be used to contradict critical accounts which argue for an obsolescence of the Gothic and the pastoral in postmodern times and to demonstrate that the category *mode* can be defined in terms of a binary structure.

Concerning the dichotomy between idyllic/pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements, a particular analytical category will be applied which can be already found in the ancient epic and which will be referred to as *locus conclusus*. In these cases, the opposition between the pastoral ideal and its disruption has been widened to an extent that the former remains merely a façade, behind which a dangerous monster figure lurks. As will be shown, this idea of an inviting place which turns out to be a sinister prison is a useful model to describe the Gothic-pastoral country.

As has been argued before, both the Gothic and the pastoral create an artificial space where at the same time current values and ideals are scrutinised. In this respect, the study has been influenced by a question which is central to New Historicism: In how far do literary texts reflect the official, dominant perspective held by those in power and the alternative, dissenting voices that are excluded from the official discourse? To be more precise, it builds on Stephen Greenblatt's idea that a text can be seen as being situated within the contact zone of different discourses, in particular between the appropriation of and distancing from the dominant one. This results in a dynamics of exchange he calls the "circulation of social energy".[102] In Greenblatt's view, a literary analysis should - among other things - focus on the degree to which a respective text moves between the extremes of containing and subverting current ideological power structures, a feature which has come to be known as the *theory of subversion and containment.*[103] As has been demonstrated above, the Gothic and the pastoral are highly ambivalent in this respect, since they oppose a subversive and a containing voice in a very explicit way. The analysis will read the texts in terms of the question in how far they express this paradoxical relation to their respective dominant discourse.

With regard to the historical development of these discourses and their reflection in the texts, the study has also been inspired by Raymond Williams's concept of dominant, residual and emergent features. According to Williams, the dominant cultural element is a perspective held by the majority of a respective society or by its most powerful (and ruling) class.[104] An example would be the city-country dichotomy in the late nineteenth century, which develops into the opposition of a 'civilised' and 'superior' London versus the 'inferior' and 'savage'

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[102] Stephen Greenblatt. *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 1.

[103] Cf. Ibid., 21-65; ---. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, 9.

[104] Cf. Raymond Williams. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 121.

colonies in contemporary ideological usage; this opposition can be frequently found within the Empire Fiction. Besides this hegemonic element, two other views co-exist at every stage of a respective culture's development, which "are significant both in themselves and in what they reveal of the characteristics of the 'dominant'".[105] The first one is an emerging perspective, which is a new element that is alternative or even oppositional to the dominant, by which it can be neglected, undervalued, opposed or repressed; reflecting the ongoing change within a society and starting as a marginal view, it can eventually turn into the dominant one.[106] At the *fin de siècle*, for instance, the city-country opposition of the Empire Fiction is increasingly subverted, which reflects an increasing decline of the British Empire and hence doubts concerning the opposition of a 'superior' city versus an 'inferior' country. The second one is a residual element, which is derived from an earlier stage of society, where it can have been the dominant one, but is still active in the contemporary cultural discourse.[107] In William Golding's time, for example, the ideological city-country dichotomy as prevalent in the late nineteenth century has almost entirely diminished due to the decline of the British Empire; nevertheless, as will be shown, the author still clings to these categories to some extent. Although usually not explicitly referred to, Williams's model will provide a general background against which the historical development of the texts' relation to existing discourses is read throughout the study.

2.6. Corpus

In order to achieve the aim of giving a comprehensive overview of the development of the Gothic-pastoral mode, the primary corpus comprises a wide range of texts from different historical and literary periods, reaching from antiquity up to the late twentieth century. Whereas the main focus within the English tradition is on British texts, some works have been produced by Irish, Polish and American writers. However, this inclusion of authors with different cultural backgrounds does not mean a breach within the coherence of the tradition. After all, they have all been influenced by the British Gothic convention and/or have firm roots within English culture. Although Charles Maturin and Bram Stoker have Irish origins,

105 Ibid., 122.

106 Cf. Ibid., 123-124.

107 Cf. Ibid., 122-123.

Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) and *Dracula* (1897) are usually regarded as classic texts within the English Gothic canon. Joseph Conrad, who was originally born in Poland, lived in England for most of his life; he has often even been perceived as one of the greatest writers in English. Finally, the two Americans, H.P. Lovecraft and Stephen King, state themselves that they have been heavily influenced by their British predecessors. In Lovecraft's case, these are prevalently authors like Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood;[108] King names almost the whole canon of Gothic writers as his sources.[109]

Since the general corpus of Gothic and pastoral texts respectively is extremely large, a strict selection had to be made, which was based on the major theses of this study. In general, the texts under discussion have been chosen according to the criterion whether they exhibit the features allowing for an intersection between both modes. For this reason, Virgil's *Eclogues* will be treated at the beginning. Although pastoral writing originally goes back to Theocritus's *Idylls*, it was the Roman author who first employed these elements in a way which turned into a tradition in European literature. The second text which stands at the onset of the analysis, Homer's *Odyssey*, is actually an epic poem and not pastoral in the strict sense; nevertheless, it has been chosen for the reason that the first manifestations of the *locus conclusus*, which will be a central feature within many Gothic-pastoral texts, can be found here.

The subchapter "Gothic-Pastoral Precursors" comprises texts which, despite their occurrence before the actual inception of the Gothic tradition, constitute a preliminary stage of this mixed form; in fact, they already exhibit a combination of the pastoral context with evil or monstrous elements. In Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, for instance, the bucolic enclave either turns out to be a dangerous prison (cf. Acrasia's Bower of Bliss) or a fragile world, which is eventually destroyed by savage bandits (cf. the pastoral interlude in book VI). Likewise, Milton's *Paradise Lost* features the disturbance of man's original harmony with nature by an evil force from outside (Satan).

The texts of the subchapter "Early Gothic-Pastoral Occurrences" have been selected because they already display traits of the later Gothic-pastoral mode, the most prominent of which is the dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements and the insistence on the protagonist's weakness. Nevertheless, since these aspects are still incomplete or have

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[108] In *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, Lovecraft praised the works of both authors highly. He even considered Blackwood's "The Willows" (1907) to be the best weird tale in literature. Cf. H.P. Lovecraft. *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. New York: Dover Publications, 1973, 89-97.

[109] Cf. Stephen King. *Danse Macabre* [1981]. New York: Gallery Books, 2010.

only episodic character, the writings in which they occur are not yet treated within the main part of this analysis. Although *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, for instance, centres on the heroine's vulnerability, which is seen as typical of current issues, her movement to the Gothic country leaves her unharmed. *Melmoth the Wanderer*, on the other hand, includes all features of the later Gothic-pastoral mode; however, these are merely confined to the Immalee episode, which is one narration among many within the novel.

The criterion for the selection of the *fin-de-siècle* texts was whether they exhibit the traits of this hybrid mode in such a uniform way that one can speak of the Gothic-pastoral romance genre. To begin with, the pastoral city-country dichotomy is a central means to reflect on the more general opposition between civilisation and savagery at that time. Moreover, the plot always features the protagonist's movement to a seemingly idyllic (or at least alluring) country, which turns out to be a *locus conclusus* with a Gothic monster figure at its centre. The intruder's weakness as exposed in comparison to the more 'savage' threat he encounters goes along with the insight into the vulnerability of his supposedly 'superior' British Empire. Nevertheless, the latter's ideology is never completely subverted; instead, these texts use the Virgilian opposition of two voices in order to confirm *and* undermine it. In order to show the two major tendencies which can be observed within this genre at that time, the novels will not be treated chronologically but in two thematic groups. Whereas H.G. Wells and Bram Stoker place their Gothic-pastoral context into a direct relation to the contemporary image of a Gothicised London, Rider Haggard and Joseph Conrad use the background of the African wilderness to explore issues concerning British and European imperialism.

For the twentieth century, the analysis is subjected to a major restriction: The phenomenon can be found in such a wide range of texts and even different media (e.g. film) that not all of them can be treated.[110] For this reason, the study will concentrate solely on textual intersections of these modes. Furthermore, it will only trace – in Empson's sense - some 'versions' of twentieth-century Gothic pastoral, which have been selected for two reasons. On the one hand, they continue features typical of the core situation at the *fin de siècle* in modal form. On the other hand, they exhibit traits which argue for a persistence of the Gothic and the pastoral mode into postmodern times. To be more precise, the texts in the two major subchapters have been chosen with regard to how they continue the city-country dichotomy and hence also the distinction between the related categories of civilisation and savagery. In

[110] For an overview of further occurrences of the Gothic-pastoral mode which will not be treated within this analysis, cf. chapter 6.

the texts of Machen, Blackwood and Lovecraft, there is an extreme widening of this opposition, since the rural enclave is conceived of as the gateway to an alternative reality. In Golding and King's texts, both concepts show an unprecedented closeness, as the country merely appears as a mirror of the city; this goes along with an increasing reduction of a whole range of other features allowing for an overlap between both modes. Nevertheless, as has been mentioned before, the feature of representative vulnerability can be found in all the texts of this chapter, by which means the continuity of both modes into postmodern times will eventually be accounted for.

3. From (Anti-)Pastoral to Gothic Pastoral: A Tradition

3.1. Ancient Origins

3.1.1. Ideal versus Reality: Virgil, *Eclogues*

Virgil's *Eclogues*, which were written in 42 BC and probably published between 38 and 39 BC,[111] are the first pastoral texts which exhibit the features allowing for an eventual overlap with the Gothic mode. Among the most prominent ones is the dichotomy between idyllic/pastoral and anti-pastoral elements. As has been mentioned in the introductory chapter, an oscillation between the pastoral ideal and an anti-pastoral component, which disturbs the harmony of such an existence or reveals its shortcomings, has been typical of this literary form since its beginnings. In Virgil's poems, the latter aspect is represented by the atrocities of a harsh reality as associated with the reader's own existence.

Eclogue IV is one of the most famous ancient texts dealing with this opposition. The poem heralds the return of an idyllic time in the future (at the time when Pollio is consul) with the birth of a mysterious boy,[112] who will keep company with gods and heroes and rule over a peaceful world (IV, 15-17).[113] During his childhood, the earth and its inhabitants will be in perfect harmony with each other; this is illustrated, for example, by images of growing plants of all kinds (17-19) or goats walking home with full udders without anybody herding them (21). When the boy becomes an adolescent, this harmonious state will continue, although traces of the previous depravity will remain (e.g. seafaring, city walls; even a new journey of the Argonauts and a new Trojan War will take place [31-36]). After he reaches his manhood, seafaring, commerce and agriculture will disappear, giving way to a world that provides anything necessary for man without the requirement of labour (37-45).

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111 Cf. Simon Hornblower (ed.). *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, s.v. "Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro)".

112 The identity of the child remains mysterious and has been the subject of controversy. Michael von Albrecht rejects the view that it could be the expected son of either Antonius or Pollio, arguing that the child represents a whole new Roman generation instead. Cf. Michael von Albrecht. *Vergil: Bucolica – Georgica – Aeneis. Eine Einführung*. Heidelberger Studienhefte zur Altertumswissenschaft. 2nd ed. Heidelberg: Winter, 2007, 24.

113 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by verse number within the text: Virgil. *Opera*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors. Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Despite this almost completely idyllic description, some features of the text undermine a full identification of the pastoral mode with the notion of the Golden Age. The author makes it unmistakably clear that this poem goes far beyond the borders of the pastoral as established by Theocritus and is hence of an experimental nature: Already in the first line, he proclaims his intention to sing about a somewhat loftier theme ("paulo maiora canamus" [1]) than was associated with the *Idylls* at that time. Moreover, the Golden Age represents a state that is unattainable in the present time of the poem, which is defined by city walls, wars and hard (agricultural) labour;[114] it once existed in the past and will come back in the future, but is currently lost and longed for in a melancholic way. Therefore, the motif of the Golden Age is established only to be simultaneously contrasted to the reader's own world, whose harshness makes it impossible to live within such an ideal state. Against the pastoral ideal, an anti-pastoral component is set, which casts doubts on the feasibility of the idyllicism and harmony portrayed.

This notion of a dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral elements finds an even more elaborate expression in the most influential text within the collection, *Eclogue* I. The poem contrasts the fate of two shepherds, Tityrus and Meliboeus, whose farms have originally been confiscated for the settlement of soldiers; however, unlike Meliboeus, who has to leave his lands, Tityrus can stay in his idyll. The poem starts *in medias res* with this contrast (I, 1-5):[115]

> *M. Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi*
> *silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;*
> *nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva.*
> *nos patriam fugimus; tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra*
> *formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.*
>
> Meliboeus: Here you, Tityrus, lying beneath the shade of a spreading beech, practise silvestric poetry on your slim pipe; I have to leave the borders of my native country and my dear lands. I'm fleeing from my home land; you, Tityrus, can linger in the shade and teach the woods to resound 'fair Amaryllis'.

The reason for Tityrus's state of bliss is given in the following. The reader learns that he was in the city of Rome, where he could buy his freedom from a powerful man, whom he refers to as "deus" ('god' [5]) and later "iuvenis" ('young man' [42]). On being asked who the "deus" was, Tityrus evades a direct answer (19), but it is very likely that Octavian is meant.[116]

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114 Cf. Lindenbaum, *Changing Landscapes*, 13; Nancy Lindheim. *The Virgilian Pastoral Tradition: From the Renaissance to the Modern Era*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 2005, 10.

115 The translations in this chapter are mine unless otherwise stated.

116 Besides the equation of the emperor with a god as typical in antiquity, *deus* can also mean 'guide' or 'life-saver', which emphasises the role of Octavian as the saviour of Tityrus here. Cf. von Albrecht, *Vergil*, 15.

Whereas Tityrus will hence be able to live in a kind of Golden Age within his idyllic lands, Meliboeus can only bemoan the loss of his rural enclave; again, the pastoral ideal is contrasted with an opposite view that longs for a time when it was still attainable.[117] This contrast gains particular emphasis when Meliboeus opposes the life in the tranquillity of the *locus amoenus* Tityrus will enjoy to that in external *loca horribilia* which awaits him:[118] While the former will lie in the shade among "hallowed springs" and "familiar streams", where the "sally hedge" will hum him "gently to sleep" (51-55), the latter will have to leave the comfortable Italian countryside and go to "bone-dry Africa, Scythia, the chalky spate of the Oxus, even to Britain – that place completely cut off from the whole world" (64-66).[119] His own *locus amoenus* will be lost for him after the intrusion by forces from outside: A "wicked soldier" will soon take possession of his land (70), and he will never be able to see his once-happy flocks and green meadows again (74-78).

Landscape descriptions are not the focus of the poem, which centres on the antithetical fates of the shepherds; nevertheless, the dual quality of the setting reflects the emotional conditions of the two protagonists and hence provides a suitable background for their respective situations. As pointed out before, Tityrus's blissful state is underlined by images of an idyllic nature. The intrinsic connection of the landscape that reflects man's emotional state is also highlighted when Meliboeus empathises with Amaryllis, who, together with the local trees, bushes and fountains, missed Tityrus during his journey to Rome (36). Such a portrayal of man as a part of a natural context that reveals his inner life is a typical feature of the ancient pastoral in general.[120] By contrast, Meliboeus's state of unhappiness is emphasised by images of an anti-pastoral nature, where a peaceful life in harmony with the environment is impossible. Here, the poem depicts the disturbance of the harmony between man and the idyll of the Roman countryside due to his expulsion and the subsequent intrusion of soldiers from outside.[121]

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117 Cf. Lindenbaum, *Changing Landscapes*, 4.

118 Cf. von Albrecht, *Vergil*, 16.

119 And yet, even Tityrus's landscape shows at times an anti-pastoral quality, since the soil is also stony and there are marsh films over the pasture land with mud rushes (47-48). This partly undermines even the idyllic portrayal of a *locus amoenus*, implying that Tityrus might have only been allowed to keep his lands because of their bad constitution. Cf. von Albrecht, *Vergil*, 16.

120 Cf., for example, the natural environment that laments the death of Daphnis in *Idyll* 1, which was the model for Virgil's fifth *Eclogue*, where the personified bushes cry: "Daphnis is a god!" ("ipsa sonant arbusta: 'deus ille, Menalca!'" [V, 64]).

121 Such a disruption of the rural environment by expropriations will again be mentioned in *Eclogue* IX; this time, however, these events will not occur in the future but have already taken place – Moeris tells Lycidas that he has lost his land and is now on his way to Rome (IX, 2-6).

The depiction of a shepherd and his land which become the victims of the forces belonging to the more powerful world of politics and war suggests that Virgil's type of pastoral is not a purely escapist mode celebrating simple virtues in the seclusion of an idealised environment. As has been outlined previously, an oscillation between both an escapism from and an exploration of the city's conditions is typical of this literary form. This tension between retreating from and investigating current issues is more elaborated in Virgil than in Theocritus, since the former introduced the world of actual history within his fiction.[122]

The transformation of the Hellenistic pastoral form becomes particularly obvious in *Eclogue* II. The poem takes Theocritus's sixth *Idyll* with Polyphemus's lamentation for Galatea as a model in its portrayal of Corydon, an unhappy lover. Whereas in Theocritus, the hopelessness of the lover's situation is based on natural differences like ugliness and beauty (a Cyclops longing for a nymph), in Virgil, it is due to social differences and questions of power (city versus country; lord versus servant) typical of his time.[123] The unhappy lover unsuccessfully tries to convince the socially privileged and fastidious city-dweller Alexis, who is the favourite of his master, of the advantages of staying with him in the countryside. His attempts, however, end in resignation; as he says to himself (II, 56-57):

> *Rusticus es, Corydon; nec mura curat Alexis,*
> *nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas.*
>
> You're a bumpkin, Corydon! Neither does Alexis care for your rural presents, nor would Iollas [Corydon's master] allow me to give you presents.

The modifications of *Eclogue* II hence show a shift from the depiction of a purely escapist sphere of myth to the inclusion of the actual, urban world of contemporary Rome, since it reveals the actual class differences within current Roman society.

The most prominent example of Virgil's new type of pastoral, however, is his first *Eclogue*. Here, the author modified the Theocritean convention of a singing exchange between two shepherds into a comment on the current political realities.[124] After the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, Antony and Octavian, who had emerged victorious, agreed that land in Northern Italy be

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122 Cf. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 161.

123 Cf. von Albrecht, *Vergil*, 39.

124 Coleman even comments that "there is little of Theocritus in the poem; it is a boldly original and highly wrought piece presenting in dramatic form the confrontation between pastoral myth and contemporary reality". Virgil. *Eclogues*, ed. Robert Coleman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, 90-91.

confiscated for the settlement of veterans. Among these areas was also Mantuan territory, where Virgil had been born and brought up.[125]

In this poem, the exploration of the current political conditions is done with the help of the two shepherds. In fact, the Roman world and its politics, in particular the expropriations, are only relevant insofar as they affect the lives of the herdsmen. The humble figures on which this text centres are hence used to explore greater themes; the result is a tension between the simplicity of the pastoral enclave and the complexity of the topics under consideration. This corresponds to Empson's dictum that the "pastoral process" consists of "putting the complex into the simple".[126]

As has been mentioned before, a particular strategy the pastoral uses in this respect is the insistence on the characters' vulnerability, which is conceived of as representing current issues and human weakness in general. This notion is particularly elaborated in *Eclogue* I. After all, many people at that time could read their own situation into the fate of Tityrus and Meliboeus, one of whom has become the victim of the aftermath of civil war, the other fortunate because he has found a protector. Besides, the general feeling of being oppressed by or dependent on more powerful forces one cannot control can be regarded as an integral constituent of being human. Accordingly, Alpers argues that

> in their simplicity and vulnerability, shepherds fittingly represent those whose lives are determined by the actions of powerful men or by events and circumstances over which they have no control. Even though they are among the least powerful members of society, they are far from alone in experiencing the dependency and victimization presented in this eclogue.[127]

Virgil's new pastoral thus creates a space defined by its opposition to the city, but where at the same time issues relating to the larger world in general can be explored by means of representative vulnerability. The portrayal of the pastoral enclave serves to return an insight relevant to the contemporary reader, who, in Gifford's terms, 'moves' from his world to the pastoral enclave and eventually 'returns' with a new awareness of his own situation.[128] Whereas in the *Eclogues*, this notion of retreat and return is only implicit in so far as the reader learns something in the portrayal of the retreat, in other works like the epic or later

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125 Cf. Virgil. *Eclogues and Georgics*, ed. R.D. Williams. London: Macmillan, 1979, 89.

126 Empson, *Some Versions*, 22.

127 Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 24.

128 Cf. Gifford, *Pastoral*, 81-82.

texts within English literature, there will be a real movement within the text; here, it will also be the protagonist that moves from city to country and vice versa.

Eclogue I finally ends in a sinister tone with the coming of evening. The shadows that are slowly approaching from the mountains create an ominous mood, which stands in contrast to the peaceful atmosphere during the day (83). Therefore, the shepherds seek the shelter of Tityrus's home. Night time can hence also be seen as an anti-pastoral element which works against the pastoral ideal, whose favourite time is noon.[129] Not only does this day-night contrast, which is a feature of several *Eclogues*,[130] reveal that the natural environment can be dangerous at times; according to Ettin, the shadows that encroach upon the rural enclave also "bespeak the imposition of the uncertainties of the outside world onto the enclosed space of the pastoral poem and onto the pastoral world", thereby exposing its fragility.[131] Tityrus can offer Meliboeus temporary comfort by inviting him inside his house for the night, but the existing tension stemming from the contrary situations of both remain unresolved, with exile waiting for Meliboeus. Commenting on the ending of *Eclogue* I, Charles Segal states that

> despite the temporary effort toward calm and rest the tensions between sadness and peace, settledness and dispossession are unresolved. Rest is promised, true, but exile is no less pressing. The morrow still awaits. This atmosphere of suspension amid contraries, of rest amidst disturbance, sets the tone for the *Eclogues*.[132]

According to Alpers, the notion of suspension, i.e. the ending in unresolved disparities, is central to the definition of pastoral as mode, since it underlines the protagonist's powerlessness:

> 'Suspension' is a modal term, in that it directly reflects the protagonist's strength relative to his world. The herdsman of pastoral poetry is conceived as the opposite of the hero: he is able to live with and sing out his dilemmas and pain, but he is unable to act so as to resolve or overcome them, or see them through to their end.[133]

Considering that the situation in *Eclogue* I is based on a real experience (Virgil's home land was among the confiscated territory), the question remains to what extent the author included his own, critical voice within the poem. Indeed, he must have found himself in a difficult

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129 Cf. Ettin, *Literature and the Pastoral*, 136.

130 I, II, V, IX and X.

131 Ettin, *Literature and the Pastoral*, 102.

132 Charles Segal. *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, 277-278.

133 Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*,69.

position: On the one hand, he surely objected to the idea of land expropriations in the Mantuan region; on the other hand, writing explicit poems criticising the official ideology of the new emperor would have been too dangerous for him. Moreover, his own land was probably later restored to him with the help of powerful friends, who pleaded his case with Octavian.[134] Therefore, he was also expected to show his gratitude, although he certainly knew how exceptional his land restoration was. Against this background, it could be argued that he consciously used the tension arising from the situation of the two shepherds to express his ambivalent attitude towards the contemporary system without running the risk of exposing himself too much.[135] By opposing two views, one of which supports the contemporary politics in Rome (Tityrus) while the other subverts it (Meliboeus), Virgil could carefully comment upon contemporary events without having to take a firm stand in a 'third voice'.[136] The oscillation between pastoral and anti-pastoral elements, the depiction of one man who is able to live the pastoral ideal while the other is excluded from it, thus becomes a powerful means of supporting while at the same time carefully criticising the current conditions.[137] The pastoral enclave is conceived of as a borderland space, where a retreat into an environment whose depiction simultaneously confirms *and* subverts the order of the larger, urban world of the current reader takes place.

The coming of night with its falling shadows can hence be perceived as symbolically representing Virgil's intention to 'obscure' his own views. At the same time, since it expresses the uncertainties and dangers of the outside world, it must be understood as a poetological statement of the author, expressing his inability to write poetry in difficult times.[138] As for his shepherds, singing (i.e. writing poetry) can be dangerous in the face of a

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134 Cf. Williams, *adloc*., 89.

135 The necessity for the author to be careful becomes also obvious in his unwillingness to include any direct references to Octavian; cf., for instance, Tityrus's previously mentioned evasion on being asked who the 'god' was that helped him (18-19).

136 Such an ambivalent attitude of the author towards the existing system is the main concern of the famous "two voices theory" by Adam Parry, who investigates the *Aeneid* under this aspect. I would argue that in *Eclogue* I, this ambivalent opposing of two voices is even more elaborated, since a direct opposition of them in the figures of two shepherds takes place, upon whom the poem focuses. Cf. Adam Parry. "The Two Voices of Virgil's *Aeneid*", in *Virgil: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Steele Commager. Englewood-Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966, 107-123.

137 This would also speak against Marx's thesis that Tityrus allegorically represents Virgil; instead, the author identifies himself with both shepherds alike, albeit only partly. Cf. Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 22; von Albrecht, *Vergil*, 17.

138 For Alpers, the figure of the shepherd is hence representative both of all humans and the poet: "The Virgilian formula is: the poet represents (himself as) a shepherd or shepherds". Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 138.

repressive, urban world impinging on a life of free expression.[139] This becomes particularly evident in the last *Eclogue*, which closes the whole volume in a profoundly sinister and pessimistic tone (X, 75-77):

> *Surgamus; solet esse gravis cantatibus umbra,*
> *[…]; nocent et frugibus umbrae.*
> *Ite domum saturate, venit Hesperus, ite capellae.*
>
> Let's get up. The shade is bad for those who sing […]; the shadows also spoil the crops. Go home, my goats, now that you are saturated – evening is approaching!

3.1.2. Deceptive Idylls: Homer, *Odyssey*

In ancient literature, the occurrence of features eventually allowing for an intersection of the pastoral with the Gothic is not only confined to small poems like Virgil's *Eclogues*; instead, they also appear in larger forms like the epic. In these cases, the dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral elements is of a specific significance. The counterforce which impinges upon or is opposed to the pastoral ideal can be the more complex world of heroes and wars that stands in contrast to the simplicity of the rural enclave. The pastoral retreat provides a temporary comfort for the hero from his troubles; it constitutes, in Ettin's terms, a "pastoral inset", where "a pastoral place or experience is set within and distinguished from an extensively portrayed unpastoral context".[140]

An example of such an inset can be found in book VIII of Virgil's *Aeneid*. After the outbreak of war in Italy in book VII, Aeneas finds in the little village of Pallanteum, which is surrounded by green hills and valleys, an idealised setting. Here, he is received by a humble society, led by the local king Euander, and provided with anything he needs in order to find a short relief from the sorrows of the larger world.

The retreat into the idyllic context and the eventual return is now literally undertaken by the hero, who becomes a representative figure. Accordingly, the insight gained is relevant both to him and the contemporary reader. The simplicity of the rural enclave, for example, which is

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139 In *Eclogue* I and IX, this inability to sing is directly linked to the land expropriations; in both poems, there is a shepherd (Meliboeus or Moeris) who cannot sing his songs within his *locus amoenus* anymore due to the intrusion of forces from the outside world. Cf. von Albrecht, *Vergil*, 35; Williams, *The Country and the City*, 16; Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 170-172.

140 Ettin, *Literature and the Pastoral*, 75. I have left out the distinction between an "explicit" and an "implicit" inset here, since, according to Ettin himself, this distinction is not always clear-cut (cf. Ibid., 80). Cf. also Poggioli's concept of the "pastoral oasis" (Poggioli, *Oaten Flute*, 9-10).

the site where the future Rome will be built, is explicitly contrasted to the greatness of the contemporary city (VIII, 97-101):

> *Sol medium caeli conscenderat igneus orbem*
> *cum muros arcemque procul ac rara domorum*
> *texta vident, quae nunc Romana potentia caelo*
> *aequavit, tum res inopes Euandrus habebat.*
>
> The sun had climbed the middle of the sky, when they [Aeneas and his companions] saw far away walls, a castle, and scattered roofs of houses, which now Roman might has made equal to the sky; at that time, Euander had his scant possessions there.

Moreover, before returning to the world of heroes and war at the end of the book, Aeneas receives a shield from his mother Venus, from which he learns about the glorious future that will await Rome under the rule of Augustus (626-728).

In other epic occurrences, however, which will be more important to this analysis, the anti-pastoral component working against the portrayed idyllicism is represented by the dangers of an untamed nature, where savage monsters lurk. Here, the dichotomy between the pastoral ideal and its disturbance has been severely aggravated; as a consequence, the *locus amoenus* remains merely a façade, whose overall purpose is to deceive the intruder into a dangerous place which turns out to be a prison. In the following, such an occurrence will be called a *locus conclusus* ('enclosed place').

This concept is mainly inspired by Owen Schur's idea of an "epic *locus amoenus*", which he distinguishes from a 'purely' "pastoral *locus amoenus*" by "the ambivalent nature of the retreat".[141] In contrast to the "true *locus amoenus*", he states, "which is a good place, drawing upon the simplicity of its setting and on the simplicity of the people and animals who live within it", the "epic *locus amoenus*" is "deceptive and dangerous to those who enter".[142] Unfortunately, the author, who only briefly mentions such an occurrence within his introduction to the pastoral mode in Victorian literature, does not give any further information on how he precisely defines such a retreat. Building on Schur's idea of a deceptive idyll, I will therefore give a definition of what I call a *locus conclusus*, illustrated by examples from Homer's *Odyssey*.

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141 Owen Schur. *Victorian Pastoral: Tennyson, Hardy, and the Subversion of Forms*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989, 10.

142 Ibid.

Exemplary occurrences of the *locus conclusus* in Homer are Odysseus's encounters with Polyphemus (123-135) or Circe (139-151).[143] The setting is usually an enclosed space in the form of an island, the exact position of which is unclear; this mirrors the fact that the largely unexplored Mediterranean Sea was still a source for many myths about potential dangers at Homer's time.[144]

At first, Odysseus and his men are ignorant or only have a vague guess at the danger hidden on the island, which appears idyllic to them. Across the bight of the Cyclopes' country, for example, there is an isle, which is untouched by mankind or any livestock and which is described as a typical *locus amoenus*:

> In it [the island] there harbour uncounted wild goats. No trace of man scares these, nor do hunters with dogs track them out, fighting their way through the bush to explore the summits of the hills. The herbage is not grazed down by flocks of sheep nor broken by any plough. Rather the spot continues in solitude, wholly uncultivated, a paradise for the bleating she-goats […]. Anything would grow well there in season, in the soft moist meadows behind the dykes of the silvery sea: and its vine stocks would bear forever. (123)

However, there is always also something odd about the place. The Cyclopes have no common law but each of them lives according to his own rules, which shows them as residing in a kind of Golden Age but also gives them a somewhat wild and uncivilised character. Odysseus is therefore warned by "some masterful instinct that […] [he] might have to do with a strange fierce being of vast strength, knowing neither right nor wrong, and ungovernable" (125). The rural enclave is hence a place where people live a more original life in accordance with nature; this, however, also means a rather savage existence devoid of any laws as typical of life within civilisation. In other words, Odysseus and his men are threatened by a monstrosity which has developed in a context where the confines of the civilised world are not valid. As outlined previously, the portrayal of a rural enclave which is idyllic but also savage and hence stands in contrast to the more civilised, urban sphere is actually a typical pastoral theme and usually subsumed under the nature/nurture opposition. Due to its hostile and dangerous character, the *locus conclusus* can be seen as an extreme form of this contrast.

It is not before Odysseus and his men have penetrated deeply into the place that they find out about its perilous nature, i.e. the monstrous quality of its inhabitant. On Polyphemus's island, for example, the Greeks are trapped in the Cyclops's cave after his return; likewise, only after

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143 Subsequent references to the following translation are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Homer. *The Odyssey*, trans. T.E. Lawrence. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

144 Cf. Ken Dowden. *The Uses of Greek Mythology*. Approaching the Ancient World Series. London: Routledge, 1992, 132.

they have entered Circe's house and eaten her poisoned food, which turns them into animals, do they discover her true intentions. However, once they have found out about the sinister quality of the place, they cannot get out anymore – the prison-like character is revealed.

At the centre of the *locus conclusus*, there is usually a monster, which has both human and inhuman traits. Polyphemus appears as a harmless shepherd, who tends a sheepflock and does shepherdwork (e.g. milking [126]) in the beginning;, however, besides having only one eye, he even turns out to be a cannibal. Circe is a "formidable goddess – though she spoke our speech" (139). Moreover, the monster often has enchanting and alluring qualities at first. The sorceress has "comely braided hair", is "singing tunefully" and "so heartily that the floor resounds again" (144). She is a tempting, beautiful woman, whom Odysseus's men can hardly resist. Once yielding to her charms, however, they find out that they are actually dealing with a malevolent witch.

It is only the hero, clever and aided by the gods, who is able to subjugate or at least outwit the monster. Trapped in Polyphemus's cave, Odysseus manages to flee by blinding the Cyclops and tying himself and his men to his sheep's undersides. When the hero is on his way to Circe's house to free his enchanted fellows, Hermes intervenes, giving him a magic herb for his protection and advice to prevent him from falling victim to the sorceress's charms.

Considering these aspects, it becomes obvious that in the Homeric occurrences as referred to above the term *locus amoenus* 'lovely place' hardly applies. In some cases, it only refers to the first, superficial impression of the place. At closer inspection, however, it turns out that beneath the surface a monster lurks, which constitutes an extreme version of the anti-pastoral component disturbing the idyllic and peaceful retreat usually associated with the pastoral ideal.[145]

Admittedly, this concept of the *locus conclusus* does not fulfil all the definitional criteria of pastoral literature as outlined in the introductory chapter. Although there is, for instance, a depiction of an idyllic context with a counterforce which works against it, Alpers's dictum that the pastoral deals with vulnerable, weak people is violated; after all, the hero exhibits a great strength relative to the world. However, as will be demonstrated, in the Gothic novel, the former hero becomes a weak figure like the shepherds of the pastoral. Moreover, the fact

[145] Despite the terminological similarity, the concept of the *locus conclusus* should be seen as distinct from that of the *hortus conclusus*; whereas the former appears idyllic from the outside but bears a dangerous inhabitant at its centre, the latter concept focuses on the Virgin, who resides within the protected sphere of a beautiful garden. For an overview of the *hortus conclusus* in European literature and the visual arts, see Stanley Stewart. *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and Image in Seventeenth-Century Poetry*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966, chapter 1-4.

that in the *locus conclusus*, the anti-pastoral counterforce is represented by a monstrous threat will be useful for an analysis of its occurrence within the Gothic, which usually deals with some kind of monster.

The further development of the pastoral mode and the concept of the *locus conclusus* within English literature will be demonstrated in the following tradition, which traces these concepts from the Renaissance up to the late nineteenth century, where there is finally a merger and proliferation of both. With regard to the pastoral, special emphasis will be placed on the representation of the anti-pastoral counterforce by some evil or monstrous being; with developments like the Gothicisation of this anti-pastoral component or the transformation of the hero figure into a weak character, the Gothic-pastoral mode finally emerges.

3.2. Gothic-Pastoral Precursors

3.2.1. The Pastoral Romance

Up to the onset of the Gothic tradition in the eighteenth century, there are several works which combine typically idyllic pastoral elements with an anti-pastoral counterforce defined by dangers, monstrosity and savagery. In English literature, these precursors of the later Gothic-pastoral mode can be found from Renaissance times onwards.

The pastorals of this period were often modelled after classical Italian or Spanish works, which in turn were based on the ancient predecessors investigated previously. Whereas the earliest texts by English authors, the eclogues of Alexander Barclay and Barnaby, were still in Latin, the first English pastoral was Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579). The form of pastoral that was especially prominent with regard to a combination of idyllic and dangerous elements at that time, however, was the pastoral romance. Originally derived from ancient pastoral texts like those written by Theocritus, Virgil and the epic occurrences in Homer, it had been established as a fixed genre by Longus in his novel *Daphnis and Chloe*. Having been taken up again and blended with elements of the chivalric tradition by Sannazaro in his *Arcadia* (1504) in the early Renaissance, it was continued by continental writers like Tasso, Montemayor, Gil Polo and Cervantes; in England, it found expression in the novels of Sidney, Greene and Lodge as well as in the sixth book of Spenser's *The Faerie*

Queene (1596).[146] The pastoral romance tradition also influenced Renaissance drama and can be found in plays like Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1598), *The Winter's Tale* (1609), and *The Tempest* (1610-1).

Besides its episodic and melodramatic character, the basic plot stratagem of the pastoral romance is one which was already prefigured implicitly in Virgil's *Eclogues* and more explicitly in the ancient epic tradition: The protagonist, either alone or within a group, leaves the ordinary world of courtly and heroic action to take up residence in a rural setting, from where he finally returns.[147] This movement leads to a confrontation of two classes of people, courtly/urban and rural.[148] Whereas the country is often portrayed as an idealised context, which stands in contrast to the corruption and depravity of the court, it also has its clear shortcomings and a barbaric character. This is due to its distance from the civilised world and its closeness to the borders of the wilderness. Here, the hero must fight against wild beasts, thieves and brigands. In some cases, the bucolic environment even turns out to be a *locus conclusus* with a monster figure representing the moral corruption and savagery which is opposed to the values of civilisation. A permanent stay in the rural context can prove harmful to the courtly intruder, who must leave before the negative attributes of this environment can influence him. Nevertheless, a contemporary sojourn is often desirable, since the country is the place where the protagonist gets a useful insight or where even the problems and discords of the court are resolved.

3.2.2. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1596)

Spenser's epic poem *The Faerie Queene* is a prominent example of this development, as it contains both an instance of a *locus conclusus* and the famous pastoral interlude in book VI, which has been inspired by the romance tradition. Whereas the former distracts the hero completely from his responsibilities and must therefore be destroyed, the latter is an idyllic and a dangerous place which at the same time prepares the hero for his further tasks.

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146 Cf. David Young. *The Heart's Forest: A Study of Shakespeare's Pastoral Plays*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 16.

147 Cf. Ibid., 20.

148 Cf. Marinelli, *Pastoral*, 57.

The *locus conclusus* is represented by Acrasia's Bower of Bliss at the end of book II. Similarly to earlier manifestations of this motif which influenced Spenser in this episode,[149] the oscillation between pastoral and anti-pastoral elements is transformed into an allegorical tale describing the vices the hero and by implication any Christian man must resist.[150] The garden, a place "where Pleasure dwelles in sensuall delights" (II, 12, 1) and marked by an ominous abundance, is diametrically opposed to the virtue of temperance, to which the second book is dedicated.[151] Already before the protagonists arrive on the island where the Bower lies, this feature is anticipated, since Sir Guyon and the Palmer must pass the "*Gulf of Greedinesse*", which "belches forth its superfluity" (II, 12, 3). Besides, the perilous nature of the place is already indicated by the obstacles they have to pass, e.g. a flood of monsters or alluring mermaids, who try to entice them (II, 12, 22-29). The garden itself, "a large and spacious plaine" with a "fairy grassy ground" and "all the ornaments of *Floraes* pride" (II, 12, 50), has traits of a classical *locus amoenus*. It is, however, also marked by a menacing quality, since art seems to have overwhelmed the natural, resulting in an unhealthy idyll of "lavish affluence", where sensual delights are "poured forth with plentifull dispence" (II, 12, 42).[152] The branches of the trees, which stretch out their "clasping armes" and the "embracing vine, / Whose branches hanging downe, seemed to entice / All passers by" (II, 12, 54) even give rise to an image of a Venus flytrap-like place, which tries to lure the intruder into its centre by promising sensual joys but imprisons him once he gives in. The pastoral motif of being in harmony with the natural environment is hence subverted, as it means to yield to its temptations and reject the Christian virtue of temperance.

The monster figure at the centre of this *locus conclusus* represents the very union with this location which is condemned in the text. Acrasia has an alluring quality, since, like Circe, she has a sweet voice men can hardly resist and is extremely beautiful (II, 12, 78). On the other hand, there is also something monstrous about her: The veil around her place is compared to a spiderweb, and her lover, Verdant, referred to as her victim (II, 12, 77).

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149 E.g. Alcina's garden in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516) or that of Armida in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1581).

150 Cf. M.M. Beard. "Pastoralism as a Statement of Value: *The Faerie Queene* Book VI". *English Studies in Africa* 27.2 (1984): 77.

151 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically within the text: Edmund Spenser. *The Faerie Queene* [1596], ed. Thomas P. Roche Jr. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 1987.

152 Cf. Robert M. Durling. "The Bower of Bliss and Armida's Palace". *Comparative Literature* 6.4 (1954): 345.

Similarly to the ancient sorceress's island, this garden is a place of seduction the hero must by no means give in to. For Verdant, who, after having sex with Acrasia, is asleep when Guyon finds him, it is already too late: Having surrendered to her charms, he has given up the responsibilities associated with the notion of heroic fortitude, which is symbolised by his weapons that are hung up on a tree. Spenser heavily condemns this act: "O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend" (II, 12, 80). The sojourn in this context, which is strongly opposed to the civilised world of Christian values, not only results in weakness and effemination but also in the degradation to the savagery of an animal: In the tradition of Circe, Acrasia turns her victims into beasts.

Like Odysseus, the hero, Guyon, and his companion, the Palmer, are depicted as strong. Here, this strength is framed in a specifically Christian allegorical context: Representing the virtues of knighthood and Christian temperance, they resist all the temptations within the garden and defeat Acrasia, who appears as helpless when they cast a net over her. As the lust represented by the Bower of Bliss cannot merely be unmasked and rejected but must be fully rooted out to become ineffective, they finally destroy the place and return unharmed to the larger world. According to Greenblatt, who interprets this scene against the background of his *theory of subversion and containment*, Acrasia's garden, representing an integral part of the intruders, subverts the dominant order they represent. Thus, he regards the reason why the intruders destroy it in such a decisive way in their attempt to re-establish this order.[153] Besides, he notes, the whole episode can even be read as an early exercise of British imperialistic power against its cultural and ideological other.[154]

In the pastoral interlude in book VI, the rural enclave at first appears to be more idyllic and peaceful than Acrasia's deceptive bower, whose ominous and artificial quality it lacks; at a closer look, however, it is not only a fragile but also a dangerous environment, where the strength of the hero is needed. At the beginning of canto 9, Calidore, during his pursuit of the Blatant Beast, comes across a pastoral inset, where shepherds tend their flocks in a *locus amoenus*. The confrontation of two classes of people, courtly/heroic and rural, leads to the opposition of both ways of living. When Calidore is invited by the old shepherd Meliboee into his humble lodging for the night, the latter praises the simplicity of the *vita contemplativa* in the country:

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153 Cf. Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning*, 173-174. For a contrary opinion, see Paul Strauss. "Allegory and the Bower of Bliss". *The Ben Jonson Journal: Literary Contexts in the Age of Elizabeth, James and Charles* 2 (1995): 67-68.

154 Cf. Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning*, 173-174.

> How much (sayd he) more happie is the state,
> In which ye father here doe dwell at ease,
> Leading a life so free and fortunate,
> From the tempest of these worldly seas,
> Which tosse the rest in daungerous disease? (VI, 9, 19)

This life of *otium* and innocence is contrasted with the *vita activa* of heroic deeds and the vicissitudes of a courtly existence. Meliboee, who was himself at the court as a youth, only found the utmost vanity there and an environment removed from the more natural condition provided in the country, to which he finally retired again (VI, 9, 24-25). He now rejects all things connected to the rivalries of the courtly sphere (e.g. glory and envy), which only cause hatred among humanity; instead, he prefers the simplicity and humbleness of a rural existence. Calidore appreciates the life of tranquillity and contentment among the shepherds; nevertheless, he represents the morally inferior life of the court, since he brings, albeit unintentionally, its jealousy and competitiveness into the pastoral world, particularly with regard to his rival for Pastorella, Coridon.[155]

The hero's love for the shepherdess, however, highlights one of the dangers of this retreat, which are similar to those posed by Acrasia's bower. Like Verdant, Calidore runs the risk of rejecting his worldly tasks by living a shepherd's life. Being distracted by his affection, he forgets about his real mission, i.e. the pursuit of the Blatant Beast. He therefore symbolically sheds his "bright armes" in favour of the "shepheards weed" and "hooke" (IV, 11, 36). Spenser disapproves of such a behaviour by comparing him to the culpable Paris (IV, 11, 36). For the hero, the stay in the pastoral context can hence only be a temporary one and a return to the larger world is necessary.

Another danger of this bucolic context lies in its very distance from the civilised world and its constraints. Accordingly, it contains not only innocent shepherds leading a life of a more natural simplicity but also wild animals, e.g. a lion, which attacks Pastorella. Moreover, it harbours savage, lawless people, i.e. bandits and brigands, who kidnap the shepherdess, kill Meliboee and destroy the pastoral world. The rural enclave appears to be extremely fragile, an ideal existence that cannot survive when measured against the dangers and atrocities from outside; its inhabitants are mere victims, whose powerlessness needs support by the hero from the courtly world, who finally frees the shepherdess and takes her away from the devastated idyll.

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[155] Cf. Beard, "Value", 88.

Despite this pessimistic image of a frail environment, it is nevertheless the place where the intruder gains an insight which is important for his further quest. Whereas initially, Calidore appears with the typical attributes of a superficial courtier, whose "kind courtesies" (VI, 11, 34) fail to impress the innocent Pastorella, it is only after taking off his armour and adopting a shepherd's guise as well as responsibilities that he finally impresses her. In the rural world, in particular through his love for the shepherdess, Calidore finally learns about the real nature of courtesy, the virtue which the sixth book is devoted to.[156]

Spenser hence implies that true courtesy cannot be found in the superficialities and intrigues of the court but only in the country. At the same time, however, the rural context lacks the strength and activeness typical of the sphere of heroic deeds and is dependent on an outsider who embodies these attributes. Since no clear preference to either court or country is given, a *via media* is perceived as the best solution, consisting in the acceptance of one's duties in the larger world but preserving the values of the pastoral enclave as a state within.[157] This support of and subversion of the dominant values as associated with the court which takes place in the bucolic world can be regarded to be a specific Renaissance continuation of the Virgilian opposition of two voices.

3.2.3. Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1611)

Dealing with a group of people stranded on an unknown island, where they are threatened by various dangers and encounter a monster figure, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* also stands in the tradition of the *locus conclusus* as well as the pastoral romance. The setting of the enclosed bucolic environment and the plot, which features the retreat of several courtiers and their eventual return, is used to explore and finally solve some problems of the courtly world.

After the arrival of Alonso and his men on the island, the tension between idyllic and anti-pastoral elements, expressed in the courtiers' different views of the natural context, is used to characterise them.[158] For Gonzalo, who is an idealistic old man, the island contains the paradisal landscape of a Golden Age, with "everything advantageous to life" (II, 1, 50) and

156 Cf. Ibid., 84.

157 Cf. Ibid., 82.

158 Cf. Young, *Heart's Forest*, 185-186.

where the green grass looks "lush and lusty" (II, 1, 53).[159] In his utopian vision, he imagines himself as the ruler of an equal society based on natural innocence and simplicity:

> All things in common nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
> Would I not have, but nature should bring forth
> Of it own kind all foison, all abundance
> To feed my innocent people. (II, 1, 157-162)

The pastoral ideal he brings forth is immediately ridiculed by Sebastian and Antonio, who represent the depravity and intrigues of the court. For them, the island is not a place where a perfect society free from vicissitudes is possible but rather provides a suitable ground for their plot against Alonso; they merely transfer the court's corruption to the pastoral enclave, which they hence do not see as a *locus amoenus* with green meadows but as a place full of "docks" and "mallows" instead (II, 1, 142).[160] Seen from the perspective of Alonso's men, the Golden Age appears as a mere ideal at best, an impossible dream in the face of a depraved court's realities.[161] Accordingly, they are unable to touch and consume the food associated with the Golden Age in the form of a banquet in act III. The reason for this is one of the deeds related to their wickedness, i.e. Alonso's usurpation of Prospero's throne. The latter therefore tells Ariel to withdraw the food as a punishment (III, 2, 19-109).

The only exception to this depiction of a courtly world which is either hopelessly idealistic or already fallen is the image of youthful innocence as established by Ferdinand and Miranda's love for each other. Ferdinand's honesty and obedience to Prospero's demands, e.g. sexual reticence before marriage (IV, 1, 1-31) or his willingness to do any work for his mistress, stand in contrast to the lies and intrigues of characters like Alonso, Sebastian or Antonio. Disguised as Ceres, Ariel hence equates the lovers' union with a Golden-Age-like fertility (IV, 1, 110-117). Accordingly, the play contrasts the representatives from a courtly world who due to their depravity cannot attain the innocence of an ideal past anymore with those

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159 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically within the text: William Shakespeare. *The Tempest* [1610-11], ed. Stanley Wells. The Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

160 This metaphor of an "unweeded garden" is also used in *Hamlet* to refer to the corruption of the state (Cf. Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I, 2, 134-135).

161 Against Bond's view that the play is in fact not pastoral because of its emphasis on the unattainability of the Golden Age, I would hence argue that it belongs to this mode, since it contains the dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral elements as typical of the tradition since antiquity. Cf. Ronald B. Bond. "Labour, Ease, and *The Tempest* as Pastoral Romance". *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 77 (1978): 331-332.

who can in fact – albeit only temporarily - live within or at least dream of it. On the island, these different notions are held in tension against each other.

Since the representatives of the courtly world are partially characterised by depravity, attributing the notion of the monster figure to this *locus conclusus* is difficult. On a superficial level, it is clearly represented by Caliban, who has unhuman qualities due to his ancestry, in particular his mother Sycorax, and is therefore referred to as "fish" (II, 2, 36) or son of the devil (I, 2, 319); moreover, he once tried to rape Miranda and in the course of the play even wants to kill Prospero. However, Caliban's plan to murder his master appears merely as a mirror of Antonio and Sebastian's plot against Alonso. Thus, the dangers posed by the monster figure can, in the Empsonian sense, be regared as a simplified version of the more complex intrigues going on at the court, of which the island appears as a microcosm. Moreover, the question remains whether Caliban is evil as a result of his absence from the civilised world and its restrictions or was made so by Prospero, who invaded his island and claimed it for himself, thereby enslaving him. From his perspective, the supposedly civilised man, who encroached upon his previously undisturbed existence in harmony with nature, is the real monster figure. Therefore, like Virgil's Meliboeus, Caliban appears to be the helpless victim of his native lands' occupation.

With this dual depiction of an indigenous inhabitant as both monster and victim, *The Tempest* blends contemporary views of the natives in the New World, in particular such as were outlined in Montaigne's essay *Of Cannibals* (1575). In this treatise, they were either seen as virtuous peasants unspoilt by corruption and living in union with nature or savage devil-worshippers, dangerous because uncultivated by the norms of the civilised world.[162] Since the play deals with the subjugation of a native by the representative of a more 'civilised' nation, it is not surprising that it has been read as an early example of a text that criticises colonialism.[163]

The pastoral tension between nature and nurture, the question whether to give preference to the 'civilised' world of the court or a more 'savage' nature, is hence expressed in the unclear ascription of the monster figure to either category. The strategy employed in this respect is again the Virgilian opposition of two voices. In fact, the evil character at the centre of the *locus conclusus* at first appears to be the vicious other who is opposed to the life within

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[162] Cf. Kermode, *English Pastoral Poetry*, 40.

[163] For an overview of such readings, see Ina Schabert (ed.). *Shakespeare-Handbuch: Die Zeit - der Mensch - das Werk - die Nachwelt*. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Kröner, 2009, 683-687.

civilisation; at a closer look, however, he functions merely as a mirror of the larger world's depravity, by which he is simultaneously even victimised.

Besides the question whether the life in a more savage context or in the civilised world results in an evil nature, the play also deals with the problem of unrestrained potency within the hands of one person in an environment where the laws of civilisation do not hold (Prospero). For this purpose, the courtly figures are deprived of their worldly power by the initial tempest and turn into the weak figures typical of the pastoral. Prospero, on the other hand, fills the resulting vacancy, becoming the ruler of the island and its inhabitants.[164] Enjoying absolute supremacy over his enemies, he experiences a struggle between his urge to carry out his revenge and his inner need to be merciful. In the course of the play, he decides for the latter: He is taught humility, compassion and self-knowledge, which leads to his insight that "the rarer action is / In virtue than in vengeance" (V, 1, 27-28). As a consequence, he lays down his magical powers in his famous soliloquy (V, 1, 33-57) and forgives Alonso.

Accordingly, *The Tempest* presents a pastoral context where the intruders are both threatened by a kind of danger but where at the same time their own potential for evil is explored. The movement of retreat and return is on the whole a healthful one, since by the reversal of worldly power structures the injustice resulting from courtly crimes is for the most part undone. Although with Sebastian and Antonio's return to the court the play indicates that the intrigues and depravity associated with it cannot be entirely annihilated, Prospero has his dukedom restored to him and intends to retire to Milan. He has been taught a lesson in compassion and forgiveness, which he takes back with him both to the fictional world outside and to that of the audience, which he directly addresses in his final speech: "As you from crimes would pardoned be, / Let your indulgence set me free" (V, 1, 337-338).[165]

3.2.4. Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667)

Whereas authors like Spenser and Shakespeare transposed a group of courtiers into an enclosed pastoral space and explored the question whether a union with this environment was still possible, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, emphasis is placed on the irreversible loss of man's

164 Cf. Young, *Heart's Forest*, 162-163.

165 According to Gifford, this is an appeal to both James I to be lenient towards the plot's being based upon a benign use of magic and to the audience, which is reminded that it is complicit in the crimes of colonisation they have just witnessed on stage; from both, it demands compassion and guilt. Cf. Gifford, *Pastoral*, 92.

original state within nature. For the human characters, the movement which takes place is hence not into the bucolic enclave anymore but only out of it with the external intrusion being confined to the forces of evil. The pastoral *locus amoenus*, which had already before been used to express fundamental Christian values, is now fully merged with the concept of the biblical Garden Eden. Here, Adam and Eve, allegorical figures representative of humanity in general, are tempted by Satan, the force of evil. Similarly to *The Tempest*, the country is conceived of as a testing ground, where a moral choice takes place; and even though the wrong choice is made, resulting in the expulsion from paradise, there is still some hope for a fallen humanity.

Milton places the pastoral city-country dichotomy into a specifically Christian context. Before the Fall, Satan is depicted as an urbanite and frequently opposed to Adam and Eve's innocent life in paradise, the place he is going to corrupt irretrievably. In book IX, for instance, he is referred to as "one who long in populous city pent, / where houses thick and sewers annoy the air" (IX, 445-446).[166] In contrast, the nature Eve inhabits is characterised by "the smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine, / or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound" (IX, 450-451).[167]

This idyllic garden is contrasted not only with the vices of a depraved city but also with the surrounding wilderness, from which it is protected by a wall (IV, 172-177); this corresponds to Marx's thesis that the pastoral context occupies a middle ground between a depraved urban world on the one hand and an untamed nature on the other.[168] Besides being referred to as a wicked city-dweller, Satan is also associated with the dangers of a dangerous natural world: During his first invasion of paradise, he is compared to a "prowling wolf, / Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey, […]" and "leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold" (IV, 183-184; 187).

Similarly to Virgil's *Eclogues*, night is not only a time when rest is sought but also means the confrontation of the rural enclave with the dangers of the outside world – both of the larger, urban world and the wilderness; accordingly, Satan, who represents both, comes during the coming of evening when he enters the garden for his final temptation of Eve in book IX.[169]

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166 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically within the text: John Milton. *Paradise Lost* [1674], ed. John Leonard. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2000.

167 Cf. U.C. Knoepflmacher. "The Novel between City and Country", in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, Vol. 2, eds. H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, 517-518.

168 Cf. Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 22.

169 Cf. John R. Knott, Jr. "The Pastoral Day in *Paradise Lost*". *Modern Language Quarterly* 29 (1968): 173.

Moreover, evening is the time when Adam and Eve have to leave paradise for good to start their lives in a world of uncertainties and perils.[170] The Fall itself, however, occurs at full daylight, during the peaceful hour of noon; by the reversal of the traditional opposition, Milton wanted to make this act appear more dramatic and emphasise that Eve sins consciously.[171]

As long as they are still in paradise, man's first parents are described as being in a kind of Golden Age, a state of prelapsarian innocence and unity with nature which differs from the contemporary reader's postlapsarian existence. At Eve's approach, for instance, the flowers "sprung / And toucht by their fair tendance gladlier grew" (VIII, 46-47). Furthermore, being without shame of each other, both walk around naked. By contrast, the current reader's world, where this harmony has been disrupted, can only bring forth "mere shows of seeming pure" (IV, 316), which do not even come close to this original state.

Despite this image of mankind within an idealised environment which differs from the reader's own reality, there is evidence that Adam and Eve in some respects are also typical of a fallen world. Their portrayal is thus used to explore more complex issues in Empson's or Alpers's sense. This representativeness becomes obvious when Milton refers to them as "the only two of mankind, but in them / The whole included race" (IX, 415-416). Like postlapsarian man, for instance, Adam and Eve have to do physical work in a garden that continually grows and tends toward disorder.[172] Moreover, Milton states that they already have sexual intercourse even before the Fall; by doing this, he comments on an earlier exegetical debate on prelapsarian sexual love and criticises – among other things – the early Catholic banning of physical love from paradise.[173]

The Garden Eden is hence not merely an idyllic existence which is threatened by an external evil but already contains many features of the contemporary world. This inclusion of elements associated with a fallen existence also applies to its temptations, which are symbolised by the snake and the Tree of Life. As in *The Tempest*, the pastoral context is a testing ground, where a moral choice must be made. In this case, however, man yields to the seductive powers of evil, which shows his general weakness concerning temptation as well as his propensity to sin.

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170 Cf. Ibid., 180-182.

171 Cf. Ibid., 174-175.

172 Cf. Lindenbaum, *Changing Landscapes*, 156-157.

173 Cf. Ibid., 158-165.

After the Fall, Adam and Eve become ashamed of each other, covering themselves to hide their nudity (IX, 158). The loss of innocence goes hand in hand with a passing of the former unity with nature, which, as in the ancient pastoral, laments its bereavement:

> Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
> Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,
> That all was lost. (IX, 782-784)

In the world resulting from the Fall, the former blamelessness and purity cannot be regained anymore. The main consequence of the expulsion from the garden is the creation of cities, which are regarded as the result of the pride and vanity causing fallen men to live an inconsistent and purposeless existence. In book XI, a catalogue of earthly cities, ranging from the exotic "Cambalu" and "Samarchand" to Rome and the mythical El Dorado, vainly sought by many explorers of the New World, is given to remind the fallen Adam that "nobler sights" are in store for those willing to live an introspective existence (XI, 385-414). Moreover, this urban world is also linked to mutual enmities, wars (XI, 638-682) and all kinds of secular sins like "jollity and game, / […] luxury and riot, feast and dance, / Marrying and prostituting, as befell, / Rape or adultery" (XI, 714-717). The descendants of Adam will emulate Satan, who has been referred to as an urbanite before.

Despite the pessimism conveyed by the image of urban vanities and felonies, there is still hope for mankind. Although in a fallen world, the original purity of an innocent country life cannot be achieved again, it is suggested that paradise can nevertheless become a state of mind by cultivating it and resisting the allurements of the Earthly City. In his final exhortation, Michael tells Adam not to raise himself above God or give in to the temptations offered by worldly vanities; instead, he should live an introspective existence of moderation in accord with Christian virtues:

> [...] only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
> Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,
> By name to be called charity, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
> To leave this Paradise, but shall possess
> A paradise within thee, happier far. (XII, 581-487)

3.2.5. Graveyard Poets

In the texts analysed so far, the bucolic environment, in spite of its dual depiction as idealised and anti-pastoral/threatening, was – if not as hopelessly depraved as Acrasia's Bower - mostly a salutary place. Here, an insight was gained that was helpful for the intruder and by implication also for the reader or the audience. In the country, the conflicts of the larger world were finally resolved. A *via media* between a city/court which was the embodiment of civilisation but also of corruption on the one hand and a rural context epitomising a natural goodness but also vulnerability and savagery on the other was often regarded as the best solution. And even in cases where a return to the pastoral idyll had become impossible, it could nevertheless still be regained as a state of mind.

With the tradition of the Graveyard poets in the eighteenth century, a shift can be observed. The countryside becomes a place for solitary contemplation, a retreat into the self, which prepares the Romantic emphasis on subjectivity and emotionality.[174] At the same time, the Gothicisation of the anti-pastoral component starts: The rural enclave is still idealised but also combined with images of graveyards, ruins, death and decay. By placing emphasis on the darkness of night, these poems metaphorically subvert the light of reason as associated with an increasingly enlightened world. In addition, dealing with themes like human finitude and afterlife, they transgress and question neoclassicist ideas of rational understanding and knowledge.[175]

Besides Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742) and Robert Blair's "The Grave" (1751), Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1750) is a paradigmatic text of Graveyard poetry. The poem uses the setting of a typically English country churchyard, whose tranquillity and peacefulness it opposes to the "madding crowd's ignoble strife" (73).[176] This can be seen as a reaction to an increasing urbanisation, in particular the anonymity and senselessness often associated with an ever-growing city in the course of the eighteenth century.[177]

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174 Cf. Peter Krahé. "'Approach and Read': Grays *Elegy* aus sozial- und mentalitätsgeschichtlicher Sicht". *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 45.4 (1995): 390.

175 Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 32.

176 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically within the text: Thomas Gray. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" [1750], in *The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Roger Lonsdale. London: Longman, 1969, 103-141.

177 Cf. Krahé, "'Approach and Read'", 396.

Despite this typical opposition of a rural existence and the world of urban affairs, there are some significant modifications in the tradition as outlined previously. Whereas the preceding texts contrasted an idyllic mood during the day with the uncertainties and dangers of the night or ended in the onset of darkness, Gray's poem places its particular emphasis on the coming of evening, with which it opens. This creates an atmosphere of Gothic twilight, which sets the tone for the speaker's contemplation of death and decay. Furthermore, in earlier texts, the countryman invited the protagonist into his humble lodging for the night, thereby establishing a sense of mutual comfort and community. Gray's ploughman, however, who seeks the shelter of home, leaves the speaker alone in the darkness of the meadows, which conveys a feeling of isolation and loneliness (3-4). In this tranquil environment, where "solemn stillness holds" (6), traditional images of the graveyard are used, with elms, yews and grassy turf covering the graves (13-14). Here, the speaker delivers his thoughts about the mortal and transitory character of all earthly things.

Besides finding expression in the typical city-country dichotomy, the contrast between rural simplicity and urban refinement has also been transformed into a comment on the class opposition between rich and poor. The speaker bemoans the lot of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" (16), who lie interred in their graves, and opposes their current state of death to their previously simple and happy but also laborious rural existence (17-28). He empathises with the lowly peasants, whose potentials could not be realised because of their low social standing and lack of education: To them, "knowledge […] her ample page / Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll" (49-50). In contrast to the rich, who leave behind outward signs of wealth and fame like expensive tombstones, monuments or memoirs after their death, the poor die fameless, passing on nothing but their "short and simple annals" (32).

At the same time, the speaker highlights that all things connected to the urban world of the upper class, e.g. power, splendour or prosperity (33-34), are mere vanities and do not count anymore after death, which acts as the great leveller: "The paths of glory lead but to the grave" (36). The injunctions on human finitude are hence used for the purpose of moral instruction, as a warning to those relying merely on secular superficialities.[178] In death, which will come for everyone sooner or later, the difference between the upper and lower ranks is annihilated, with the former also becoming weak figures which cannot escape their fate either.

[178] Cf. Ibid., 34.

With its gloomy depiction of a Gothic country, Graveyard poetry hence does not only run counter to contemporary notions of reason and propriety but paradoxically also supports them. In fact, the images of graves, ruins and corpses are not merely celebrated for their own sake but also serve to convey a moral lesson. Showing the likeness of all human beings – be they refined urbanites or simple peasants, famous personalities or unknown people – after their departure from life, these poems utter warnings to the godless and demand religious faith in order to guarantee the ascension of their souls to heaven.[179] Thus, the pastoral tension of subverting and conforming to contemporary notions as established by Virgil is from now on also used in a Gothic context. In this case, the two voices are represented by pro- and anti-Enlightenment ideas respectively.

In the here and now, however, equality between the upper, urban and the lower, rural classes remains an impossibility. In spite of his empathising with the village community, the intruding figure, who has a different social rank and probably comes from the city, nevertheless does not become a part of it, as was the case in the previous texts, but remains an outsider.[180] The final image that he offers of himself at the end of the poem is therefore still one of isolation and alienation: Changing the perspective, he imagines a "kindred spirit" (probably another visitor from the city) arriving at the country and enquiring from a "hoary-headed swain" (96-97) the way he lived and died.[181] The peasant evokes the image of a *locus amoenus* with a "nodding beech" (101) and a brook (104), where the speaker used to sojourn but which was empty one day (109-112). This indicates that he died a lonely death.

Thus, the retreat into the country results, as typical of the pastoral tradition, in an insight. However, this insight is not linked to a higher condition of happiness but rather to melancholy and sadness, since the speaker learns about the transitory character of all earthly things. The idea that in death everyone is equal gives the speaker some consolation but also conveys a sense of inevitable loss to him. Moreover, the withdrawal to the rural enclave does not lead to a new synthesis or sense of community but emphasises the speaker's seclusion and loneliness. In this respect, the Graveyard poets occupy an intermediate position between the earlier pastoral texts, where the movement to the countryside had positive consequences, and the later Gothic-pastoral tradition, which increasingly emphasises the devastating effects of this process.

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179 Cf. Ibid., 33.

180 Cf. Suvir Kaul. "Thomas Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard*", in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Christine Gerrard. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006, 282.

181 Cf. Ibid., 287.

3.3. Early Gothic-Pastoral Occurrences

3.3.1. The Formation of the Gothic-Pastoral Mode

From the late eighteenth century on, the tradition of portraying a pastoral environment which is peaceful and tranquil but also conveys a sense of danger and mortality due to images of ruins, death and decay is continued within the form of the novel. In these texts, the anti-pastoral component opposed to the pastoral ideal is, as was the case in Graveyard poetry, filled with Gothic elements. This gives rise to an extreme dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral/Gothic features or even leads to an emphasis on the latter. Whereas the Gothic novel as such has its origins in the mid-eighteenth century with Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), it is not before the 1790s that pastoral and Gothic elements are combined in fictional form. At the beginning of this development stand Ann Radcliffe's texts, which are then followed by writers like Mary Shelley, Charles Maturin and Emily Brontë.

The blending of both modes in the novel of that time is not surprising. In fact, the early texts of the Gothic tradition, like the type of pastoral as established by Virgil, can be seen as resulting from a historical context which bears political instability and an uncertainty concerning current values.[182] In Virgil's time, this uncertainty was constituted by the precarious political situation in the aftermath of civil war. At the close of the eighteenth century, it resulted from the horrible consequences of the French Revolution or the dissatisfaction with an increasingly industrialised, urban world; as a consequence, literature flourished which dealt with the retreat into a pre-enlightened past and a displaced rural context.

This does not mean, however, that the elements associated with the pastoral ideal in the depiction of the Gothic country, in particular the idyllicism of its landscapes or the simplicity of its inhabitants, can provide much comfort; nor do they serve as a desired refuge from the troubles of the larger world. Instead, the anti-pastoral/Gothic traits, which co-exist with these idealised features, make the rural retreat dangerous, since they embody everything barbaric or savage which stands in contrast to the classical ideal of rationality and Enlightenment. According to Punter and Byron, Gothic literature came to be associated with anything medieval or the opposite of classical at that time:

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[182] Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 41-46.

> Whereas the classical was well ordered, the Gothic was chaotic; whereas the classical was simple and pure, Gothic was ornate and convoluted; whereas the classics offered a world of clear rules and limits, Gothic represented excess and exaggeration, the product of the wild and the uncivilized, a world that constantly tended to overflow cultural boundaries.[183]

The dangers associated with the ruined castles, sublime mountains and feudal counts which can be found in the Gothic country imply that these are no nostalgic elements associated with a Romanticised past. Rather, they embody concrete fears of aspects threatening the contemporary enlightened culture and social structure. Among these are, for instance, the social upheavals subsequent to the French Revolution or changes in the relation of the sexes.[184]

Besides the aggravation of the opposition between idyllic/pastoral and anti-pastoral elements by the Gothicisation of the latter, there is also an exacerbation of the other features allowing for an overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral mode. First of all, the city-country opposition is now increasingly equated with the Gothic dichotomy between civilisation and barbarism. The rural retreat is the context where, due to its distance from the civilised city, the savagery associated with a Gothic past can be found. Here, the supposedly cultivated city-dweller is made evil and/or unleashes his more savage side. Moreover, the movement between city and country as well as the answer to the question whether there can be a synthesis between both ways of living at times reveals a severe pessimism. Emphasis is in some cases either placed on the devastating consequences the retreat into the rural environment has or the inability of a fallen humanity to return to a state of pastoral harmony in a world of Gothic terrors. A sinister image occasionally also arises from the insight to be gained in the countryside, which can be linked to evil. As far as their negotiation of dominant discourses is concerned, the authors at times employ the strategy of opposing two voices, the result of which is a tension between conflicting notions. Regarding their attitude, these texts concentrate on man's (or, often, woman's) weakness in relation to his (her) environment, which is now seen as representative of the aforementioned anxieties.

However, the Gothicisation of these pastoral elements is still not a general feature of all the texts under consideration or is not fully elaborated yet: In Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the journey to a sinister country of Gothic dangers still leaves the heroine unharmed, finally enabling her to come back to her innocent existence within a pastoral idyll.

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183 Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 7.

184 Bhalla therefore states that "the rural landscape in the Gothic novel is neither separate from lived reality nor free from social reason; it is a part of the complex political, economic and moral history determining the agrarian arrangements of the age". Bhalla, *Cartographers of Hell*, 21-22.

Although in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, the notion is already expressed that the rural enclave is the place where man's inherent beast is unleashed, the withdrawal into this context does not necessarily go hand in hand with a negative lesson for the urban intruder; after all, Lockwood eventually departs for the city without having understood this fundamentally negative insight. Even though the pessimism related to the retreat-return movement is fully elaborated in Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* and Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in these writings, the Gothic-pastoral elements are generally restricted to certain episodes and cannot be applied to the respective novel as a whole. Thus, it can be argued that in the following texts, which exhibit an incomplete or restricted repertoire of features typical of the later Gothic-pastoral mode, this hybrid form is still at an initial, premature stage.

3.3.2. Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)

Dealing with a figure growing up in the seclusion of an idyllic countryside, her movement to the larger world of evils and subsequent return to her pastoral existence, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the first Gothic novel to employ the pastoral mode. In fact, the author makes it clear that she is indebted to several pastoral writers, from whose works she quotes frequently throughout the text.[185]

The difference between city and country which the novel establishes is typical of the pastoral tradition. Whereas Emily and her family lead a more authentic life of innocence and simplicity in harmony with an idealised nature at La Valleé, people from the city are frequently described as vain and superficial. In contrast to the honest affections as offered by Emily's father, for instance, after his death, her aunt, Madame Cheron, does not even try to console her niece; instead, she distresses her even more by her concerns what society could possibly think of her relation to Valancourt (105-110).[186] The city-dweller is also described as being alienated from nature: Whereas during their journey to Italy, Emily feels comforted by watching the sublime Alps, her aunt wants to leave the "horrid mountains" (162) behind and proceed to Venice, a city surrounded by water and from where the mountains cannot be seen.

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[185] Among them are, for instance, James Thomson, Vergil, Ovid, Milton and Alexander Pope. Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 28-29.

[186] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Ann Radcliffe. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* [1794], ed. Jaqueline Howard. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2001.

In general, the novel takes up the Romantic notion that contemplating the idyllicism of a pastoral nature as well as the sublimity of landscapes like the Alps can be salutary and give the subject new spirits.[187] This stands in contrast to the later Gothic-pastoral tradition, where images of an idealised nature will be mainly used for the purpose of deception. When Emily has to leave La Vallée, on her last evening she enters the natural environment in front of the chateau and feels revived afterwards (109-110). In particular the sublime encounter calls forth the knowledge that the world is ordered by a supreme being and thus consoles her, since she is reassured of a benevolent universe:[188]

> Her thoughts rose again to the sublime subject she had contemplated; the same divine complacency stole over her heart, and [...] inspired hope and confidence and resignation to the will of the Deity, whose works filled her mind with adoration. (110)

The sublime, however, is not only a source of awe-inspiring comfort but at times already represents the anti-pastoral or Gothic counterforce threatening the life of a pastoral existence. This becomes particularly obvious in Radcliffe's landscape descriptions, where the co-occurence of sublime and pastoral/picturesque elements creates a sense of both comfort but also impending danger. The opening of the novel, for instance, portrays the chateau of Emily's family in terms of a bucolic idyll which borders on the Pyrenees:

> From its [the chateau's] windows were seen the pastoral landscapes of Guienne and Gascony, stretching along the river, gay with luxuriant woods and vines, and plantations of olives. To the south, the view was bounded by the majestic Pyrenées, whose summits, veiled in clouds, or exhibiting awful forms [...] were sometimes barren [...] and sometimes frowned with forest of gloomy pine, that swept downwards to their base. These tremendous precipices were contrasted by the soft green of the pastures and woods that hung upon their skirts; among whose flocks, and herds, and simple cottages, the eye, after having scaled the cliffs above, delighted to repose. (5)

On the one hand, an image of a safe and harmonious existence within a typical *locus amoenus* is given; here, Emily and her family are described as leading a life in the protected

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187 Cf. Benjamin A. Brabon. "Surveying Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Landscapes". *Literature Compass* 3.4 (2006): 842.

188 In this respect, Radcliffe is a closer follower of Shaftesbury, Thomson and Rousseau, who associate the improving effects of contemplating nature with the fact that the subject becomes aware of a benevolent god and the excellence of his creation. Cf. Joachim Ritter. *Landschaft: Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft*. Münster: Aschendorff, 1963, 21-25; Marlis Lemberg-Welfonder. *Ann Radcliffes Beitrag zur englischen Rousseau-Rezeption im Zeitalter der Französischen Revolution*. Diss. Heidelberg, 1989; Thomas Kullmann. "Nature and Psychology in *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *Wuthering Heights*", in *Exhibited by Candlelight: Sources and Developments in the Gothic Tradition*, eds. Peter Davidson and Jane Stevenson. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, 99-100. This salutary side of the natural environment also speaks against Bhalla's argument that Emily "frequently returns to scenes of nature without discovering there a healing power. […] It should be clear by now that the Gothic pastoral denies all possibilities of healing". Bhalla, *Cartographers of Hell*, 37-38.

sphere of a pastoral inset, where they spend "moments infinitely more delightful than any passed amid the brilliant and tumulous scenes that are courted by the world" (8). On the other hand, the presence of the mountains in the background has a similar function to the coming of evening in Virgil's *Eclogues*. Corresponding to the sublimity and terror Montoni's castle later evokes in the protagonist, they symbolise the impending threat posed by the more powerful, Gothic forces from the larger world, which will compel Emily to leave her native lands.

The anti-pastoral counterforce threatening the rural existence can now also embody concrete anxieties as were prevalent at Radcliffe's time. After leaving the secure world of La Vallée, Emily soon journeys to Italy, where she finds a landscape which is both pastoral and sublime; at some places, however, it is also devastated by the aftermath of civil war:

> Over the beautiful plains of this country the devastations of war were frequently visible. Where the lands had not suffered to lie uncultivated, they were often tracked with the steps of the spoiler; the vines were torn from the branches that had supported them, the olives trampled upon the ground, and even the groves of mulberry trees had been hewn by the enemy to light fires that destroyed the hamlets and villages of their owners. (164-165)

The image of a ruined *locus amoenus*, devoid of its original inhabitants, is reminiscent of the images of a countryside spoiled by soldiers as evoked by Meliboeus in *Eclogue* I. As in Virgil's poem, this destruction is linked to contemporary fears of social unrests and political instability: Whereas in the ancient text, these fears refer to the civil wars out of which Octavian eventually emerged victorious, in the early Gothic novel, they are associated with the horrors following the onset of the French Revolution. After all, Radcliffe, who sets the plot in 1584, wrote her novel during the Reign of Terror (1793-1794), whose images of blood and violence caused widespread panic throughout the European monarchies.[189] The strife-torn landscape hence not only evokes images of a savage, feudal past but is also intended to remind the reader that this dark age could easily return and threaten the fabric of contemporary society, as exemplified by the 'barbaric' events in contemporary France. Similarly, the medieval ruins in the Gothic country call forth images of an earlier period full of political instability, as David Durant notes: "The ruined castles and abbeys are graphic symbols of the disintegration of a stable civilization".[190]

These aspects are concentrated in the depiction of Montoni's castle, which is a Gothic version of a *locus conclusus*. Here, the author takes up the previous notion of the country as a place

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189 Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 44.

190 David Durant. "Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic". *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 3 (1982): 523.

which is dangerous due to its distance from the civilised, urban world and gives it a Gothic shape, thereby alluding to current anxieties and uncertainties. Similarly to La Vallée, the surroundings of this *locus conclusus* are defined by the co-occurrence of pastoral and sublime elements. In this case, however, the former appear merely deceptive while the latter completely function as an anti-pastoral/Gothic counterforce symbolising the danger associated with the place. On her way to the castle, Emily at times perceives "pastoral scenes" with "herds and flocks [...] and the shepherd's little cabin [...] [,which] presented a sweet picture of repose" (215). Additionally, the landscape consists of "tremendous crags, impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared except here and there the trunk and scathed branched of an oak" (215). A sense of peril is also evoked by the approaching darkness of evening, which makes it increasingly impossible for Emily to view the surrounding nature (215-216). The climax of this scene is her first view of the castle, whose "gloomy grandeur" as well as its "vast, ancient and dreary" features (216) corresponds to the surrounding sublime landscape and also evokes feelings of awe and terror in Emily.

Although Montoni, who is the monster figure of this *locus conclusus*, is not a supernatural being anymore, he is still characterised by a combination of 'high' and 'low' elements. Whereas in Venice, he appears to be a rich count, after the party's arrival at the castle, he more and more turns out to be a sinister villain, the captain of a horde of bandits, who plunder and devastate the adjacent countryside. In this respect, he represents the fears of a more feudal and savage power structure which reaches into the present. With regard to his threats to Emily and her aunt, particularly his attempts to gain their estates in France, he also embodies an overpowering patriarch who terrorises the female heroine.[191]

The notion of a patriarchal threat is particularly striking in the depiction of the figure which enters this enclosed space. In contrast to the ancient epic, it is not a strong hero anymore who encounters the monstrous danger without problems but displays a degree of weakness as typical of the pastoral. This feebleness is explicitly depicted as characteristic of the female sex. After all, this figure is represented by the Gothic heroine, who cannot escape her imprisonment within the castle by herself but needs the support of more powerful men (she is later rescued by Ludovico and Du Mont). Emphasis is therefore placed on the inability of the female to rejoin the natural environment again: Although from her window, Emily sees "images of pastoral beauty" behind which "the broad breast of the mountains" (230) can be

[191] Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 89.

seen, she can only lament her imprisonment within the castle.[192] This insistence on the intruder's weakness is representative in Alpers's sense, since it reflects contemporary (particularly female) ideas about the relation between the sexes.[193]

Despite the heroine's powerlessness, her journey into the Gothic country does not prove harmful to her. After being expelled from her native lands and moving to the city, from where she then embarks to Montoni's castle, Emily finally manages to safely return to her pastoral idyll, eventually reclaiming her estates in La Vallée. As has been stated before, this reveals that Radcliffe's novel still constitutes a premature version of the later Gothic-pastoral mode, where the retreat-return movement will always have devastating effects on the protagonist.

However, the threats lurking in the depths of the Italian country are not completely opposed to the heroine's supposedly safe bucolic world; on the contrary, even here, Gothic places can be found, which are in quality similar to the villain's castle. Besides De Vilefort's chateau with its hidden secrets, the novel portrays the French countryside in general as idyllic and Gothic alike. For this purpose, the typical pastoral contrast between day and night is frequently deployed. Whereas the region is peaceful in the daytime, emphasis is placed on the danger of being outside during the night, since the traveller runs the risk of falling into the hands of savage bandits. When the Count de Vilefort, for instance, gets lost during his journey through the Pyrenées, he seeks shelter in an old watchtower; its inhabitants at first seem harmless hunters but soon turn out to be dangerous villains threatening his life.[194] This conception of a country which is ideally suited for travelling during the day but is transformed into a place of Gothic dangers at night blurs the border separating Emily's pastoral existence and Montoni's country. It implies that a clear distinction between good and evil (as something external) is not possible.[195] To be more precise, it reflects doubts regarding the idea that the horrors as represented by the aftermath of the French Revolution are only to

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192 This inability of the female to go outside due to her confinement by a vicious male is emphasised throughout Radcliffe's work. Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest*, for instance, is locked away in a convent by her uncle and therefore "excluded from the cheerful intercourse of society – from the pleasant view of nature". Ann Radcliffe. *The Italian* [1797], ed. Frederick Garber. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 46.

193 Roberts argues that the contrast between Emily, who finally manages to escape, and her aunt, who dies within the castle, shows a progression in women's rights for freedom; I would argue against this, since Emily does not flee from the castle by her own means but needs the help of more powerful men. Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 66.

194 This notion is also expressed in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). On his way to Strasbourg, Don Raymond spends the night at the lodging of a peasant family which appears harmless at first but the head of which soon tries to murder him. Cf. Matthew Lewis. *The Monk* [1796], ed. Howard Anderson. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 95-128.

195 Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 71.

be found somewhere else; after all, the novel suggests, not even the most idyllic and sheltered existence can guarantee complete safety from such cruelties.

This idea of a merely seeming return to a former state of stablity also refers to the notion that a woman's place is at home and under patriarchal control, symbolised by the final image of Emily living in her sheltered bucolic environment. After fleeing from the power of one patriarch (Montoni), she comes under the authority of the next one (Valancourt) through marriage. Thus, with the happy image of a pastoral existence the female protagonist can eventually enjoy, the novel also seems to close with the reassertion of traditional stereotypes of women.[196] However, some degree of ambiguity remains. After all, the heroine only comes back to her idyllic world in La Vallée after having been granted a high degree of freedom and having frequently wandered outdoors. According to Botting, the novel therefore suggests that a woman's place is both inside and outside, where the evils she encounters could even be more enjoyable than her confinement at home.[197] Paradoxically, the encounter with evil even seems to be important for Emily's development; because of the dangers she comes upon in the depraved city as well as the Gothic country, she learns to value her life at La Vallée, to which she longs to return throughout her absence. This insecurity concerning the female's place is supported by the fact that Emily's idyllic country also contains Gothic elements, which are in quality similar to those of Montoni's castle.

The Mysteries of Udolpho hence ends with the return to an ordered pastoral existence which corresponds to a whole range of dominant contemporary notions. At the same time, however, this order is undermined, with the novel closing in an insecurity concerning its boundaries. Thus, like Virgil's *Eclogues*, Ann Radcliffe's novel does not end happily in the naive restoration of a pastoral way of life but preserves a state of tension; in this case, however, this notion has been Gothicised, since it not only reflects uncertainties but also specific anxieties concerning the return of a more barbaric past as typical of the time.

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196 Cf. Brabon, "Gothic Landscapes", 843; Donna Heiland. *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, 76.

197 Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 70.

3.3.3. Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Whereas Radcliffe's version of Gothic pastoral still complied with the idea that a retreat into nature can be salutary and enabled its protagonist to safely return to her pastoral world, in the course of the nineteenth century, this positive notion increasingly vanishes, giving way to pessimism. In the Gothic novels of this time, the insight gained in the country has often horrible consequences for the intruder. Moreover, emphasis is placed on the fact that a return to paradise is impossible in a world of Gothic vices. The borders between an external evil and the innocent existence it threatens are even more than previously blurred. It is not only the bandits or feudal counts anymore that turn the countryside Gothic but also the simple peasants themselves, who at first correspond to the pastoral ideal of innocent people but turn out to contain the propensity to viciousness within.[198] This deterioration in the depiction of the countryside is often linked to larger issues like the exploitation of the lower classes and the unfair distribution of property.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, these ideas are exemplified in the episode in which the monster meets the De Lacey family. After his 'birth' in the city of Geneva and the vehement rejection by his creator, he tries to gain admittance into one of the surrounding cottages in the country; due to his repulsive appearance, however, he scares the local peasants, who chase him with severe violence. On reaching the De Laceys' house, he therefore decides to hide in an adjacent hovel, from where he can watch the family unobserved and decide upon a plan of being received into their home.

The creature is overwhelmed by the scenes of domestic affection and harmony he contemplates in the following; he loves particularly the music played by the old man, who tries to comfort his poverty- and grief-stricken family by this means. The image presented is hence one similar to that of Virgil's shepherds, i.e. simple peasants who come together for mutual comfort and musical entertainment. Like Tityrus and Meliboeus, the De Laceys are also shown as powerless with regard to the forces of the larger world. Once a rich family, they were obliged to go into exile when Felix rescued a Turkish merchant who was wrongfully accused of a crime but who then deceived his saviour, leaving him and his family dispossessed and in poverty.

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198 This contradicts Bhalla's thesis that "the novel does not contain an example of a good community" (Bhalla, *Cartographers of Hell*, 27). Rather, an image of a good community with innocent peasants is established at first, which is then increasingly subverted.

The De Laceys' disastrous situation, resulting from the unfair treatment by the economical and political system, is regarded to be representative of the actual conditions at Mary Shelley's time. In fact, it must be seen within the wider tendency of the novel to deal with images of rural poverty throughout Europe. The beginning of Frankenstein's narration, for example, features Beaufort, a merchant from Geneva, who, due to misfortune, is forced to live in "poverty and oblivion" (33) in the countryside;[199] he depends on the unskilled labour of his daughter Caroline, who "earn[s] a pittance scarcely sufficient to support life" (34). For the author, this fate is typical of poor people who have to survive in rural regions; corresponding to historical accounts of the time, her description of human misery can hence be seen as an attack on the leading political and economical classes' indifference towards the peasants' atrocious living conditions.[200] Accordingly, the anti-pastoral counterforce threatening a peaceful existence is associated with the consequences of agrarian exploitation.

This notion becomes also obvious in the traditional image of a landscape turned anti-pastoral as a result of the current political situation. Seeking to complete his task of creating a female partner for his monster, Frankenstein withdraws to the Orkney Islands. The scenery he finds there is described as a devastated *locus amoenus*:

> The soil was barren, scarcely affording pasture for a few miserable cows, and oatmeal for its inhabitants, which consisted of five persons, whose gaunt and scraggy limbs gave token to their miserable fare. Vegetables and bread, when they indulged in such luxuries, and even fresh water, was to be procured from the mainland, which was about five miles distant. (168)

Whereas the portrayal of a bucolic environment spoiled by anti-pastoral forces was used by Ann Radcliffe to reveal anxieties concerning the return of a feudal, savage past, in this case, emphasis lies on the decay of the region through poverty, which stigmatises the cruel conditions of the people in rural areas.[201]

The link between the deplorable state of the country-dwellers and the larger theme of social exploitation is particularly prominent in the De Lacey episode. Hiding in the hovel, the monster overhears Felix reading from Volney's *Ruins of Empires* (1796), an essay on the

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199 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein* [1818], ed. Maurice Hindle. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2003.

200 Commenting on the conditions in the countryside in the late eighteenth century, for instance, Enid Gauldie states that there were "rural slums of horror not surpassed by the rookeries of London. The touching picture of country people living in neat and pretty thatched cottages far from the sins and slums of the city is easily dispelled by a closer look at the pretty cottages". Enid Gauldie. *Cruel Habitations: History of Working Class Housing, 1780-1918*. London: Allen & U, 1974, 21. Cf. Bhalla, *Cartographers of Hell*, 24.

201 Cf. Bhalla, *Cartographers of Hell*, 26.

philosophy of history. From this book, he learns about "the strange system of human society", consisting of the "division of property, of immense wealth and squalid poverty" (122). He furthermore discovers that the current social structure is the result of the unfair distribution of luxury and wealth at the price of the lower classes' miserable situation; this system is also enforced through civil laws and religious sanctions, whose cruelty is disguised under the veil of benevolence.[202] Felix and his family, who are themselves the victims of this unjust society and its corrupt legal practices, serve the creature as a living example of Volney's theses.

The scenes of mutual affection and images of innocence which the monster observes in the house of the De Laceys, for whose miserable lot it seems to feel pity, finally encourage him to make himself known to them. However, even these figures, who have so far been portrayed as vulnerable and sympathetic peasants, eventually treat him with extreme hostility and violence. Although they have been excluded from society by unfair means, they do the same to the intruder, against whose horrible appearance they are prejudiced. Ironically, they do this shortly after the image of the charity typical of traditional pastoral shepherds has been established again: The blind grandfather assures the monster that, since his "friendly and amiable" family (136) is also excluded from society, he should not despair at being admitted. When Felix enters, however, he violently beats the creature, which appears as a mere victim that clings to the old man's knees, and eventually flees (137). As a consequence of his ill treatment by the family, he finally declares "ever-lasting war against the species" (138); his contact with the simple peasants has not given him a new sense of community or provided him with new spirits but on the contrary even aggravated his feeling of being an outsider: "My protectors had departed, and had broken the only link that held me to the world" (140).

The movement to the country and the eventual return is hence informed with a new sense of pessimism. Previously, the retreat had mostly positive consequences or at least left the protagonist unharmed; in many cases, it even enabled the intruder to come back with a useful insight or served to solve the conflicts of the larger world. In Shelley's novel, however, this process leads to horrible results: The insight gained in the rural context is a fatal one, since the intruder learns not only about the injustice of society but also that not even its humblest and most innocent members will accept him. As a consequence, he is not integrated into this society but, assured that he will forever be an outsider, even turns violent against it. The sojourn in the countryside hence results, contrary to the previous pastoral tradition, not in the

[202] Cf. Ibid., 27-28.

mitigation or amelioration but rather aggravation of one's evil traits. Despite being initially depicted in a sympathetic way, the peasants cannot teach the intruder a more natural and original way of living anymore; instead, it appears that they have internalised the cruelty and atrocities with which they have themselves been treated in an unjust system. This extremely negative view of the retreat-return movement will be a central feature of all Gothic-pastoral texts from the late nineteenth century on.

However, some degree of ambivalence remains, as the intruder is in this case not a human city-dweller but a monster, which makes the De Laceys' reaction understandable to some extent. Moreover, it is not entirely clear whether the creature has been made evil by society or if it is inherently wicked. After all, the whole episode is told from his own perspective. Moreover, his extremely cruel deeds, e.g. the murder of Wilhelm, Henry and Elizabeth, and the fact that Frankenstein describes his countenance as exhibiting the "utmost degree of malice and treachery" (171) seem to argue for an inherent malice. In fact, this discrepancy between the statements and the actions of the monster as well as his emotional involvement in the narrated events is a typical feature of unreliable narration.[203]

Pessimism also arises from the question whether a pastoral return is possible. In a reference to Milton's Adam when he is expelled from paradise ("And now, with the world before me" [141]), the monster leaves the cottage, entering the 'fallen' world of humanity.[204] Unlike Adam, however, who walks "hand in hand" with Eve,[205] the monster is rather an isolated figure like Satan; being an outcast from paradise forever, he will wreak havoc on humanity, of whose blissful state he is jealous:

> He [Adam] had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with, and acquire knowledge from, beings of a superior nature: but I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition; for often, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me. (132)

In fact, it is difficult to speak of a fall here, since there was no initial state of peaceful harmony with a rural existence the monster could enjoy. In contrast to the Miltonic Adam or the Radcliffean Emily, the novel does not describe the creature's growing up in a pastoral idyll to which he then tries to return. Instead, Shelley places special emphasis on the fact that

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203 Cf. Neumann and Nünning, *Narrative Fiction*, 98-99; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. *Narrative Fiction. Contemporary Poetics* [1983]. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 2002, 100.

204 Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost* XII, 646-647: "The world was all before them, where to choose / Their place of rest, and Providence their guide".

205 Ibid., 648.

from the very beginning he is accepted nowhere in the country, whose inhabitants appear as amiable shepherds at first but treat him with severe hostility. Moreover, he is already at his birth the result of a process which is explicitly opposed to an innocent state of union with nature. Working on his creation, Frankenstein describes his lonely confinement within his laboratory and his subsequent alienation from the natural environment outside:

> Winter, spring, and summer passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves – sights which before always yielded me supreme delight – so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. (57)

If a union with nature takes place at all that can be associated with the monster's original existence, it is rather one that is linked to nature's dark side and the exploration of its hidden mysteries:

> The moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbed among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? (55)

Unlike Adam, the creature is therefore not the result of a return to a peaceful nature but comes from a scientist's pursuit of its sinister, morbid aspects. However, it is not only the monster but also his creator that is unable to ever enjoy a state of bliss in the here and now again; after all, Frankenstein's creation destroys all his hopes of regaining happiness, finally rendering him the same outcast. The notion emerges that man himself, by an excessive pursuit of scientific knowledge and penetrating too deeply into nature's secrets, actively makes his re-entry into paradise impossible. This idea will be in the focus of several Gothic-pastoral texts at the *fin de siècle*.

3.3.4. Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820)

Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*, which has often been regarded as one of the last great works within the initial period of Gothic fiction, returns to classic elements like graveyards, ruined monasteries or the threat by a feudal past as established by writers like Walpole, Radcliffe and Lewis;[206] with its depiction of religious persecution, depraved convents and

[206] Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 106.

cruel spiritual authorities, it thereby places particular emphasis on the theme of anti-Catholicism. As in *Frankenstein*, the depiction of the country and the retreat-return movement reveals a severe pessimism. However, the Gothic-pastoral mode still has a mainly episodic character. The story of Immalee, in which this hybrid form can be found, is part of the more complex assortment of various narratives characteristic of the novel. In this episode, features of the previous Christian tradition have been taken up in the portrayal of a natural paradise with an innocent inhabitant, her temptation by an external figure and her subsequent movement to an urban world of sins. On the other hand, the author has significantly modified this well-established pattern: Here, the encounter of the female character, who has lived alone in paradise without a male counterpart so far, and her tempter results in marriage. This 'love plot' was actually a typical feature of Spenser's and Shakespeare's pastoral, in which the urban/courtly intruder finally wedded the beautiful girl he found in the country. However, in Maturin's novel, the wedding has fatal consequences: Entering a union with the agent of the devil, the bride eventually meets her death.

With Immalee's island, the novel features a pastoral inset, placed within the narration of and opposed to an extremely sinister urban context. The "Indian's Tale", which describes the events on the isle, is embedded in the "Spaniard's Tale", in which Alonzo di Moncada relates his escape from the powers of a depraved convent and the prison of the Inquisition in Madrid. This is a truly Gothic city, characterised by the dissolution of the family structure and a church whose representatives are thoroughly depraved and sadistic: After being consigned to a monastic life by his parents, who were easily convinced to do this by the vicious director, the Spaniard experiences a life of pain and torture at the convent, where the cruelty and sadism of his fellow monks almost drive him mad. His flight is unsuccessful, resulting in his brother's death and his imprisonment within the chambers of the Inquisition. After he manages to break out by a fortunate coincidence (the prison is on fire), he hides in the basement of a Jewish household, where he finds an underground passageway leading to Adonijah, a cabbalistic Jew. The latter asks his visitor to translate an old manuscript written in Spanish, which contains the story of Immalee.

The unknown island and the life of Immalee, a member of the wealthy Aliaga family from Madrid who was lost as a child during a voyage in the Indian Ocean, stand in stark contrast to Moncada's extremely hostile and vicious urban world. The image of an innocent and childish existence in union with the environment of a *locus amoenus* is established, where, as in the

ancient pastoral tradition, a personified nature reflects and responds to the emotional state of its inhabitant:[207]

> The sun and the shade – the flowers and foliage – the tamarinds and figs that prolonged her youthful existence – the water that she drank, wondering at the beautiful being who seemed to drink whenever she did – the peacocks, who spread out their rich and radiant plumage the moment they beheld her – and the loxia, who perched on her shoulder and hand as she walked, and answered her sweet voice with imitative chirpings – all these were her friends, and she knew none but these. (280)

This context appears to be devoid of evil, since the naïve Immalee is "not conscious of fear, for nothing of that world she lived in had ever borne a hostile appearance to her" (280). The description of a life in a Golden Age within an idyllic pastoral environment hence seems to imply that there are untouched places free from the ills of the larger world at first. However, it soon turns out that even on this isle, which had "long remained unknown to the Europeans" (272) and is far distant in the Indian Ocean, the evils associated with Europe, in particular the Catholic Church, cannot be escaped. The place is intruded by Melmoth, who represents these evils and spoils its purity.

In fact, Melmoth, who "experienced a sensation like that of his master when he visited paradise" (285) and wears European garments (281), is associated with both Satan and a depraved Europe.[208] The portrayal of Immalee, on the other hand, who is soon imbued with the knowledge of a fallen world and must leave her state of innocence forever, evokes the image of Eve. Moreover, in her description as a native inhabitant who is closer to nature and is later unable to adapt to the life in the European city, she also represents the figure of the colonist. Since her existence is ruined by the representative of a European imperial power, who introduces her to the evils outside, the entire episode can be read as a stigmatisation of colonial practises.

The world of "suffering, guilt and care" (285) the tempter shows his victim, stands – among other things - in the tradition of *Paradise Lost* with its concentration on the vices of the earthly city. Similarly to Milton's epic poem, the "foetid air, artificial heat, unnatural habits, and impracticable exercise" of the European city build a contrast to Immalee's natural existence, where fragrant flowers can be found (301). The urban environment is also defined

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[207] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Charles Maturin. *Melmoth the Wanderer* [1820], ed. Douglas Grant. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

[208] Paradoxically, Melmoth, who spoils Immalee's innocent existence by showing her a world of evil outside, assumes the role of not only Milton's Satan but also the archangel Michael, who shows Adam the larger world of vanities and evils at the end of *Paradise Lost*. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost* XI, 370 – XII, 649.

by extreme class divisions, resulting in poverty and starvation on the one hand versus superfluity and luxury on the other (302).

Besides employing this typical pastoral city-country dichotomy, Melmoth places his catalogue of evils into the larger theme of religious bigotry, which he extends to the major world religions:

> On one point they all agree – that of making their religion a torment – the religion of some prompting them to torture ourselves, and the religion of some prompting them to torture others. (290)

As an example, he lets Immalee see various scenes in India, which is, like Europe, presented as a place of Gothic horrors. This sudden shift of perspective to the Asian Continent is not as surprising as it might seem at first. After all, notions like Indian barbarism and cruelty were often equated with the Catholic Church at Maturin's time. As Rudd argues, both Hinduism and Catholicism were associated with superstition, priestcraft and image worship in the British popular imagination during the early nineteenth century.[209] The hideous scenes Immalee encounters are hence of a similar quality to the horrors which had been described in the "Spaniard's Tale" as typical of Catholic institutions before. Among such scenes is, for instance, the procession of a Juggernaut, and people who willingly throw themselves or their infants beneath it, leaving behind a landscape of bones and skeletons (293); the link to Catholicism is made explicit in the narrator's comment that the worshippers place as much faith in their rites "as the Catholic votarist does in the penance of St Bruno, or the exoculation of St Lucia, or the martyrdom of St Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins" (293).[210] However, religious torture is not merely confined to Hinduism: On seeing a mosque in front of which Turkish men are treating the nearby Hindi in a hostile way, Immalee learns that Islam expects of its devotees "to hate all who do not worship as they do" (295). Being a melting-pot of spiritual corruption, India and its scenes of Gothic horror generally reveal the awful consequences of blind faith and religious cruelty as were often related to Catholic institutions at that time.[211]

The only religion which seems devoid of this hostility is Christianity, which teaches people to be "mild, benevolent, and tolerant" towards other faiths and to worship God with "pure hearts

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209 Cf. Andrew Rudd. "India as Gothic Horror: Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* and Images of Juggernaut in Early Nineteenth-Century Missionary Writing", in *New Readings in the Literature of British India, c. 1780-1947*, ed. Shafquat Towheed. Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2007, 45-51.

210 Cf. Ibid., 58-59.

211 Cf. Ibid., 58.

and crimeless hands" (296-297). As a consequence, Immalee decides that "Christ shall be my god, and I will be a Christian!" (297). This honest embracing of the Christian belief by a being representing an original purity as typical of the pastoral ideal highlights that at least in theory this religion rejects the violence and hatred associated with other forms of faith.
However, this does not mean, as was the case in Milton's text, that paradise can be regained if one follows the essentials of Christian religion; in this world of Catholic horrors, where humanity appears to be hopelessly lost, a pastoral return is not even possible as an internal state of mind. Melmoth reveals to his victim that not even this ideal religion is free from enmity: "All agree that the language of the book [the Bible] is, 'Love one another,' while they all translate that language, 'Hate one another'" (307).[212] While Immalee is subsequently compared to Eve tasting from the tree of knowledge (308) and loses her original unity with her natural environment, it is clear that she will never be able to retrieve her former state of innocence. After her return to Madrid, she learns that Melmoth's words concerning the larger world, especially such as relate to religious bigotry, were true. Not only does she bemoan the artificiality of a life consisting in one's submission to outward ceremony and social expectations; she also finds out that achieving a paradise of the mind by accepting the Christian doctrine of universal love is impossible in a context of Catholic hypocrisy. As her mother says,

> it is in vain that I tell her that true religion consists in hearing mass – in going to confession – in performing penance – in observing the fasts and vigils – in undergoing mortification and abstinence – in believing all that the holy church teaches – and hating, detesting, abhorring, and execrating. (332-333)

The artificial character of this world and the depravity of Catholicism eventually drive Immalee into the hands of the devil's agent, whom she paradoxically associates with her former life of innocence in paradise she longs to return to:

> I loved you because you were my *first*, - the sole link between the human world and my heart […] because your image is mixed in my imagination with all the glories of nature – because your voice, when I heard it first, was something in accordance with the murmur of the ocean, and the music of the stars. (375)

It is hence implied that the world of urban depravity where Immalee originally was born cannot be escaped in the long run, with her pastoral idyll being only a temporary refuge. Even

[212] Cf. Jack Null. "Structure and Theme in *Melmoth the Wanderer*". *Papers on Language and Literature* 13 (1977): 143-144.

worse, the monotony and naïveté of her existence within this idealised context seems to have driven her into the arms of Melmoth, who taught her the joys of human company.[213] The anti-pastoral counterforce as represented by the Gothic evils of the world outside is too powerful to enable the heroine to escape.

Similarly to Spenser's and Shakespeare's pastoral texts, where a marriage between the courtly/urban intruder and the innocent country girl takes place, Immalee finally enters a union with Melmoth. In this case, however, the intruder is so depraved that nothing good can be gained from the synthesis; on the contrary, it has fatal consequences. After becoming the "bride of the grave" (374) in an uncanny marriage scene within the nocturnal terrors of a ruined monastery, Immalee/Isidora eventually gives birth to an "infant demon" (524) and dies with him in the prison of the Inquisition. An image of severe pessimism and inescapability arises, since the individual is safe from evil neither in the city nor in the country. The innocence and harmony associated with paradise are conceived of as powerless in comparison to the forces of a world shaped so thoroughly by immorality and wickedness.

A sense of hopelessness is also called forth by the effects the sojourn in the rural enclave has on the evil intruder from the city. Although Melmoth's original intention is to seduce the daughter of nature, it initially seems that his powers are temporarily suspended in her society, and he even "ceased to regard her as a victim" (298). In her presence, he is partly transformed back into his former self, forgetting about his role as a tempter figure for a while: "He […] thought that for a moment he was not the Cain of the moral world, and that the brand was effaced" (299).[214] However, the positive results the movement into the bucolic context has are only short-lived. Already in the next sentence, it is stated that he returns to his former plans, feeling "the gnawing of the worm that never dies, and the scorching of the fire that is never to be quenched" (299). The sins as represented by the figure of the devil's agent are too severe to allow any kind of escape into an idealised environment, which will sooner or later inevitably be spoiled. This notion that the stay in the pastoral context cannot mitigate or ameliorate the evil traits of the urbanite anymore can be also found in the next novel.

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213 According to Bhalla, Immalee "discovers too late that her fantasy life on the remote Indian island, free from the conflicts and divisions of the real world, carries within it the threat of imaginative sterility and the destruction of the self". Bhalla, *Cartographers of Hell*, 36.

214 Cf. Mona Körte. *Die Uneinholbarkeit des Verfolgten. Der Ewige Jude in der literarischen Phantastik*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2000, 225-226.

3.3.5. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

In Victorian times, a domestication of the Gothic mode takes place. Whereas previously, wild landscapes, medieval castles or the Catholic Church were among the major sources of anxiety, these are now constituted by a more realist framework within the urban or domestic sphere.[215] The Gothic villain is no feudal count, monstrous being or supernatural tempter figure anymore but a human subject, which is an aspect that places special emphasis on the origins of evil within the human condition or its social context. The employment of realist elements also applies to the concept of nature, which has lost its transcendental powers. It does not have any reviving effects anymore but rather reveals a general indifference towards man, who, with the emergence of Darwinism, is bereft of his central position within the universe.[216] Accordingly, in contrast to the previous tradition, the idyllic elements associated with the pastoral ideal cannot even have at least a temporarily positive influence on the urbanite in the literature of the time. In the rare cases where they appear at all, they are used in an ironic way, mocking the naive assumptions of the human subject, which falsely expects to find an idealised context with happy people in it.[217] Nevertheless, the natural environment is often not completely cut off from the human world, as it can still serve to mirror or respond to emotional states as typical of the pastoral tradition. Moreover, the country as such still appeals to authors who are dissatisfied with the disjointedness of an ever-growing city and doubtful about the course civilisation is taking. For these writers, the rural enclave still constitutes a suitable place to examine human affairs far from the chaotic conditions of an ever-expanding metropolis.[218] A prominent example of this development within the Gothic tradition is Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

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215 Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 123.

216 Cf. Knoepflmacher, "Novel", 523.

217 In fact, this is part of a wider tendency within Victorian literature. In the chapter sarcastically entitled "Arcadian simplicity" of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, for instance, the narrator mocks the reader's expectations that the "simplicity" and "sweet rural purity" of the "honest folks at the Hall" must "surely show the advantage of a country life over a town one" (William Thackeray. *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero* [1848], ed. John Sutherland. The World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, 113). Likewise, the lush landscape of the countryside in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or Eliot's *Adam Bede* hides the same anxieties that growing men and women encounter in the city. In the latter novel, a stranger who beholds "the joyous nature" would be deceived by its seeming calmness, unaware "that behind the apple-blossoms, or among the golden corn, or under the shrouding boughs of the wood, there might be a human heart beating heavily with anguish" (George Eliot. *Adam Bede* [1859], ed. Stephen Gill. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 1980, 363-364).

218 Cf. Knoepflmacher, "Novel", 524-525.

Already in the beginning, the novel uses the pastoral ideal in an ironic way. Mr Lockwood, who has rented Thrushcross Grange in Northern England for the purpose of recuperation, visits his new landlord Heathcliff. The happy and peaceful peasants living in union with an idyllic environment he originally expected quickly turn out to be a naïvely romantic assumption of him.[219] The society he encounters at the Heights is not a "family […] with an amiable lady presiding over home and heart" (13) but extremely hostile towards each other and the newcomer.[220] Although Heathcliff, for instance, is described by Lockwood as a gentleman at first, he refuses to offer him a room for the night, which parodies the traditional pastoral situation in which the countryman invites the city-dweller into his house. Furthermore, Heathcliff's constant swearing stands in contrast to the urbanite's politeness. After Lockwood's disillusionment is complete, he ironically comments that

> this is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's Heaven […]. (3)

Despite the reduction of these idyllic pastoral motifs to a merely ironic usage and the emphasis on a rather anti-pastoral environment, the country nevertheless serves to explore aspects relating to the larger world. For this purpose, the novel concentrates – among other things - on the figures of Catherine and Heathcliff. The particular strategy employed in this respect is the emphasis on these characters' weakness, expressed in their inability to change the rigid social strictures of the time. Initially, both are described as rather wild and close to the natural environment, into which they often escape from the confinements of the Heights together. After Catherine's accident and her stay at the Linton family, she more and more assumes the manners of a lady in terms of behaviour, education and appearance; Heathcliff, on the other hand, keeps his rude looks and even gives up his education. As a result, they increasingly alienate themselves from each other, which finally leads to Catherine's marriage with Edgar Linton. The situation of both is regarded as resulting from current social expectations. Although they love each other, Catherine has to marry another man because of his social standing. This reveals the contemporary situation of women, who were forced to wed someone not because of love but for material and societal reasons. The gypsy foundling

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219 Cf. Luke Spencer. "*Wuthering Heights* as a Version of Pastoral". *Brontë Society Transactions* 23.1 (1998): 47-48.

220 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights* [1847], ed. Pauline Nestor. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2003.

Heathcliff, on the other hand, does not have a chance to ascend the social ladder in this prejudiced and rigid class structure.

Notwithstanding its portrayal of weak characters, whose powerlessness against the current social strictures is representative of current notions, the novel also subverts these dominant ideas of the time to some extent. This particularly applies to the concept of femininity. Like Radcliffe's heroines, Brontë's women at times challenge the notion that their place is in the house and under patriarchal control. Catherine, who is initially depicted as frequently playing outdoors with Heathcliff, longs for a reunion with the natural environment after her marriage. However, she is only granted this freedom in death, subsequent to which she haunts the male characters as a ghost from outside. When Lockwood is confronted with her during his nocturnal stay at the Heights, for instance, she wants to come in through the window (25). According to Roberts, this blurring of the outside/inside distinction reverses the traditional power structure between male and female.[221] For the younger Catherine, even greater liberty than by such violent means is possible. With her refusal to marry Hareton, she escapes patriarchal submission, thus becoming the owner of the Heights herself. Since she is not confined to the household under masculine dominance, she has more freedom to wander outside, which symbolises a greater degree of feminine power.[222]

Although nature is generally associated with the freedom from social constraints, it rarely has any reviving effects anymore as was still at least partially the case in Maturin's novel. On the contrary, emphasis is often placed on immediate harm as a result of the exposure to open nature. Lockwood, for instance, suffers from illness after walking from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange. Moreover, Catherine is bitten by a dog when she is outside. And even if the natural environment gets more pleasant with the advent of spring, this still does not have any positive consequences for the physical state of the individual. Edgar Linton, for instance, after being sick all winter long, "gathered no real strength" from wandering outside although "spring advanced" (257).

Nevertheless, the natural context is not completely cut off from human concerns; at times, it still reflects the emotional state of its inhabitants as typical of the pastoral tradition. At one point, for instance, it dramatises the society-driven conflicts between Catherine and Heathcliff, who cannot marry because of their different social classes. After Catherine has explained to Nelly that she can never marry Heathcliff, since, although she loves him, they

221 Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 89-90.

222 In Roberts's view, this greater freedom shows a progression of women's rights from the older to the younger Catherine's generation. Cf. Ibid., 112-113.

would be beggars (82), the weather mirrors the feelings of Heathcliff, who only overheard the part concerning the impossibility of their union: "It *was* a very dark evening for summer: the clouds appeared inclined to thunder [...]; the approaching rain would be certain to bring him home without further trouble" (84-85). Similarly, "the growling thunder, and the great drops that began to plash around her" reflect Catherine's "state of agitation which permitted no repose" (85) after she has heard that Heathcliff has run away.

As in the previous texts, the retreat into the country and the eventual return does not lead to a new synthesis anymore and can even prove harmful to the intruder. Similarly to *Frankenstein*, the notion is expressed that the rural society makes the intruder vicious instead of integrating him in its community. Unlike Shelley's novel, however, which dealt with the dubious narration of a monster, *Wuthering Heights* clearly portrays the intruder's development into a villain as a consequence of his treatment by the countrypeople.[223] Although Heathcliff, a foundling from the city of Liverpool, is frequently compared to the devil (e.g. 36; 39), this characterisation is always biased, as it is done from Hindley's perspective. Moreover, he is from the beginning treated with mistrust and hostility, especially by Hindley, who is jealous of his father's affection for the orphan (38) and who hence tyrannises him after Mr Earnshaw's death. When Heathcliff has been unjustly locked up by Hindley, he swears revenge, and Nelly henceforth notices something diabolical about him (66). He finally develops into a sinister villain, who, after becoming the master of the Gothic castle of Wuthering Heights, terrorises the Lintons and the Earnshaws.

However, it is not only the gypsy that unleashes his evil side in the rural enclave but also the supposedly 'civilised' English visitor from the city. Lockwood's initial superiority and politeness, which seem to stand in contrast to Heathcliff's savage behaviour, are quickly revealed to be a façade, hiding a person which does not differ from the countryman's roughness in the slightest. In fact, his vision of the elder Catherine appearing at her old chamber window and begging to be allowed in during his night at the Heights could be interpreted as the confrontation with the irrational instincts he has so far suppressed.[224] His cruel repulsion of the child who wants to come home illustrates, according to Freud, the mixture of sadism and sexuality typical of the repressed civilised man.[225] This is an anticipation of a central feature of the Gothic-pastoral mode at the *fin de siècle*, where the

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223 Cf. Ibid., 80; Kullmann, "Nature and Psychology", 103-104.

224 Cf. Knoepflmacher, "Novel", 524.

225 Cf. Sigmund Freud. *Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930], trans. and ed. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1989, 66.

country is regarded as the place where man's instinctual traits he has renounced due to his life in the city are liberated.

In contrast to the later Gothic-pastoral tradition, however, this unleashing of the beast does not go along with a devastating insight for the city-dweller yet. After all, Lockwood regards the whole episode in which he meets the ghost as a mere nightmare without any deeper meaning. In general, he fails to understand that the savagery he encountered during his sojourn in the countryside is actually also a part of himself. In the late nineteenth century, which will constitute the focus of the following chapter, this will change: Here, the retreat into the pastoral context always results in the urbanite's insight that the idea of the 'civilised' world is an artificial construct, which hides the beast within itself. Far from oscillating between the real and the dream, these novels depict the savage side in man as a silent truth which can hardly be negated. As a consequence of such a discovery, the urbanite is forever unable to rejoin his life in the city again. Negotiating fundamental anxieties and uncertainties related to the concept of civilisation, the Gothic-pastoral mode will play a fundamental role within the texts of that time.

4. Gothic Pastoral in the Late Nineteenth Century

4.1. The Emergence of the Gothic-Pastoral Romance

In the course of the nineteenth century, an ideological transformation of the literary concept of city and country can be observed. In the Empire Fiction, it turns into a dichotomy between the capital as a symbol of western civilisation and the chaotic, barbaric world of the colonies. The nature-nurture opposition, i.e. the contrast between urban sophistication/depravity and rural roughness/simplicity, becomes the ideological opposition of a superior, enlightened British race on the one hand and the inferior, savage people found in the colonies on the other. The city-intruder is now represented by the white man, who goes out into the wilderness to fight evil forces.[226] He is also the coloniser, who brings the light of civilisation into the darkness. The country-dweller becomes the racially and morally inferior colonist, who is seen as a half-beast that is further down the evolutionary ladder and thus nearer to the animals. The activity of colonisation is celebrated as a heroic action, an altruistic service to help the primitive natives, who are not only regarded as evil but also as 'children' in need of 'parental guidance'. In Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" (1899), for instance, the coloniser is opposed to the "new-caught, sullen peoples, / half devil and half child" he must now lead.[227]

However, this ideological dichotomy was more and more questioned towards the *fin de siècle*. This was the result of uncertainties and anxieties connected to the rapid social and economic changes as well as the erosion of traditional ideas and values during that time.

The Empire, which had expanded earlier in the century, was increasingly breaking apart. Not only did the British lose their overseas markets; there was also growing international competition due to the economic rise of Germany and the United States. Besides, unrests in the colonies, where the natives rebelled against their occupants and demanded independence, increased, eventually culminating in the Boer War (1899-1902).[228]

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226 Cf. Raimund Schäffner. "Imperialismus und Literatur im englischen *Fin de siècle*", in *Fin de Siècle*, eds. Monika Fludernik and Ariane Huml. *LIR* 29. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2002, 324-340.

227 Rudyard Kipling. "The White Man's Burden" [1899], in *Rudyard Kipling: The Complete Verse*. London: Kyle Cathie, 1990, 261-262.

228 Cf. Roland Carter and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English: Britain and Ireland*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2001, 319.

Doubts emerged concerning the old Victorian beliefs and values, particularly those of a religious nature. This was among other things due to the publication of Charles Darwin's famous works *The Origins of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), which had destroyed the anthropocentric worldview as proposed by Christianity and hence deprived man of his divine origins. According to this influential theory, human beings were a species like any other, which had developed merely by chance. Since natural history was seen to progress randomly and towards no particular climax, humanity might revert to a more primitive state again.[229] Fears grew that the British themselves could become degenerate or that those who were not the fittest would multiply. Such anxieties interacted with and were aggravated by the increasingly visible decline of the Empire as well as the perceived corruption of the metropolis. In his influential book *Degeneration* [Entartung] (1892), Max Nordau argued that, with the climax of human progress being reached, everything would deteriorate from now on – be it the once powerful Empire, the morals of society, or civilisation itself.[230]

Pessimism also arose from general feelings associated with life in the capital. Whereas the population of London had been at about two million when Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, it had risen to 6,5 million by the time of her death in 1901. As a consequence of the accelerating urbanisation, the sense of a 'local' community had more and more given way to the individual feeling of anonymity in a fragmented urban context.[231] Besides, a range of social ills and scandals linked the inhabitants of the metropolis to immorality and seemed to render it a dangerous place.

With the emergence of such wide-ranging fears and uncertainties, it is not surprising that literature flourished in which the ideological dichotomy between a 'civilised' city and a 'savage' country is increasingly doubted. Apart from those novels which portray a Gothicised London, where the same savagery as associated with the colonies can be found,[232] a certain group of texts, which will be the focus of this chapter, directly concentrates on the country to negotiate these fears in displaced form. For this purpose, they use features as typical of the

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229 Cf. Ibid.

230 Cf. Max Nordau. *Entartung* [1892], Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Berlin: Duncker, 1893.

231 Cf. Carter, McRae and Bradbury, *History*, 319.

232 Prominent examples in this respect are Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1895) or Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) deals with both a Gothic city and country; since this analysis, however, focuses only on the portrayal of the country (where nevertheless, as will be shown, often particularly urban fears of the time are negotiated), the depiction of London in *Dracula* will be neglected.

tradition outlined so far and modify them in order to adapt them to the anxieties prevalent at the time.

In contrast to the previous writings, however, the Gothic-pastoral elements do not play a minor role or have only episodic character anymore but occupy a central position within these novels. Moreover, there is not only an internal structure, i.e. a set of conventionalised features and a certain attitude, but also an external one, i.e. a fixed plot arrangement, which is derived from the pastoral romance. Since the co-existence of an external and an internal structure was defined by Fowler as typical of genres,[233] one can argue that the modal tradition as outlined so far turns into a uniform genre. In the following, this will be referred to as the *Gothic-pastoral romance*.

As typical of the pastoral romance tradition, there is always a movement from city to country and an eventual return in these texts. As has been pointed out before, the former is now regarded as an emblem for 'civilisation' whereas the latter embodies the 'savagery' which seems to be opposed to it at first. The movement between both contexts goes along with an insight for the intruder, who is now a representative of the Empire and its ideology. However, since this insight is linked to contemporary anxieties concerning the artificial nature of this ideological city-country contrast, it always has fatal consequences. Besides, all of these texts make use of a transformed version of the *locus conclusus*. As in the ancient epic, the idyllic elements of the pastoral tradition serve as a mere façade to deceive the intruding urbanite into the centre of the place, where a dangerous monster figure lurks that represents a more savage/anti-pastoral nature. Unlike Homer's *Odyssey*, which dealt with a strong hero encountering this monstrous other, these texts continue the depiction of a 'weak' intruder figure as established by Ann Radcliffe. In these cases, however, this figure is for the most part represented by the male representative of a supposedly 'superior' Empire, which mirrors general fears resulting from the increasing visibility of imperial vulnerability. Moreover, the tradition as established by Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, where a clear distinction between the intruder and the monster figure was not possible, is now continued and placed into the context of specifically late nineteenth-century fears of degeneration. As far as their negotiation of the dominant discourse of a 'superior' city is concerned, these texts are not merely subversive; instead, they often maintain a Virgilian ambivalence by opposing two voices, which confirm and undermine this discourse respectively.[234]

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233 Cf. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 76; chapter 2.2.2.

234 Some features of the Gothic-pastoral romance have already been described by Patrick Brantlinger as typical of a genre he calls the "imperial Gothic". This term includes any Gothic text dealing with the

Whereas the four authors who will constitute the focus of the following chapter all negotiate imperial and post-Darwinist anxieties in their respective way, they can be divided into two groups. The first one (Wells, Stoker) uses a pastoral context which stands in a direct relation to the contemporary notion of a Gothicised London and the associated fears of imperial decline. The second one (Haggard, Conrad) portrays a rural environment that is also placed in a dialectical relation to an urban context, which is, however, not merely London anymore; in these texts, worries concerning both the notion of a 'civilised' city and of British/European imperialism in general are displaced into the retreat of the African wilderness.

4.2. The Country of Dreadful Night

4.2.1. London at the *Fin de Siècle*

Before analysing the first group of novels, which place their Gothic-pastoral context in a direct relation to the late-nineteenth century capital, a brief overview of the dominant image of a Gothicised London as typical of the contemporary British imagination shall be given first. Against this background, the features of the Gothic-pastoral romance within H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), *The Time Machine* (1895) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) will then be investigated.

Whereas in 1802, William Wordsworth in his "Lines Composed upon Westminster Bridge" refers to London with the words "Earth has not anything to show more fair: […] / A sight so touching in its majesty […] / all bright and glittering in the smokeless air",[235] James Thomson presents a different vision of the metropolis in "The City of Dreadful Night" (1874): Here, London is a place where "Myriads of habitants are ever sleeping / Or dead, or fled from

encounter of the supposedly 'civilised' man and the 'savage' colonist in the contact zones of the British Empire, in the process of which imperial anxieties concerning a possible link between both are negotiated. The Gothic-pastoral romance, however, is a more comprehensive genre, which displays Brantlinger's features but also the elements as outlined in this chapter. Whereas the blurring of the opposition between the 'civilised' city and the 'savage' country or the opposition of two voices could be seen as typical of the "imperial Gothic" as well, aspects like the dichotomy between idyllic and Gothic features, the *locus conclusus* or the insistence on representative vulnerability go beyond Brantlinger's genre. For this reason, it makes sense to introduce a new term for the genre which displays all of these features. Cf. Patrick Brantlinger. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988, chapter 8.

[235] William Wordsworth. "Lines Composed upon Westminster Bridge" [1802], in *Selected Poems*, ed. Walford Davies. London: Everyman, 1975, 116.

nameless pestilence".[236] This pessimistic view resulted from the large number of social ills which were connected to the capital in the popular mind at that time. Besides, it anticipated the public scandals of the 1880s that increasingly led to a Gothicised image of the city, which for many had become an uncontrollable and threatening space.

In the first volume of his *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889), Charles Booth, investigating the poverty in London, argued that the rapid expansion and the consequent overpopulation of the metropolis had resulted in a crisis of housing for the poor, who were forced either onto the streets or to the more unsavoury locations of the city.[237] Consequently, vice and crime proliferated in the poorest districts, situated largely in the East End, where people lived under the most atrocious conditions.[238] Late nineteenth-century London was a city of contradictions: While the East End, being associated with poverty, crime and prostitution, was seen as a symbol of the city's moral decline, the West End was regarded as the more 'fashionable' and affluent home of the privileged society. Due to the physical proximity of both areas, fears emerged that the East End's 'depravity' could spread and threaten the inhabitants of the West End.

However, it was not the threat of the working classes but rather their exploitation by the rich that gave rise to a major public scandal in 1885.[239] In his sensational revelation of East-End child prostitution in *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon* (1885), W. T. Stead exposed how members of the upper and wealthy middle classes regularly 'bought' child virgins for sexual enjoyment. Transgressing class boundaries to indulge in paedophilic pleasures, these ranks were now also connected to depravity. The image of the bourgeois male leading a respectable life by day while pursuing nefarious activities at night became a prominent figure in the public mind. It is probably no coincidence that Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) appeared some months after the publication of the *Maiden Tribute*.

The novel was used by the press for a Gothicised depiction of the Ripper murders in the autumn of 1888. While Whitechapel, the setting of the killings, was referred to as an

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236 James Thomson. "The City of Dreadful Night" [1874], in *The Penguin Book of Victorian Verse*, ed. Daniel Karlin. London: Penguin, 1997, 550.

237 Cf. Charles Booth. *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Vol. 1. London: Macmillan, 1892.

238 Cf. Linda Dryden. *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde, and Wells*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 52-56.

239 Cf. Ibid., 51-52.

"immoral landscape of light and darkness",[240] a gloomy labyrinth with hidden evils, the Ripper himself, whose true identity has never been revealed, prompted a whole range of suspects: First of all, preying on East-End prostitutes, he represented the figure of the vile West-End aristocrat as exposed by the *Maiden Tribute*. Moreover, he seemed to possess anatomical knowledge, suggesting that he was somehow related to the medical profession; an image of the "mad doctor"[241] arose, which, according to Walkowitz, reflected

> popular fears of surgeons, gynaecologists, vaccinators, vivisectors, and dissectors as violators of […] the innocent bodies of women, children, and animals, that had found considerable expression in a range of popular health and antimedical campaigns of the 1870s and 1880s.[242]

As far as the brutality of the murders is concerned, the Ripper was often referred to as a degenerate "half-beast"[243] of the type found in the colonies, which was indicative of contemporary xenophobia. The Jews, who, fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe, usually entered London through the east, whose docks and railway termini were international *entrepôts* for many immigrants, were among the main suspects at that time.[244] Finally, the idea of a 'working-class Jack' suggested that the Ripper was the personification of an evolutionary drawback, a monster which had been created by the conditions of the slums. His emergence was thus seen as a "metaphor for the self-generated decline of civilisation".[245] Consequently, the aspects previously mentioned gave rise to growing anxieties concerning the metropolis, in particular its role as the heart of a supposedly superior British Empire. During this time, doubts emerged about the ideological opposition of London, centre of the 'civilised' world, and the 'barbarity' of the colonies, since features of the latter could be observed within the capital. Authors like H.G. Wells and Bram Stoker directly deal with these uncertainties by displacing them into Gothic-pastoral contexts.

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240 Judith R. Walkowitz. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. Women in Culture and Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 193.

241 Andrew Smith. *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the* Fin de Siècle. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004, 79-83.

242 Walkowitz, *Delight*, 199.

243 Smith, *Demons*, 70.

244 Cf. Walkowitz, *Delight*, 26.

245 Smith, *Demons*, 70.

4.2.2. Wells, *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896) and *The Time Machine* (1895)

H.G. Wells is one of the most prominent *fin-de-siècle* authors to employ features of the tradition outlined so far and create his own version of the Gothic-pastoral romance. In *The Island of Dr Moreau*[246] and *The Time Machine*,[247] he uses the enclosed natural enclave in order to negotiate particular fears regarding a Gothicised London and its position as the heart of a 'superior' British Empire.

In general, the displacement of contemporary issues to a fictional place, from where they can be better scrutinised, is one of the main intentions the author pursues within his fiction. In an interview he gave at the time when he published *TM*, the author revealed the major development which was taking place in his writings:

> It is singular enough how fiction is widening its territory. It has become a *mouthpiece for science, philosophy and art*. […] The world may have been often enough described. The intricacies of human conduct may even approach exhaustion. But the modern fanciful method takes the novelist to a *new point of view*. Stand aside but *a little space from the ordinary line of observation*, and the relative position of all things changes. There is a new proportion established. You have the world under a totally different aspect. There is profit as well as novelty in the *change of view*. That is, in some small way, what I aim at in my books.[248] (my emphasis)

According to Wells, his texts should not only comment on current developments, be they of a scientific or philosophical nature, but also explore the "intricacies of human conduct", in other words the human condition. This should be done "a little space from the ordinary line of observation", by which he means a shift of the narrative perspective. While in *TM*, where the protagonist travels to the year 802,701, this shift is temporal, in *IM*, which features the journey of the city-dweller to a fictional island and his eventual return, a spatial displacement is deployed.

Besides dealing with the urbanite's movement to a space removed from but at the same time close to the current world of the reader and his eventual return, these texts take up many other features of the earlier Gothic-pastoral tradition. A very prominent one is the dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements. As critics have pointed out, the idealised spots of nature reveal an underlying escapist longing for the flight from an increasingly

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246 From now on abbreviated as *IM*.

247 From now on abbreviated as *TM*.

248 Reprinted in D.C. Smith. "A Chat with the Author of the Time Machine". *The Wellsian* 20 (1997): 6.

industrialised, fast-moving urban world to the original purity of an unspoiled environment.[249] However, the rural retreat only appears idyllic at first sight; in fact, as in many previous texts, it quickly turns out that behind the seeming Arcadian simplicity sinister dangers lurk, rendering it a hostile setting. Emphasis is also placed on the protagonist's weakness as revealed in his attempt to deal with the monstrous threat he encounters, which is seen as representative in Alpers's sense. In the following, it will be demonstrated how Wells has modified those and other elements of the Gothic-pastoral convention as outlined so far in order to adapt them to their particular late nineteenth-century background. As it will turn out, both novels reveal a severe pessimism as typical of the time. Since this pessimism is even more elaborated in *TM*, it will, despite its publication shortly before *IM*, be treated afterwards in this analysis.

In *IM*, the Gothic-pastoral environment is a fictional island with a Circe-like figure at its centre. Accordingly, the model of the *locus conclusus* can be applied to describe this natural retreat. Whereas in some respects the novel follows the features of the ancient model very closely, in others there are significant differences, which are placed into a specific *fin-de-siècle* context.

Similarly to Homer, the exact position of Moreau's isle is unknown. Although his nephew assumes that it is "Noble's Isle" (5),[250] he cannot be absolutely sure whether the place really exists or if it is merely a fantasy of his uncle, who is "supposed demented" (5); he thus concludes that "this narrative is without confirmation in its most essential particular" (5).[251] Moreover, Prendick, the protagonist, knows neither where he is nor where he is going after he has been rescued by the *Ipecacuanha*. He merely learns that he is travelling to a nameless island somewhere in the Pacific (12).

Prendick soon has reason to guess that something terrible is hidden on this isle. The captain refers to it as an "infernal island" (16), and Montgomery speaks of a secret he does not want to reveal but which is the cause for his life as an outcast (20). Furthermore, Montgomery's

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249 Cf. Michael Matzer and Hans-Peter Burth. "Das schlechte Gewissen der Zukunft: Die Wissenschaft bei Herbert George Wells". *Inklings* 12 (1994): 189.

250 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: H.G. Wells. *The Island of Dr Moreau* [1896], ed. Patrick Parrinder. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2005.

251 This must be also seen in the wider context of Gothic prefaces, in which the author traditionally distances himself from the story by asserting that he has found a text whose validity he cannot guarantee. Cf. Horace Walpole. *The Castle of Otranto* [1764], ed. Michael Gamer. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2001, 5-7.

attendant, who is a "misshapen man" and moves with "animal swiftness" (13), reminds the protagonist of the "forgotten horrors of [his] childhood" (20); he also seems to be the reason for the anger of the captain, who calls him a "devil" (16).

Although Prendick's unease even increases when he meets more of these creatures, some aspects of the island appear familiar and inviting at first sight. Once landed, he is taken to a habitation which to his surprise is strikingly 'English':[252] He finds an apartment "not uncomfortably furnished" with a bookshelf containing "editions of Latin and Greek classics" (32) and is served coffee and vegetables on a tray (33). An impression of a typically English and civilised environment is given, which should make Prendick more comfortable. However, he once again feels uneasy due to the strange occurrences he cannot account for, e.g. M'Ling's ears, which are pointed and furry (33).

The newcomer soon discovers the island's perilous quality, which is hidden behind the deceptive façade of an idealised nature. Having left the house, he first encounters a place whose idyllic scenery creates an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity:

> The place was a pleasant one. The rivulet was hidden by the luxuriant vegetation of the banks, save at one point, where I caught a triangular patch of its glittering water. On the further side I saw through a bluish haze a tangle of trees and creepers, and above these again the luminous blue of the sky. (39)

This depiction of a peaceful natural retreat, which invites those who enter to rest for a while, is the classic description of a pastoral *locus amoenus*. However, shortly afterwards, Prendick discovers the anti-pastoral/Gothic character of the place. He is appalled at discovering a half-beast, which is watching him curiously. After he has found the dead body of a rabbit it has devoured (39-41), his perception of the environment changes into that of a dark jungle with skulking dangers, which stands in contrast to the previous image of an idyll: "Every shadow became something more than a shadow, became an ambush, every rustle became a retreat. Invisible things seemed watching me" (41). His feeling of terror, aggravated by the sight of more half-beasts and the increasing darkness, finally culminates into sheer panic: He is chased by the Leopard Man through the nocturnal jungle, where "every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness" (45).

Despite the horror the protagonist experiences at his first encounter with the Beast People and his panic in the gloomy jungle, he soon finds out that the real monster of this *locus conclusus* is the figure of Moreau, whose cruelty is illustrated by his brutal vivisection of

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[252] Cf. J.R. Hammond. "*The Island of Doctor Moreau*: A Swiftian Parable". *The Wellsian* 16 (1993): 38-39.

animals. Similarly to Circe, he rules over the island and has the ability to give new shapes to creatures; however, there are three important differences between him and Homer's sorceress.

Firstly, the monster is no supernatural creature anymore. Instead, similarly to Radcliffe's Montoni, it is represented by a human being. In contrast to the Gothic villain in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, however, it is not a figure which has always lived in a more savage nature away from the civilised world. On the contrary, like Prospero, Satan and Melmoth, Moreau comes from the city, now the emblem of 'civilisation', and intrudes into the island, thereby spoiling its innocence. Telling Prendick the story of his first experiments, the doctor remembers "the green stillness of the empty ocean about us though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me" (75). However, the peace of this unspoilt paradise was quickly destroyed after his arrival. Besides a failed experiment with a sheep (75) and a gorilla (76-77), Moreau made a "limbless thing with a horrible face" that "lurked in the woods […], doing mischief to all it came across" and killed the Kanakas (77). From that time on, the island, populated with grotesque half-beasts, had lost its former purity.

Secondly, the monster is represented by a doctor, who is driven by a cold intellectual passion and lacks any sense of ethical responsibility (75). Therefore, he achieves the transformation not by magical but painfully surgical means, which emphasises his cruelty.[253]

Thirdly, Moreau reverses the direction of the transformation. Whereas Circe turns Odysseus's men into animals, the doctor tries to transform animals into human beings. Seeing the vivisected puma for the first time, Prendick is scared due to his false assumption that he is transforming a human being into an animal (50-51). However, the doctor soon after explains to him that the half-beasts on the island are "humanized animals – triumphs of vivisection" (71).

Another striking difference can be found in the portrayal of the character entering the *locus conclusus*. Unlike Homer's clever and strong hero, who always finds a way of handling a seemingly hopeless situation, Prendick is presented as weak and hence rather stands in the tradition of Radcliffe's Gothic heroine. Not only does he start weeping while going to the island (25) and become hysterical after being chased by the Leopard Man (48-49) but also lacks any practical sense, which is illustrated by the fact that he fails to build a raft in order to escape from the island (124-125). Moreover, due to his deficient authority he is unable to establish himself as a ruler over the Beast People and becomes a fellow with a mere "pre-

[253] Cf. Pascale Krumm. "*The Island of Dr Moreau*, or the Case of Devolution". *Foundation* 28.75 (1999): 53.

eminence among them" (121). It is suggested that this weakness is the result of his detachment from a working life. Prendick is the type of respectable gentleman who does not have to work for a living. Although he tells Montgomery that he went to university, he did so not out of necessity but because of boredom: "I told him […] how I had taken to natural history as a relief from the dullness of my comfortable independence" (11).

As has been outlined above, this Gothic-pastoral environment is the place where contemporary issues concerning the capital are explored. In fact, the latter never seems to be far away from the island:[254] Montgomery, for example, frequently refers to his former life in the city, which he misses. Standing on deck of the *Ipecacuanha* with Prendick, he talks about London "in a tone of half-painful reminiscence" (18) and wants to know as much as possible about the changes since his disappearance. The protagonist remarks that "he talked like a man who had loved his life there, and had been suddenly and irrevocably cut off from it" (18). However, the depiction of the country as a *locus conclusus* and the modifications previously mentioned show that the issues which are explored are related to anxieties associated with a Gothicised London. Hearing the painful yell of the vivisected puma, Montgomery comments: "'I'm damned […] if this place is not as bad as Gower Street – with its cats'" (49).

The fact that the monster is not a supernatural being anymore but a doctor who comes from the city reflects fears that the metropolis itself had become a breeding-ground for depraved criminals. Moreau represents the evils associated with a Gothic capital and transfers them to the country. When the protagonist remembers the doctor in connection with the headline "'The Moreau Horrors'", where a "prominent and masterful physiologist" was discovered to conduct experiments involving the mutilation of animals (34), this obviously alludes to the Whitechapel murders, where one of the main suspects was the figure of the 'mad doctor'.[255] In contemporary press accounts, the image of a slaughtered animal was often used to refer to the victims' mutilated bodies. The female puma in particular evokes the picture of a prostitute killed by the Ripper.[256]

Another significant aspect is Prendick's portrayal of a helpless middle-class gentleman, which must be seen in the context of a class-divided and geographically bifurcated London. On the one hand, his inability to cope with the dangers on the island represents worries of the

254 Cf. Dryden, *Doubles*, 168-169.

255 Cf. Ibid., 167.

256 Cf. Walkowitz, *Delight*, 193.

upper and middle ranks that they could become feeble due to their detachment from physical work and would consequently be overthrown by the stronger working classes. On the other hand, it points toward the fear that the members of these classes, particularly those inhabiting the West End, could be influenced by the depravity of the East End, which was the home of many working-class members.

Apart from that, metropolitan anxieties are reflected in the pastoral opposition between day and night which the novel exhibits. As has already been demonstrated in the case of Prendick's first exploration of the island, noontime on the island can be quite idyllic; however, similarly to Virgil's *Eclogues*, the coming of evening has a dangerous and ominous quality. Whereas in the traditional pastoral, the perils connected to the darkness of night were only implicitly alluded to, in Wells's novel, this opposition is even aggravated, since the natural retreat turns into an explicitly threatening environment. The habits of the half-beasts, for instance, are strongly suggestive of the nocturnal activities connected to a Gothicised metropolis. Montgomery tells Prendick:

> The Law […] became oddly weakened at nightfall; that then the animal was at its strongest; a spirit of adventure sprang up in them at dusk, they would dare things they never seemed to dream about by day. (81)

Like the perception of contemporary London as a breeding-ground for nocturnal crimes and vices, Wells's island becomes a "Country of Dreadful Night", where the islanders use the cover of night to escape the restrictions imposed on them by the Law. One of these vices is suggested by the "Fox-Bear Woman's vulpine, shifty face", which is "strangely human in its speculative cunning" (84). Dryden suggests that Prendick's odd feeling of having met her before "in some city by-way" (84) alludes to East-End prostitution.[257] Moreover, the protagonist's persecution by the Leopard Man in the darkness of the jungle would have reminded the Victorian reader of the capital's image as a gloomy labyrinth, which was haunted by criminals like Jack the Ripper. The fact that the half-beasts' habits resemble those of the metropolitan inhabitants reflects urban fears that the Londoners could also have a 'beast within' and possibly be subject to regression.

Besides being employed for the investigation of current urban conditions, Wells's island, as mentioned before, is also the setting where issues regarding the Empire are explored. There are, in fact, several aspects of the novel that suggest the plausibility of a reading along the lines of imperial language.

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[257] Cf. Dryden, *Doubles*, 169.

Moreau and Montgomery can be seen as the colonisers, who came from the city eleven years ago (19) and entered the jungle, trying to impose an order onto the perceived 'chaos'. The doctor in particular embodies the figure of the white man, as he is frequently associated with the colour white. When he explains the purpose of the island to Prendick, for instance, he has a "cigar […] in his white dexterous-looking fingers" and "the light of the swinging lamp" falls "on his white hair" (71).[258]

Likewise, the image of the islanders is similar to the ideological perception of the 'odd' natives found in the colonies.[259] They are frequently described with the colour black (e.g. 13, 20, 54) or brown (27), live in dens made of "interwoven heaps of sea-mat, palm fans and reeds" (57), and can hardly speak English (55-56). Assuming them to be human at first, Prendick notes that they are "human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal" and thus bear "the unmistakable mark of the beast" (42); this reflects contemporary views that the colonists were, compared to the Europeans, closer to the animals. Besides, an image of the dark wilderness with the untamed savage who poses a threat to the civilised man arises when Prendick is chased by the Leopard Man (43-47).

However, the ideological opposition of the 'barbaric' native and the 'cultivated' white man is questioned in the course of the novel. On the one hand, the colonisers not only employ the islanders as slaves (26-29) or servants (33) but also try to maintain their established order with guns (62) and whips (66). On the other hand, it has already been demonstrated that Moreau, who brutally tortures the half-beasts, is the real monster of this *locus conclusus*. Alluding to existing imperial practices, Wells questions the ideological opposition of a 'civilised' city and a 'savage' country by showing that it is civilisation itself which produces the monsters it feels threatened by. By portraying the rural context as the place where the white man unleashes his own inherent bestiality, the novel reflects contemporary doubts about the moral and racial superiority of the British Empire and stigmatises the cruelty of the colonisers towards the natives.

Additionally, the text echoes fears resulting from the perceived decline of the Empire. With the portrayal of a helpless middle-class gentleman, worries are reflected that industrialised cultures like the British could become weak and degenerate due to the division of labour and class in comparison to – according to current stereotypical views - more self-reliant,

[258] Cf. Hammond, "Parable", 36.

[259] Cf. Dryden, *Doubles*, 164.

'primitive' people like the colonists.[260] Furthermore, doubts concerning the Empire's strength are highlighted in Moreau's inability to impose a 'civilised' order onto the creatures and the fact that he and Montgomery are eventually killed by them. Together with the destruction of the habitation (111), which has been described as strikingly 'English', this symbolises the collapse of the Empire.

With the portrayal of a dangerous island which embodies existing anxieties, the author pursues didactic intentions.[261] For this purpose, he makes use of the traditional pastoral motif of retreat and return: The intruding urbanite (and with him the reader) is taught a lesson about human nature and will then return to the city. However, since the pastoral context has been Gothicised, this lesson ultimately turns out to be extremely pessimistic and therefore harmful to the city-dweller, whose vulnerability, as the novel suggests, is representative of humanity in general.

In fact, the insight Prendick and the reader gain is linked to another aspect typical of the pastoral tradition. Like the pastoral romance, *IM* features the confrontation of two classes of people: Whereas the urban, 'educated' class is represented by the three Londoners, the rural, 'uneducated' class consists of the Beast People, who inhabit the island. As in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a blurring between both classes takes place, which has now been adapted to current post-Darwinist ideas of degeneration. The world Prendick enters reveals a striking uncertainty regarding the boundaries between humans and animals. To a large extent, this is the result of Moreau's transformations. By reversing the direction of Homer's Circe, the doctor creates humanised animals, which possess (restricted) linguistic abilities, live in dens, have a kind of 'law' and marry (79), thus exhibiting an alarming proximity to human beings.

Likewise, the protagonist learns that the men on the island have many bestial traits.[262] This has already been demonstrated for Moreau, who is extremely cruel in his experiments and does not care "about the ethics of that matter" (75). Prendick, shocked at the inhumanity of the doctor's experiments with the puma, is appalled that Moreau is "so irresponsible, so utterly careless" and takes pity on the islanders (95).

Furthermore, Montgomery has been on the isle with the Beast People too long and thus acquired bestial traits himself. The protagonist notes that "he had come to regard them as almost normal human beings" (83). This becomes obvious, for example, in Montgomery's

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260 Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 137.

261 Cf. Hammond, "Parable", 30-33.

262 Cf. Dryden, *Doubles*, 54.

close relation to M'Ling (83) or in the night preceding his death, when he drinks with the Beast People as if they were actual human companions (106-112). Consequently, he is unable to return to the city again, as the protagonist finally realises: "I felt that for Montgomery there was no help; that he was in truth half akin to these Beast People, unfitted for human kindred" (109).

Even Prendick shows traits of an intrinsic 'beast'. At first sight, he seems to be the most civilised character in the book. Unlike Montgomery, who has "an ugly temper" (16) and drinks a lot (36-38; 100-112), he characterises himself as a "mild-tempered man" (17), who never drinks (30). In contrast to Moreau, he also has a sense of ethical responsibility, which becomes obvious in his killing of the Leopard Man, for whom he feels pity when he thinks of the fate he would otherwise undergo in Moreau's torture chamber (94). However, even before his arrival on the island, he considers cannibalism as an alternative to starving to death in the lifeboat with the other two men and is delighted when they drown after a fight (9). Furthermore, he lives with the Beast People and even adapts to their ways after the death of Moreau and Montgomery. As a result, he shows signs of regression: His eyes get "a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement" (124), similar to those of an animal.

The humanisation of animals and the animalisation of humans hence results in an approximation of both species, thereby blurring the traditional distinctions between the 'higher' city-dweller and the 'lower' countryman. Therefore, Prendick increasingly doubts the boundaries between the 'civilised' and the 'savage'. He even starts suspecting that the beast is inherent to every human being. This is, for instance, implied by his reaction at his first encounter with a half-beast:

> I had never beheld such a repulsive and extraordinary face before, and yet – if the contradiction is credible – I experienced at the same time an odd feeling that in some way I *had* already encountered exactly the features and gestures that now amazed me. (14)

The strange combination of repulsion and familiarity Prendick feels reveals that the Beast People represent an integral part of himself that he has so far repressed. In fact, they embody what Freud called "the uncanny", something "that is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression".[263] Thus, the protagonist experiences not only a strange familiarity with but also a dislike of the islanders, which he cannot explain.

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[263] Sigmund Freud. "The Uncanny" [1919], in *Collected Papers*, Vol. 4, ed. and trans. Joan Riviere [et al.]. New York: Basic Books, 1959, 394; cf. Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction", 198.

Prendick finally learns that civilisation is merely an artificial construct, which is unable to suppress the 'beast within'. Not only do the half-beasts circumvent the restrictions of the Law at night but they also regress without Moreau's interference, as he explains to him: "As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again" (78). Accordingly, the protagonist witnesses their reversal after Moreau's death.
Having learned the lesson that man is, after all, nothing more than an animal and having partly assumed bestial traits himself, Prendick also becomes incapable of joining life in the city again. Once returned, he avoids the company of his 'civilised' fellow-beings, in whom he cannot help suspecting the beast:

> I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not also another, still passably human, Beast People, animals half-wrought into the outward image of human souls; and that they would presently begin to revert, to show first this bestial mark and then that. (130)

Whereas on the island, the habits of the Beast People reminded him of the Londoners, it is now the latter that remind him of the half-beasts:

> I would go out into the streets to fight my delusion, and prowling women would mew after me, furtive craving men glance jealously at me, weary pale workers go coughing by me with tired eyes and eager paces like wounded deer dripping blood, old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves and all unheeding a ragged tail of gibbing children. (131)

Unable to distinguish the metropolitan crowds from the Beast People, the protagonist becomes an outcast and takes refuge in the English countryside; although he cannot find complete redemption there, he is nevertheless set at ease by the peace and tranquillity of the rural seclusion (131). The novel's ending, however, is extremely pessimistic, since it is implied that Prendick will probably never find his trust in human nature again.
Consequently, the movement from city to country and the return does not lead to a solution. Neither does nature have redemptive powers anymore nor is there at least a temporary relief from life's troubles. On the contrary, as in the previous Gothic tradition, these troubles are Gothicised, so that the urban intruder, having encountered his own anxieties in monstrous displacements, sees them even aggravated. Therefore, the exposure to the country and the insight gained there has fatal consequences for the urbanite. On the one hand, Moreau and Montgomery die on the island; on the other hand, Prendick, having explored man's bestial and primitive nature, is incapable of rejoining life in the city again and becomes an outcast from the civilised world. This mirrors a general pessimism, resulting from doubts about the

racial superiority of the British Empire and the human species in general, which were informed by the influence of Darwinist ideas.

In *TM*, Wells also makes use of the Gothic-pastoral romance in order to negotiate contemporary fears in displaced form. However, this text shows some striking differences in the portrayal of the rural retreat, which reveals an even greater pessimism.

After his journey to the year 802,701, the Time Traveller is surprised not to encounter a city technologically much further advanced than Victorian London as he had originally expected but an Arcadian landscape exhibiting the features of a *locus amoenus*. In this world of "beautiful bushes and flowers, a long-neglected and yet weedless garden" (26),[264] the Eloi, in their child-like innocence, seem to live in a kind of Golden Age at first sight: Amid the green hills of the area which used to be London, they appear to enjoy a life of original simplicity in accordance with nature without having to work or suffering from any kind of disease. The Time Traveller initially assumes that these benefits must be the result of technological, scientific and social improvements (32).

However, it soon turns out that the protagonist's assumptions concerning the world of the future are wrong. Immediately after his arrival, he already notes that there is something odd about this idealised environment. Having encountered the feeble Eloi, who possess restricted physical and mental abilities, he comes to the conclusion that he witnesses the "sunset of mankind" (31). He believes that the adaption of humanity to its perfect surroundings has rendered bodily and intellectual powers obsolete. The notion of childhood innocence usually connected to a pastoral Golden Age is hence coupled with strong undertones of unease. Instead of presenting the human race in a prelapsarian state of bliss as was the case, for instance, in *Paradise Lost*, *TM* paradoxically portrays this time stage as a postlapsarian and devolutionary existence. Highlighting the dark underside of technical and scientific developments, the novel undermines the Victorian belief in constant progress. The very advancements of civilisation which have eventually resulted in this pastoral idyll have at the same time led to the regression of its inhabitants to child-like creatures. Therefore, instead of evoking feelings of longing for a simplified past as was the case in the classic pastoral tradition, this depiction of a Golden Age instead conjures up fears concerning the future of the race, i.e. that humanity could regress to a more primitive state.

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[264] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: H.G. Wells. *The Time Machine* [1895], ed. Patrick Parrinder. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2005.

In fact, the notion of an idealised environment is not only combined with odd undertones but instead soon turns out to be completely illusionary; again, the establishment of the pastoral ideal serves as a mere façade to deceive the intruder concerning the Gothic nature of the place. In spite of gaining confidence in his new environment at first, the Time Traveller realises that he is entrapped in a dangerous *locus conclusus* after the stealing of his machine. On bumping into one of the Morlocks in the darkness, he concludes that "Man had not remained one species but differentiated into two distinct animals" (46): Whereas the English upper classes, having developed into the helpless Eloi, inhabit the pastoral landscapes of the upper world, the former working classes, now represented by the Morlocks, live in an industrial underworld. The traditional pastoral motif of flock-tending is Gothicised, since the Eloi are the cattle which serves as food for the Morlocks' carnivorous appetites: "These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon – probably saw to the breeding of" (62).

Like Moreau's island, the Gothic-pastoral context of *TM* and the modifications of the *locus conclusus* serve to echo existing discourses linked to the image of a Gothicised London. In particular, urban fears of the upper and middle ranks concerning the division of the city into East and West End are reflected. The portrayal of helpless and childlike creatures, who serve as the livestock for the physically stronger Morlocks, expresses anxieties that they could become feeble due to their detachment from physical work and thus be overthrown by the stronger workers. Whereas in *IM*, this idea was merely suggested, in *TM*, the defeat of the former upper ranks has already occurred. Contrary to the usual scheme of the rich West-End aristocrat exploiting the people of the East End, the Morlocks reverse the roles of exploiter and exploited, thereby exacting a terrible revenge for their former abuse by these classes.[265]

Furthermore, the pastoral day-night opposition is Gothicised in order to negotiate the horrors connected to a "City of Dreadful Night". Despite appearing idyllic and peaceful in the daytime, during the hours of darkness, the London of the future becomes a hunting-ground for the Morlocks, who ascend to the upper world in order to devour the helpless Eloi. In fact, this contrast is even more elaborated than in *IM*, since the Morlocks are nocturnal creatures, who avoid any kind of light and live in an underworld of eternal gloom. In these "deadly secret chambers harbouring grisly evidence of human dissection and consumption beyond

[265] Cf. Dryden, *Doubles*, 154.

imagining", the physical mutilation of human bodies invokes awful images of the Ripper murderer slicing up human bodies in the darkness of London's East End.[266]

As in *IM*, the depiction of the pastoral environment also allows for an imperial reading. The Eloi and the Morlocks represent the 'savage' tribes which are seen as further down on the evolutionary scale. This becomes apparent in the frequent comparison of the Eloi with children who are in need of parental guidance (e.g. 24; 28), or the attribution of inhuman (e.g. 55) and ape-like qualities (e.g. 44) to the Morlocks. The Time Traveller, on the other hand, assumes the role of the imperial explorer, who is regarded as superior to their 'primitive' existence. When he is among the Eloi for the first time, for instance, he regards himself as "a schoolmaster amidst children" (28), which is an archetypical motif in the imperial romance.[267] Seen in this light, the Morlocks' preying on the Eloi could be also read as the vengeance the colonial subjects wreak on their former oppressors. The depiction of the latter as helpless children would then invoke contemporary fears that the British could become weak in comparison with more 'barbaric' races.[268]

One of the most striking aspects within the novel, however, is the mingling of the human and the monster figure, which reveals an attitude even more pessimistic than in *IM*. While in the latter text, the evolutionary connection between the half-beasts and the human beings is merely suggested, in *TM*, it is made explicit that the monsters of this *locus conclusus* have developed directly from the lower classes of late-Victorian London: The monsters and the intruder figure originally belong to *one* species. Likewise, the ideological city-country paradigm is not only blurred but – at least in geographical terms - completely broken down: Whereas in *IM*, the country is a fictional island removed in space from Britain's capital, in *TM* there is no spatial but only a temporal shift, as the Gothicised country directly results from a chain of specifically urban developments. Therefore, the text suggests that the very heart of the British Empire could someday be subject to regression and thus revert to the 'inferior' state of the colonies.

This blurring of the boundaries between the supposedly civilised man and the beast also applies to the intruder figure. At first, as in the previous text, the person entering the *locus conclusus* is presented as weak; this becomes obvious in the Time Traveller's many false assumptions about the world of the future and his initial inability to cope with the loss of his

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266 Ibid., 159-160.

267 Cf. Paul A. Cantor and Peter Hufnagel. "The Empire of the Future: Imperialism and Modernism in H.G. Wells". *Studies in the Novel* 38.1 (2006): 38-39.

268 Cf. Ibid., 43.

machine. However, unlike Prendick, who remains powerless throughout the novel, the protagonist of *TM* eventually manages to emerge victorious from the battle with the Morlocks; moreover, he finds a way of returning to his time on his own accord without being dependant on mere chance. And yet, since he does not have any tools from his technologically more advanced time, he has to make use of the most archaic weapons, a mace (67) and fire (75-77), in order to defeat his enemies. Moreover, he becomes increasingly violent in the course of the story, thus resembling the Morlocks in his behaviour. During his eight days in the future, the Time Traveller more and more shows signs of regression.[269] Not only does his outward appearance change, since he limps and his shoulders hunch as a result of his exhaustion and wounded feet, but also his behaviour begins to display atavistic traits. This becomes clear, for example, in his mad raving in the night after his machine has been stolen (36); besides, he exhibits a "thirst for murder" (67) when he speaks about his longing to kill the Morlocks after gaining his mace at the Palace of Green Porcelain. Therefore, albeit *TM* portrays a protagonist who gains more physical strength and manages to defeat the monsters threatening him, this process is informed with an even stronger undertone of pessimism; after all, it implies that the Time Traveller is only successful because he adopts the characteristics of these primitive creatures.

Consequently, the novel suggests that in order to fight against the 'savage' forces which threaten the 'civilised' world, it must paradoxically assume the traits associated with them. Otherwise, it will be subjugated by these forces and become extremely helpless, eventually regressing to an Eloi-like state. However, as has been demonstrated, the adoption of the savage will also lead to a kind of regression, resulting in the condition of the Morlocks. *TM* thus evokes ultimate feelings of hopelessness. Here, the intruder as well as the reader gains the insight that humanity will inevitably relapse on the evolutionary scale – the only question is whether it will follow the way of the Eloi or that of the Morlocks.[270] Having learned this

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269 Cf. Terry W. Thompson. "'I Determined to Descend': Devolution in *The Time Machine*". *CEA* 63.3 (2001): 13-22.

270 This dilemma is also invoked in Wells's early short story "Aepyornis Island" (1894), which explores man's strength relative to the world in the Gothic-pastoral retreat of a desert island. Stranded alone with a young specimen of the prehistoric Aepyornis bird, the protagonist is extremely pleased at having some company at first. However, after growing to its adult size, the bird finally turns hostile towards his human surrogate parent and a struggle for territory between both species arises. Although humanity finally wins the contest, man's superior position in the natural order is questioned, since an approximation between the human and the animal world takes place in the course of the struggle: Whereas the monster figure increasingly exhibits traits of a human intelligence, the protagonist, who sleeps on palm-trees and turns more and more violent towards his enemy, displays bestial features. Cf. H.G. Wells. "Aepyornis Island" [1894], in *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells*, ed. John Hammond. London: J.M. Dent, 1998, 54-62.

lesson, the Time Traveller, like Prendick, is unable to rejoin life in his former existence in Victorian London and doomed to the state of an eternal outcast.

Wells's version of the Gothic-pastoral romance hence displays a high degree of ambivalence towards the civilised values as associated with the city; whereas on the one hand, they are clearly preferred to the country's savagery, they cannot survive against the latter's strength in the long run. This support and similar subversion of ideas relating to the Empire's capital can be seen as a specific late nineteenth-century continuation of the Virgilian opposition of two conflicting voices, one of which tries to hold on to the image of a 'superior' city while the other underlines its fragility and feebleness. It is a feature which is even more elaborated in the next novel.

4.2.3. Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)

Bram Stoker is the second *fin-de-siécle* author who directly links his portrayal of a rural environment among other things to current ideas associated with the capital. He thereby focuses on fears of foreign invasion in his own version of the Gothic-pastoral romance. In *Dracula*, there are two environments which can be referred to as Gothic pastoral: In his portrayal of Transylvania, the author makes, similarly to Wells in *IM*, use of a spatial displacement, this time to Eastern Europe; in the case of Whitby, a seaside resort in Northern England where Lucy and Mina retire before their planned marriages, the Gothic country is depicted as dangerously close to the capital, which is an aspect that will turn out to be significant.

Stoker's novel opens with the journey of Jonathan Harker to Dracula's castle in Transylvania. In the beginning, the typical pastoral confrontation between the 'educated' city-dweller and the 'uneducated' countrymen is used to establish the ideological opposition between city and country when the solicitor gives a depiction of a 'backward' east which stands in contrast to the reader's perception of a 'modern' west. Not only does he complain about the unreliability of timetables (1-2) but he also encounters superstitious peasants (4-5).[271] Moreover, he travels into a region where four different nationalities have settled down, among whom the Slovaks are supposed to be the most barbaric ones (3). This conception of

[271] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Bram Stoker. *Dracula* [1897], ed. Maud Ellmann. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

eastern chaos, superstition, cultural diversity and barbarism represents the exact antithesis of Jonathan's (and the Victorian reader's) perception of western order, racial purity, progress, reason and civilisation.[272] Due to his trust in this opposition, the solicitor is unwilling to believe the ruralists' superstitious rites and calls them "ridiculous" (5). His perspective is that of a tourist, who keeps a comfortable distance to everything around him, which is in his view simply a diverting spectacle.[273] Perceiving the "barbarian" Slovaks, for example, he imagines them as "an Oriental band of brigands" performing "on the stage" (3).

Despite the strangeness of the country Harker traverses, its landscape exhibits at times also elements associated with a *locus amoenus*, which makes him feel more comfortable. When he reaches the so-called "Mittel-Land" (7), for instance, he encounters the typical kind of idealised pastoral scenery which can be already found in ancient literature:

> Before us lay a green sloping land full of forests and woods, with here and there steep hills, crowned with clumps of trees or with farmhouses […]. There was everywhere a bewildering mass of fruit blossom – apple, plum, pear, cherry; and as we drove by I could see the green grass under the trees spangled with the fallen petals. (6-7)

However, it soon turns out that there is something odd about this Arcadian idyllicism. This is already indicated by the closeness of this idyllic spot with sublime mountains, which creates an ominous mood:

> Beyond the green swelling hills of the Mittel Land rose mighty slopes of forest up to the lofty steeps of the Carpathians themselves. Right and left of us they towered, with the afternoon sun falling upon them and bringing out all the glorious colours of this beautiful range, deep blue and purple in the shadows of the peaks, green and brown where grass and rock mingled, and an endless perspective of jagged rock and pointed crags, till these were themselves lost in the distance, where the snowy peaks rose gradually. (7)

The coexistence of pastoral and sublime elements in the description of the surrounding landscape was already a typical feature of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic-pastoral contexts. It suggests that despite the harmless impression of a rural country with simple and superstitious peasants which Harker has in the beginning, there is also a threatening and perilous aspect to it. In fact, the solicitor soon loses the detached attitude of a tourist, since he is about to enter a dangerous place. In Dracula's castle, he will be kept as a prisoner and has to fear for his life. Accordingly, this rural context shares many features with a *locus conclusus*.

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272 Cf. Stephen D. Arata. "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonisation", in *Dracula*, ed. Glennis Byron. New Casebooks Series. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999, 131.

273 Cf. Ibid., 132.

First of all, the exact position of the castle is unclear. Jonathan, unable to place it precisely on the map, only knows that it is "in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe" (1), which already suggests its perilous character. The ominous quality of the place becomes also obvious in the Gothicisation of the pastoral day-night opposition. Leaving the bucolic landscapes and entering the mountains, Harker notes how "the sun sank lower and lower behind us, the shadows of the evening began to creep around us" (7). The sublime terrors inspired by the Carpathians are combined with the horrific quality of a Gothic night on his journey: During his approach to the castle, while the "falling sunset threw into strange relief the ghost-like clouds" (8), his imprisonment is already anticipated by the increasing geographical narrowing. He has the feeling that "the pine woods […] seemed in the darkness to be closing down upon us" (8) and "the mountains seemed to come nearer to us on each side" (9). Besides, he grows decidedly uneasy due to the panic of his fellow passengers (10) and the uncanny experiences he cannot account for (10-14). In Dracula's coach, he appears to be lost in a labyrinth of darkness, since he cannot help suspecting that he is "simply going over and over the same ground again" (11). When he finally reaches the "vast ruined castle, from whose black windows came no ray of light" (14), his horror is complete (15).

Once he enters, however, his fears are dissipated at first: The Count, who speaks an "excellent English" (15) and is very polite as well as hospitable, makes Harker feel more comfortable (16). Moreover, the solicitor not only discovers a huge collection of English books (19) on the following day but even finds Dracula "lying on the sofa, […] reading an English Bradshaw's Guide" (22). Whereas in the beginning of the novel, the traditional pastoral confrontation between the urban, 'sophisticated' class and the rural, 'uneducated' class is used in order to establish the ideological dichotomy between a 'civilised' western city and a 'barbaric' Eastern country typical of the Empire fiction and Orientalist travel narratives, this contrast is now blurred: In the middle of this strange and uncanny place, Jonathan suddenly finds a very educated and cultivated gentleman with a remarkable interest in British culture.[274]

However, it gradually turns out that Dracula's appearance is only a façade: Harker, having cut himself while shaving, is appalled to see the Count grab his throat in a "demoniac fury" (26). After finding out that he is a prisoner, the solicitor's fears of being in the hands of a monster are confirmed when he sees his host crawling down the castle walls like a lizard

[274] Cf. Ibid., 132-133.

(34). This is a typical feature of the monster in the *locus conclusus*, which at first sight looks familiar and has enticing qualities but soon reveals its true nature when the hero is already trapped. Likewise, the three ladies at the castle are alluring and enchanting but then turn out to be monsters as well. Like Homer's Circe, they are beautiful women, whose "silvery, musical laugh", which sounds like the "intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses" (37), men can hardly resist. Despite yielding to their charms at first, Harker notes that one of them "licked their lips like an animal" (38); furthermore, after the Count has interrupted the women's seduction, the solicitor is terrified when he sees them preying on a little child (39).

Similarly to Wells's novels, the person entering the *locus conclusus* is presented as rather weak. Showing signs of a 'female' helplessness, Jonathan is actually even placed into the position of Ann Radcliffe's heroines.[275] In fact, there is a striking likeness between Harker and Gothic heroines like Emily. The scene when he approaches the castle, for instance, is very similar to Radcliffe's description of Emily's arrival at Montoni's castle: In both cases, there are features like the interchange of sublime and pastoral elements, the slowly approaching shadows of the night, and the final sight of a castle exhibiting an awful grandeur.[276] Moreover, like the protagonist of *Udolpho*, the solicitor, once he is trapped within the place, looks out of a window to a pastoral landscape and sublime mountains.[277] In addition to "a sea of green tree-tops, with occasionally a deep rift where there is a chasm" and "silver threads where the rivers wind in deep gorges through the forests" (26), Jonathan notices that the castle is at the verge of a vast precipice, where "a stone falling from the window would fall a thousand feet without touching anything" (26). His general effeminacy is also highlighted by the fact that he would have almost been "raped" by the vampire-ladies had not Dracula interfered, or that he sits down and starts crying after finding out that he is a prisoner (45).

Stoker's country is thus a place which on the one hand corresponds to contemporary readers' perceptions of a 'backward' east with harmless peasants living in a kind of pastoral context; on the other hand, it is a dangerous environment, where the boundaries between conceptions of the 'civilised' and the 'savage' are blurred by a malevolent monster in order to deceive the intruding urbanite, who is imprisoned and threatened with his death. As was the case in

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275 Cf. Stephan Schaffrath. "Order-versus-Chaos Dichotomy in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*". *Extrapolation* 43.1 (2002): 104; Arne Williams. "*Dracula*: Si(g)ns of The Father". *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33 (1991): 448.

276 Cf. Radcliffe, *Udolpho*, 214-217.

277 Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 17.

Wells's novels, the the depiction of the rural enclave as a *locus conclusus* and its modifications serves to explore issues concerning the social community, in particular late nineteenth-century London and the Empire.[278]

First of all, fears of the capital's and the Empire's vulnerability are invoked. The cultural diversity of Transylvania, which Dracula calls "the whirlpool of European races" (28) and which lies in Eastern Europe, alludes to the contemporary image of the East End, which was the home of many foreigners. This questions the supposed 'purity' of the British race by reminding the reader that ethnic diversity can be found within the heart of the metropolis; moreover, it shows existing fears that the city could be overrun by immigrants. The Count in particular represents anxieties of depravity and xenophobia connected to the East End, which was seen as a breeding-ground for criminals like the Ripper and the entry for many immigrants to the British capital, e.g. the Jews.[279] In fact, Dracula has several features that correspond to the stereotypical characteristics of a Jew, e.g. his parasitism, his "aquiline, […] thin nose" (17) and his link with money as well as gold throughout the novel (47; 306).[280]

Furthermore, the depiction of a helpless middle-class member contains the disturbing idea that those ranks could become weak in comparison to the lower classes or that the British race in general had become feebler than the strong colonists. In this respect, the opposition of Jonathan and Dracula is particularly striking: In contrast to the intruding urbanite, the Count is frequently presented as extremely vigorous. Encountering him for the first time, for instance, Harker, noting how he takes his arm "in a grip of steel" concludes that "his strength must have been prodigious" (10). Moreover, the vampire combines the blood of more primitive, warlike races in his person (18-19).[281]

Besides the primitive warlord, Dracula embodies the atavistic other, the half-beast found in the colonies. He has, for example, pointed ears, long and sharp nails, hairy palms (18) and extraordinarily long, sharp and canine teeth (22). At the same time, it has already been pointed out that he is actually very 'English' with regard to his appearance as well as his behaviour. Similarly to *IM* and *TM*, this merger of the refined and the barbaric in one figure mirrors general anxieties of degeneration, triggered by the increasingly perceived decline of the Empire on the one hand and the influence of Darwinist ideas on the other.

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278 Cf. Smith, *Demons*, 141.

279 Cf. Dryden, *Doubles*, 47.

280 Cf. Schaffrath, "Chaos", 103.

281 Cf. Arata, "Colonisation", 135.

Moreover, the combination of 'high' and 'low' elements in one person alludes to urban scandals like the publication of the *Maiden Tribute*, the Ripper murders as well as those including homosexual acts, e.g. the Cleveland Street Scandal or the Oscar Wilde trials.[282] The figure of Dracula in particular embodies doubts about the respectability of the middle and upper classes, which in the aftermath of these scandals were linked to depravity. Like the typical West-End villain, Dracula commits his crimes at night, which corresponds to an image of a Gothicised London as a suitable place for nocturnal double-lives. The fact that the aforementioned scandals in some cases involved homosexual acts is taken up by the homoerotic traits which characterise the Count: Not only does he interfere furiously with the words "This man belongs to me" (39) when the vampire ladies are about to start their penetration of Harker during the rape scene; he even replies to their provocation "You yourself never loved, you never love!" with the words "Yes, I too can love" in "a soft whisper" while looking at Jonathan's face "attentively" (39).[283] The characterisation of the bestial other with features of a British upper-class gentleman indicates that the ideological boundaries between city and country are an artificial construct. Similarly to Wells's novels, *Dracula*, despite its portrayal of a rural retreat that looks very different from contemporary London at first sight, suggests that it is nevertheless the city itself which produces the monsters it fears.

Finally, Stoker's Gothic-pastoral context is the place where general uncertainties about the relation of the sexes are invoked. In this respect, the depiction of the hero figure entering the *locus conclusus* as passive and effeminate is significant, particularly in the scene during which he encounters the three vampire ladies. In this case, the Victorian roles of male activeness and female passiveness are reversed, resulting almost in the 'rape' of the masculine figure: Whereas the solicitor is the one that "waited – waited with a beating heart" (38) for the penetration by the women bending over him, the latter, who have already been described as human and unhuman alike, take the lead with a "deliberative voluptuousness" (38).[284] This monstrous depiction of an unrestrained sexuality is characteristic of all female

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282 The Cleveland Street Scandal (1889-1890) involved cross-class liaisons between telegraph boys, willing to supplement their income, and members of the aristocracy in a homosexual brothel. But even before that, a large number of homosexual scandals raised the public attention and finally led to the passage of the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* (1885); outlawing every homosexual act between men as 'gross indecency', it marked a decisive turn for the situation of homosexuals and provided the legal conditions for Oscar Wilde's finally being charged and sent to prison in 1895. Cf. Joseph Bristow (ed.). *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing*. London: Routledge, 1992, 49.

283 Cf. Craft, "Gender and Inversion", 110.

284 Cf. Ibid.

vampires in the novel. It evokes specifically masculine fears of the New Woman, who critically questioned the Victorian two-sex model and increasingly tried to enter traditionally male domains, e.g. the learned professions.[285]

Dracula, however, is not confined to the urbanite's journey to the country and his exposure to a monstrous representation of the troubling aspects within late-Victorian society. Instead, a reversal of the pastoral motif of retreat and return and hence also of the confrontation of two different classes takes place: Besides Harker's movement to Transylvania and his eventual escape, the text transplants the evil ruralist into the metropolis, where he intends to create a new race of vampires out of its inhabitants. Looking at the sleeping Count, Harker notes:

> This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps for centuries to come, he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. (51)

In fact, Dracula's journey to London can be seen as the counterpart of Harker's trip to Transylvania. The depiction of the Count as an English gentleman, who studied nearly every aspect of British society and planned his voyage very carefully, corresponds to the solicitor's preparation of his trip, who went to the British Museum in order to get some foreknowledge of the country (1-2). The novel hence inverts the usual concept of the Empire Fiction, where the white man from the 'superior' city enters the 'inferior' country, by placing the urban context into the position of being invaded by the country-dweller. As Arata points out, *Dracula* is a "narrative of reverse colonisation".[286] Being placed in the position of the colonists, whose nation is first studied intensively and then attacked by a monster, the British can see their own imperial practices mirrored back in monstrous form. This serves as a response to feelings of cultural guilt concerning their treatment of the colonists. Moreover, Dracula's infiltration of England and his supplementation of the English with a race of vampires embodies fears that the 'civilised' world could be overrun by more 'savage' forces.[287]

The place where the Count enters England to start his infiltration of the British capital is the seaside resort Whitby. Similarly to Transylvania, the area combines features traditionally

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285 Cf. Kathleen L. Spencer. "Purity and Danger: *Dracula*, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis". *ELH* 59.1 (1992): 225.

286 Cf. Arata, "Colonisation", 120.

287 Cf. Ibid., 120-121. For an analysis of the way Dracula pursues his vicious intentions once he is in London, cf. Gill Davies. "London in *Dracula*; Dracula in London". *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London* 2.1 (2004). 07.07.2011. <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/davies.html>.

associated with both the pastoral and the Gothic. The description in Mina's journal at first looks like the kind of idyllic landscape typical of a *locus amoenus*:

> This is a lovely place. The little river, the Esk, runs through a deep valley, which broadens out as it comes near the harbour. A great viaduct runs across, with high piers, through which the view seems, somehow, farther away than it really is. The valley is beautifully green, and it is so steep that when you are on the high land on either side you look right across it, unless you are near enough to see down. (62)

However, next to this "lovely place" (in fact the literal translation of *locus amoenus*), Gothic elements can be found, such as a church with a "big graveyard, full of tombstones" (62) and, most importantly, the ruin of Whitby Abbey. Already at this point, these features are linked to notions like degeneration and foreign invasion. On the one hand, Whitby Abbey constitutes the scene of Walter Scott's poem "Marmion" (1808). It deals with the nun Constance de Beverley, who breaks her vow in order to follow a treacherous lover; in the end, she is punished with being bricked up alive in the dungeons of the abbey. According to the legend, the ghost of this woman is at times still seen behind one of the windows in the form of a white figure. This can already be regarded to anticipate the fate of Lucy, who will be raped by a 'treacherous lover' and, because of her subsequent degeneration, be killed by the vampire hunters.

On the other hand, it is stated that the ruin of Whitby Abbey was already "sacked by the Danes" (62). This foreshadows Dracula's invasion of Britain and evokes the image of a vulnerable Empire by reminding the reader that England, despite its long period of safety from external attacks, had nevertheless once been subject to them. The fact that Whitby, and by implication England, is particularly susceptible to an assault from outside is emphasised by the occurrence of Gothic elements within the landscape; after all, these features, which were initially described as being typical of regions as remote as Transylvania, can even be found in the heart of the British Empire. Accordingly, the Count, in the form of a dog, enters Whitby through the churchyard when he arrives (78-79).

Whereas before, the region's Gothicism had only been implicitly alluded to in Mina's description of the decayed buildings and the churchyard, the place turns explicitly Gothic/anti-pastoral upon Dracula's arrival. With the approach of his ship, the weather changes: Suddenly, the formerly idyllic and sunny place turns stormy and cloudy (75). Besides, masses of sea-fog create a gloomy and ominous atmosphere (77). Although the sky clears up and the days become bright again after the Count's entering of England's coast, the former atmosphere of peace and tranquillity cannot be restored anymore. The pastoral

context is now a place where strange incidents occur, for example the murder of Mr Swales, who has "a look of fear and horror" (87) on his face after being found. Moreover, the pastoral day-night opposition is Gothicised, since at night, the countryside, in particular the churchyard, becomes a menacing environment.

The dangerous quality of the rural context becomes particularly obvious in Lucy's case, whose nocturnal exposure to it has fatal consequences. Waking up in the middle of the night, Mina, on noticing that Lucy is not in her room, leaves the house in search for her. Whereas during the day, she could enjoy the beautiful view of an idyllic landscape, during the hours of darkness, she becomes the witness of a horrible incident: After a cloud has passed, the full moon reveals a "half-reclining figure, snowy white" (90), on Lucy's favourite seat as well as "something dark" that "bent over it", of which Mina cannot say "whether man or beast" (90). Having approached the scene, she also sees "a white face and red, gleaming eyes" (90) vanishing into the nocturnal obscurity. Although only hinted at, it is clear that she has just witnessed Lucy's rape by the Count.

At first, it appears that the bucolic context has the same healing powers as, for instance, in the pastoral romance tradition, since Lucy seems to have returned with renewed spirits. Mina is surprised to see that the next morning she looks much healthier than before (92). On the following day, she is even glad to observe that "all her old gaiety of manner seemed to have come back" (93). However, it is implicitly made clear that in fact the very opposite has taken place: Not only does Mina note the marks on Lucy's throat (92) but she is also worried about her increased sleep-walking as well as her paleness (93). After entering a pastoral context which has turned Gothic, Lucy is doomed forever, since she will soon become a vampire. As in *IM* and *TM*, this rural retreat does not reunite the intruder with society or have any salutary effects. On the contrary, it causes her degeneration and renders her a dangerous outcast from civilisation.

In this context, the question arises what insight can be gained by the reader from Lucy's movement into this Gothic-pastoral environment and her return. A hint is given by the comparison of Lucy with the female protagonist of Scott's poem, who is, like Stoker's character, referred to as a "white lady" (62). Her equation with a nun who broke her vow of celibacy for a lover and was subsequently punished demonstrates that the issues explored in this rural setting are related to contemporary questions concerning sexuality and propriety. According to Spencer, Lucy is, similarly to the Count, portrayed as sexually degenerate in

terms of late-Victorian concepts of morality.[288] In her view, this is indicated by the fact that in her letters to Mina which precede the Whitby episode, she not only boasts about having had "THREE proposals in one day" (56) but also expresses her wish to marry all three of them in the often-quoted sentence "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" (59). Moreover, she points out that sleep-walking was "a habit traditionally associated with sexual looseness" in Victorian times.[289] Hence, it can be argued that Lucy is punished for her wish to transgress the boundaries of late nineteenth-century ideas of sexual decency. Since the rural context has turned Gothic, Lucy even returns with her flaws in an intensified form instead of being cured from them. In the further course of the novel, she exhibits an increasingly 'monstrous' sexual appetite. In the night before she fully becomes one of the undead, for instance, her voraciousness equals that of the ladies in Dracula's castle (161). Another example is the scene before she is killed by the vampire hunters, during which her "sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness" (211). Posing a serious threat to the stability of late-Victorian sexual morality, she must be killed by the 'Crew of Light' for the purification of the country.

So far, it has become obvious that the Gothic-pastoral environments in *Dracula* have many similarities to those in Wells's novels: Despite their inclusion of idyllic features, they are thoroughly sinister places, where contemporary worries concerning the morals of British society and a Gothicised capital are investigated. The fact that these settings have no healing powers but exacerbate the worst fears of the time reveals a similarly pessimistic mood typical of the *fin de siècle*. In one respect, however, this pessimism is even more elaborated than in *IM* and *TM*, which must be seen within *Dracula*'s concentration on the concept of "reverse colonisation". As has been demonstrated, although Wells's texts explore the conditions of the metropolis and the Empire, the Gothic-pastoral context is in both cases remote from London, since it is either removed in space or time. In Stoker's novel, however, the distance between the 'inferior' country and the 'superior' city has been consciously narrowed. Whereas in the Transylvania episode, the rural retreat is still geographically far removed, in the case of Whitby, it is dangerously close to the capital. In contrast to Prendick, who could at least still find some comfort in the English countryside at the end of *IM*, the British women in *Dracula* cannot even recover within the rustic landscape of their home country anymore, as the

[288] Cf. Spencer, "Crisis", 209-210.

[289] Ibid., 210.

monsters threatening civilisation already lurk there. The fact that a rural area in England has turned Gothic intensifies current fears of foreign invasion by demonstrating that the country is already in the process of becoming the horrible Gothic-pastoral place which Wells's Time Traveller encountered in a still distant future. It is made clear that a part of late-nineteenth century Britain has already been Gothicised, and others are to follow. This is also underlined by the aforementioned fact that the landscape includes Gothic traits even before Dracula's arrival, which suggests that Britain, containing the 'evil' elements associated with the foreigner, is particularly susceptible to an assault by such a figure.

Thus, despite the novel's insistence on the foreignness of the intruder who must be expelled, it also reveals the silent truth that he actually embodies a part of the culture he plans to invade. Like Virgil's *Eclogues*, Stoker's text can be regarded to combine two contrary voices: Whereas the first one confirms the official ideology of a 'superior' Empire, the second one undermines it by using the depiction of a pastoral retreat which contains the Gothic elements typical of the 'inferior' colonies. This oscillation between the establishment and subversion of the current imperial doctrine becomes even more obvious at the close of the novel, where another movement of retreat and return between London and Transylvania takes place.

Similarly to *IM*, *Dracula* reflects current fears concerning the potential weakness of the upper and middle classes.[290] This has previously been demonstrated for the figure of Jonathan, who appears powerless during his imprisonment at Castle Dracula. The other men in the novel are also described as rather weak: Whereas Van Helsing and Seward fail to save Lucy's life, Arthur breaks down into hysterical sobs twice after her death (167-168; 229-231). The Count, in contrast, is described as young and vigorous (e.g. 263; 264) once he is in London (172). Initially, he succeeds in his plan to spread his influence over the metropolis and create a new race of vampires, which is illustrated by his victimisation of Lucy and Mina. Throughout the book, the middle-class men manage to overcome their helplessness and finally emerge victorious over the Count, which at first sight makes the novel appear more optimistic than the ones previously analysed. After his return from the country, Harker initially shows symptoms similar to Wells's Prendick or Time Traveller: Not only does he suffer from "brain fever" (104), but he also has a nervous breakdown on seeing the Count in the centre of London (171-173). His experiences at Dracula's castle were so horrible that he tries to suppress any memory of them (104).

290 Cf. Arata, "Colonisation", 126-127.

However, the solicitor does not suffer the same fate as Lucy or display the same resignation as Wells's protagonists do. Instead, he manages to overcome his trauma by going through it again and by accepting the existence of the monster (187-188).[291] His diary, which gives a detailed documentation of his stay at the castle, finally helps the group to defeat the Count. In the end, Harker does not show a 'female' helplessness anymore but seems to have gained a new 'masculine' strength: Mina describes his "impetuosity and the manifest singleness of his purpose" and his "strength that seemed incredible" when he finally kills the Count (376). It hence seems that his retreat into the Gothic-pastoral environment of Transylvania and his encounter with Dracula has even given him new vigour at last.[292] Likewise, the other bourgeois males also manage to triumph over their weakness. Working as a group, they overcome the disjointedness of the city by putting together the pieces of information they receive. Consequently, they trace the places of the Count's boxes, which results in his expulsion. The intruder is eventually killed in the country by the union of men, who have regained their 'male' strength, and the former opposition between a 'civilised' city and a 'savage' country appears to be re-established.[293]

Despite this overt happy ending, there are covert pessimistic undertones. Like Wells's Time Traveller, the vampire hunters get increasingly violent and irrational throughout the novel. Not only do they break into houses (145-146; 299) but also kill Lucy by driving a stake into her heart (216). Towards the end of the novel, the roles of the weak intruder and the more powerful but also savage monster are reversed: The Count, being referred to as a child (302) and a creature that needs to be pitied (308), appears as the quarry, which is pursued by "hunters of wild beasts" (307), who cannot wait to kill him. Moreover, in spite of being related to modernity and progress, the vampire hunters use tools like garlic, crucifixes and wafers, which are connected to a superstitious past, to fight the un-dead.[294] This seems to be the central paradox of the novel. In order to defeat the intruder from the 'barbaric' country, the city-dwellers have to become more savage and thereby gain new strength.[295] Similarly to

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291 In his psychoanalytical reading of the text, M.C. Brennan compares Jonathan to a patient, who is healed by facing and acknowledging his terrible experiences with the help of Van Helsing, who functions as the therapist. Matthew C. Brennan. *The Gothic Psyche: Disintegration and Growth in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*. Studies in English and American Literature, Linguistics, and Culture. Columbia: Camden House, 1997, 123-125.

292 Cf. Smith, *Demons*, 143.

293 Cf. Schaffrath, "Chaos", 106.

294 Cf. Ibid., 108.

295 Cf. Smith, *Demons*, 146.

IM and *TM*, this suggests that the 'bestial' is in fact part of the 'civilised'.[296] Its rejection results in an Eloi-like weakness, which is illustrated by the initial image of an effeminate bourgeois masculinity.

Moreover, it is suggested that the monsters at Castle Dracula, despite representing a horrible other, symbolise man's bestial and primitive traits he has so far suppressed. Dracula, for instance, seems to embody Harker's monstrous double, which becomes obvious in the fact that Dracula leaves the castle in his clothes (44).[297] Furthermore, the strange familiarity and repulsion Harker experiences while almost being seduced by the vampire-ladies suggests that the women represent the "uncanny" and thus embody latent animalistic drives that are a part of him:[298]

> I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. […] There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. (37)

Linking the 'civilised' man to depraved sexual desires and bestial attributes, the novel displays a post-Darwinist pessimism by implying that these traits are intrinsic to every human being.

In conclusion, *Dracula* questions the whole opposition of a modern, progressive and rational west and a chaotic, superstitious and barbaric east as established in the beginning. Paradoxically, the novel defends but at the same time questions central aspects related to western civilisation – be it Enlightenment, industrialisation, urbanisation, progress or science – by enacting several movements between city and country; in the course of these movements, the evil ruralist, who at first sight differs from this world, actually turns out to be an integral part of it. This feature of conforming to while at the same time subverting contemporary notions without giving a clear resolution in the end has been typical of the pastoral mode since Virgil's *Eclogues* and has also been used in the Gothic tradition from its beginnings. It is now placed in a specifically late nineteenth-century context as a particular strategy to negotiate prevalent concerns of the time. In the following group of texts, this tension will be even further elaborated as a central device to utter the respective author's ambivalent attitude towards the current system.

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296 Cf. Sara Martín. "Meeting the Civilised Barbarian: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*". *Miscelanea* 22 (2000): 106-107.

297 Cf. Arata, "Colonisation", 131.

298 Cf. Smith, *Demons*, 143.

4.3. Dangerous Freedom: Africa as Gothic-Pastoral Space

4.3.1. The Dark Continent

After investigating the way Wells and Stoker create a "Country of Dreadful Night" in order to negotiate fears regarding a Gothicised capital and its position as the heart of a declining Empire, the focus will now be placed on two novels which still oppose their Gothic-pastoral context to the city. In these cases, however, the latter category does not exclusively refer to London anymore but can mean any other British or even European urban location. The country, on the other hand, now denotes a fixed geographical situation, since the figure of the intruding urbanite is always transplanted into the wilderness of Africa.

The concentration on the setting of the Dark Continent in many novels in the late nineteenth century is not surprising; after all, public attention was increasingly focused on this space when the European powers had begun their famous 'Scramble for Africa' in the 1890s. In these texts, the external exploration by white male explorers and their encounter with native races as well as the dangers they have to endure is conceived of as an internal journey into the heart of darkness of both the adventurers and Europe in general, which maps its own political desires and anxieties onto these regions.[299] For this purpose, the Dark Continent is often depicted as a mysteriously feminised space. Henry Morton Stanley, one of the most famous explorers of the time, referred to himself in his book *In Darkest Africa* (1890) as an intrepid man who "marched, tore, ploughed, and cut his way for one hundred and sixty days through this inner womb of the true tropical forest".[300] However, this female body is also regarded to be dangerous: After sleeping for a long time, it will take vengeance upon its penetrators once it is woken up. This ambivalent depiction of a gendered rural setting served to echo current changes within British society at home, e.g. the increasing questioning of the Victorian two-sex model and the emergence of the New Woman figure as outlined before.

A similar notion of an environment as both inviting and dangerous can be found in the image of a Gothic-pastoral Africa: On the one hand, the Dark Continent becomes a place where the male explorer can flee from the confinements of a restrictive urban existence into the freedom of the natural setting and where he encounters 'noble savages' living a more

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299 Cf. Brantlinger, *Darkness*, 246; Richard F. Patteson. "*King Solomon's Mines*: Imperialism and Narrative Structure". *Journal of Narrative Technique* 8 (1978): 112.

300 Quoted in William Booth. *In Darkest England and the Way Out* [1890]. London: International Headquarters of the Salvation Army, 1986, 6.

'original' life. On the other hand, it is a threatening, anti-pastoral environment due to its very distance from the 'civilised' world, which is often described in Gothic images of an untamed nature and devilish natives. Although the adventurers manage to overcome these dangers and return to the city, this movement goes along with a horrible insight, which is now metaphorically referred to as a veiled 'truth' that should better not be uncovered. This takes up Puttenham's idea that pastoral literature serves as a 'veil' to explore current issues and gives it a Gothic shape.[301] The notion of the Dark Continent as an idyllic place that turns out to be a terrifying environment resulted from current developments in the African colonies. Among them were, for instance, the political unrests subsequent to the first Kaffir Wars, the Zulu War and the first Boer War, where Britain had to suffer bitter losses and was forced to the retrocession of the Transvaal.[302]

Dealing with the retreat of a group of white male explorers into a seemingly idealised but perilous Africa and their eventual return, in the process of which current British fears are negotiated, H. Rider Haggard's novel *She* (1887) is a paradigmatic text of this African Gothic-pastoral romance. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), on the other hand, still features the typical pastoral retreat-return movement between the European city and the Dark Continent. However, the novel rejects any idyllic elements and instead presents the rural context in profoundly sinister tones, which paradoxically still encompasses a strange fascination for the intruder. Besides, Conrad widens the scope by dealing not only with British anxieties but with those of the European imperial powers in general.

As writers of Empire Fiction, both Haggard and Conrad were even more than Wells or Stoker in a situation similar to Virgil in ancient times: While they officially had to conform to the doctrines of imperialism, they were neither blind to the ongoing decline of the Empire's power nor to the injustice committed in the colonies. As a result, they had an ambiguous attitude towards the official ideology, in which they still believed to some extent but whose shortcomings they could hardly negate. As will be demonstrated in the following, the use of a Gothic-pastoral space is, similarly to the *Eclogues*, a useful means for both authors to give voice to their ambivalent feelings towards the current system. After all, they employ it as a device to confirm *and* subvert it without running the risk of exposing themselves too much. Therefore, while the two novels use images derived from the imperial city-country dichotomy, they also deal with the explorers' discovery of a 'truth', which subverts their

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301 Cf. chapter 2.2.1.4.

302 Cf. Rebecca Stott. *The Fabrication of the Late-Victorian* Femme Fatale*: The Kiss of Death*. Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992, 89.

false assumptions of the 'superior' white man encountering the 'lower' countryman. Although both writers suggest that this insight is utterly devastating, Conrad tries to offer a way how to deal with it.

4.3.2. Haggard, *She* (1887)

H. Rider Haggard's *She* expresses the typical pastoral city-country dichotomy in terms of an opposition between a 'confining' urban and an 'open' rural environment. Whereas the latter is, similarly to the previous texts, portrayed as an idyllic but also as a 'savage' and 'wild' space, the former is in this case represented not by the labyrinthine and unobservable London but by the small town of Cambridge. This place is defined not only by the cosiness and security of its rooms but also by strict rules and regulations, which are only exceptionally relaxed (22).[303] In this typically 'English' setting, people lead a contemplative life of research, where experiences are only gained in a mediated way. On opening the box at Leo's twenty-fifth birthday, for instance, the protagonists learn about the history of Leo's family, the killing of Kallikrates by a mysterious African queen and the quest that must be undertaken with the help of various artefacts and documents (24-50).

The use of a university town instead of Britain's capital for the concept of the city has several reasons. First of all, although the image of a Gothicised London was already widespread at the time of the novel's publication, Haggard's primary intention was not to explore concerns related to the late nineteenth-century metropolis. Rather, as one of the most prominent writers of the imperial romance, he aimed at creating a space where more general issues regarding the British Empire and its relation to the colonies could be investigated. For this reason, there was no need for him to adhere to the location of the capital. Second, the employment of a specifically academic setting is a convenient device in order to set the novel's plot in motion: Since the documents the protagonists find are partly written in ancient Greek, a translation and interpretation by someone with a scholarly background as provided by Cambridge is necessary (24-50). Third, Haggard consciously wanted to create a contrast between the protected sphere of a small town like Cambridge and the dangers of the African wilderness. In fact, his version of the Gothic-pastoral romance reveals what happens if one

[303] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: H. Rider Haggard. *She: A History of Adventure* [1887]. The Modern Library Classics. New York: Modern Library, 2002.

leaves the safety of this place and penetrates too deeply into the depths of nature, which contains some terrifying 'truths'.

Indeed, the world of scholarly detachment and regulations as embodied by Cambridge stands in stark contrast to the rest of the novel, where the protagonists travel through the open space of the African wilderness and gain authentic, first-hand experiences. The opening pages of the journey in chapter IV convey the mood of an escapist longing for the flight from the confinements of the town to the beauty and purity of an unspoiled nature. Holly, the narrator, enthusiastically comments that

> gone are the quiet college rooms […] and the familiar volumes on the shelves, and in their place there rises a vision of the great calm ocean gleaming in shaded silver lights beneath the beams of an African full moon. A gentle breeze fills the huge sail of our dhow, and draws us through the water that ripples musically against her sides. (51)

Nature is thus attributed a liberalising and tranquilising force, which offers an escape from the narrowness of a theoretical academic life. Like Harker during his journey to Transylvania, the four protagonists at first have a detached attitude towards the country they are travelling to and their quest in general. Leo, for instance, merely hopes that he will "get some first-class shooting" (49).

However, the narrator soon learns how wrong he is about his assumption of a peaceful nature, since the latter turns out to be extremely volatile and dangerous. Having fallen asleep, the protagonists are surprised by a violent sea storm. Whereas shortly before, the night was still described as "lovely" (54), the sky has suddenly turned "dark as pitch" (54). The sea, which was calm and tranquil previously, not only bears huge breakers now, which threaten the steamer and the crew (54-55); it is also personified in Gothic terms as "a shrieking sea of foam, out of which the billows rose [...] like avenging ghosts from their ocean grave" (57).[304] Being confronted with the prospect of immediate death because of the overpowering forces of an aggressive nature, Holly does not prefer this environment to his cosy Cambridge rooms anymore but suddenly misses them: "As for myself, his [Leo's] reference to chapel made me reflect, with a sort of sick longing, on my comfortable rooms at Cambridge. Why had I been such a fool as to leave them?" (58).

[304] As Peter Paul Schnierer notes, already at this point the demonisation of Africa seems to influence the protagonists: "The wind and the storm wreaths and the sheets of stinging spray blinded and bewildererd us, but through it all we worked like demons with the wild exhilaration of despair, for even despair can exhilarate" (56). Cf. Peter Paul Schnierer. *Entdämonisierung und Verteufelung. Studien zur Darstellungs- und Funktionsgeschichte des Diabolischen in der englischen Literatur seit der Renaissance.* Studien zur englischen Philologie. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2005, 125.

Whereas initially, there was the pastoral desire for the flight from the city to the freedom of a more natural setting, there is suddenly the longing for a return to a safe urban context like Cambridge again after the anti-pastoral/Gothic quality of this deceptively idyllic environment has been revealed. Although the sea soon quietens down again, the protagonists' former faith in this scenic landscape cannot be re-established anymore. The narrator comments on the coming of dawn that

> it was a beautiful sight, and yet a sad one, perhaps because of its excess of beauty. […] The sun that rose to-day for us had set last night for eighteen of our fellow-voyagers! – had set everlastingly for eighteen whom we knew! (59-60)

Thus, already at this point, the romanticised idea of an idealised African continent suited for more or less harmless adventures has been undermined.

During the further course of the journey, the pastoral confrontation between 'higher' and 'lower' figures is, similarly to *Dracula*, used to establish the dichotomy between the 'civilised' city-dweller and the 'savage' countryman. Being carried in a litter to the habitations of the Amahagger, Holly notes that despite their beautiful faces, there is also something evil about them, which is "almost uncanny in its intensity" (78). When Billali is about to drown in a pool, the contrast between the heathen natives and the Christian Englishman becomes particularly obvious; whereas the former do not help the old man, the latter, shouting "out of the way, you brutes!" (123), immediately jumps into the water and saves him. This description of backward savages, who are "half devil, half child" and in need of 'parental' guidance in Kipling's sense,[305] refers to contemporary ideological ideas concerning the 'evil' colonists.

However, the characterisation of both the protagonists and the Amahagger society also implies that this dichotomy might be only an artificial construct which falls short of reality. Whereas Leo, for instance, is constantly described as extremely beautiful, his golden curls (3) and his comparison to a Greek god (4), probably Apollo, add foreign elements to his supposed Englishness. Holly is hence keen to emphasise that his ward "is one of the most English-looking men I ever saw" and "has nothing of the supple form or slippery manner of

[305] Cf. chapter 4.1.

the modern Greek about him" (210), which serves to dilute his racial otherness to some extent.[306]

While Leo is only implicitly characterised with non-English elements, Holly is portrayed with traits which explicitly give him an appearance traditionally attributed to the colonist: Seeing a man who is "short, rather bow-legged", with "unusually long arms" and "hair" that "grew down his forehead", the narrator of the introductory chapter comes to the conclusion that "he reminded me forcibly of a gorilla" (4). These features are not merely confined to his appearance but are also expressed in his behaviour: During the hot-potting scene, Holly is "mad with rage, and that awful lust of battle which will creep into the hearts of the most civilised of us when blows are flying, and life and death tremble on turn (103)". This again suggests that the country is the place where the supposedly civilised man unleashes his more barbaric side.

The obliteration of the demarcation line between the urbanite and the country-dweller is also apparent in the portrayal of the Amahagger; here, the narrator at times tries to weaken the racist image provided by counting them, for instance, among the cultured nations of the world:[307]

> As all civilized nations appear to accept it as an axiom that ceremony is the touchstone of morality, there is, even according to our customs, nothing immoral about this Amahagger custom, seeing that the interchange of the embrace answers to our ceremony of marriage, which, as we know, justifies most things. (82-83)

This passage should not be regarded to be the immediate proof that, as Sandison argues, Haggard was a cultural relativist.[308] After all, it has been demonstrated previously that he adheres to the racially prejudiced terminology of the Empire Fiction to a large extent. Nevertheless, it reveals that he also had his doubts concerning the latter's truthfulness. Thus, it can be argued that the strategy he uses to express his ambivalent attitude is not the complete subversion of the contemporary ideology; rather, he employs the typical Gothic-pastoral opposition of two voices, one conforming to and the other undermining it.

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306 Cf. Tamar Heller. "The Unbearable Hybridity of Female Sexuality: Racial Ambiguity and the Gothic in Rider Haggard's *She*", in *Horrifying Sex: Essays on Sexual Difference in Gothic Literature*, ed. Ruth Bienstock Anolik. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2007, 58.

307 Cf. Schnierer, *Entdämonisierung*, 124-125.

308 Cf. Alan Sandison. *The Wheel of Empire: A Study of the Imperial Idea in some Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Fiction*. London: Macmillan, 1967, 31.

The landscape that the explorers traverse, with its vaporous marches and stagnant canals, has been described by Gilbert and Gubar as a "Freudianly female *paysage moralise*".[309] Similarly to the eroticised setting of *King Solomon's Mines*, where mountains named "Sheba's Breasts"[310] belong to a symbolic female body waiting for penetration by the white explorers, the protagonists of *She* are carried through ancient birth canals and a "rocky defile" into a womb-like, "vast cup of earth" (80). Despite the alluring image conveyed by this depiction of a sexualised Africa, already in *King Solomon's Mines* it became obvious that there is also a perilous side to it; after all, Allan Quatermain receives the map from a descendant of Silvestre, who starved to death beside the "nipple" of "Sheba's breasts".[311] According to Rebecca Stott,

> such an extraordinary motif – death from starvation beside the primary source of sustenance, the breast – sensitises the reader to the harshness and cruelty of this African landscape (body). It is a land that refuses to nurture and refuses sustenance to man.[312]

This paradox of portraying an inviting female landscape on the one hand but revealing its dangers and harmfulness on the other is also a typical feature of *She*. Although the countryside is, as outlined above, highly eroticised, the adventurers also have to pass through a "death-breeding swamp" (68), where the stench of the rivers is so awful that they must swallow medicine in order to avoid getting sick; on their way to She, Leo and Job even get fever from their exposure to the smell of the marches (122). This dual depiction of the setting as alluring and repulsive is an anticipation of She-who-must-be-obeyed, who is an extremely beautiful woman that turns out to be an evil monster figure with malevolent intentions. Besides, the overpowering vastness of this feminised countryside and the negative effects it has on the male explorers anticipates their weakness in comparison to the omnipotent queen.

Apart from deploying a dangerously gendered setting, the novel takes up the Radcliffean opposition of idealised elements traditionally associated with the pastoral on the one hand and the Gothic or sublime on the other. After traversing a hostile nature with swamps and stagnant marches, for instance, Holly is pleased to encounter an environment reminiscent of a classic *locus amoenus*:

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309 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*. Sexchanges, Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, 13.

310 H. Rider Haggard. *King Solomon's Mines* [1885]. The Modern Library Classics. New York: The Modern Library, 2002, 20.

311 Ibid.

312 Stott, *Fabrication*, 93.

> Before us was a vast cup of earth from four to six miles in extent, and moulded to the shape of a Roman amphitheatre. The sides of this great cup were rocky, and clothed with bush, but its centre was of the richest meadow land, studded with single trees of magnificent growth, and watered by meandering brooks. On this rich plain grazed herds of goats and cattle, but I saw no sheep. (80)

This existence of a pastoral space enclosed in a rocky earth cup, which is in the midst of impassable swamps, is, in Ettin's terms, a "pastoral inset", i.e. a pastoral context surrounded by a non-pastoral one.[313] Here, the Amahagger, a rural society, live a life of bucolic simplicity, which should convey a harmless atmosphere. However, this inset, although initially offering the protagonists temporary comfort and relief from their journey, also provokes feelings of unease: After all, it is in the middle of a vast and extinct volcano crater, which is an element that is nearer to the notion of the sublime and hence gives this rural refuge also a perilous aspect. Moreover, it contains several Gothic features. During their first night, for instance, the protagonists are appalled at finding out that their sleeping places used to be sepulchres for the dead. In this Gothic grave, Holly even has a nightmare of being buried alive (88). The open barbarism and cruelty as exposed in the nocturnal ritual during which the Amahagger try to place a hot pot on Mahomed's head (100-101) is also a typical element of the Gothic.

The residence of She-who-must-be-obeyed is described by a combination of the pastoral and the sublime/the Gothic as well: Holly at first sees an idyllic landscape, which he describes as follows: "A most beautiful view broke upon our gaze. Beneath us was a rich stretch of country, verdant with grass and lovely with foliage and flowers" (126). At the same time, he notes a "huge and extraordinary mountain", the shape of which

> seemed to be round, […] but […] it proved difficult to estimate its exact size, which was enormous. […] Anything more grand and imposing than the sight presented by this great natural castle, starting in solitary grandeur from the level of the plain, I never saw, and suppose I never shall. Its very solitude added to its majesty, and its towering cliffs seemed to kiss the sky. (126)

Holly's reaction to the vastness of this natural spectacle is typical of a sublime encounter: Not only is he unable to describe in words what he perceives but he is also "awed […] by the intensity of its lonesome and most solemn greatness" (129). After entering this mountain, the protagonists are led through the darkness of its caves, which are reminiscent of a Gothic labyrinth. Here, Holly, blindfolded, only notices how "the litter turned a corner, then another" and that "the turns were continuous, and to me […] most bewildering" (131). On

313 Cf. Ettin, *Literature and the Pastoral*, 75; chapter 3.1.2.

leaving the caverns, the protagonists are surprised at finding a pastoral landscape again, i.e. a cultivated plain, suited for herds of cattle and goats, which temporarily creates a harmless atmosphere (132). Having eventually arrived at She's habitation, the Englishmen, after being given rooms and clothes, feel comfortable at first (135). However, they soon discover that the place where they receive their meal was once not only a refectory but also "an embalming-room for the Priests of the Dead" (136). Moreover, these caves used to be and are still used as vast catacombs. During his first night, Holly traverses the subterranean passages of this place to watch She's passionate cursing of her rival and runs the risk of getting lost in its darkness after his light has been extinguished (162).

This closeness of elements traditionally assigned to the pastoral on the one hand and the Gothic or sublime on the other has been typical of this hybrid mode before. In Haggard's novel, however, it is not confined to single occurrences anymore. Instead, as has become obvious, there is a constant interchange of those contrary features. This creates a steady tension between ease and unease, alluding to the deceptive quality of this rural context and anticipating its dangerous character. Moreover, it is a means to persistently deceive the intruding urbanite: In the fashion of a Chinese-box system, he is constantly lured deeper into this Gothic-pastoral environment and gradually unveils its horrible character, until he has eventually reached its heart.[314]

Ayesha, who is at the centre of this place, is the monster figure of this *locus conclusus*. Similarly to Stoker's count, she is an ambiguous figure in racial terms. On the one hand, she fulfils Holly's expectations of meeting a "savage, dusty queen" (139): Not only does she lack any sense of ethical responsibility and appears unable to keep her passions at bay, e.g. in her treatment of Ustane or the punishment of those responsible for the hot-potting ritual; she also supervises a grotesque ceremony where mummies are burned and infernal songs are sung. On the other hand, she is portrayed as extremely 'civilised': Haggard frequently emphasises the whiteness of her skin and her pure Arabic, which marks her off from the 'bastard' version the Amahagger speak, as well as her education and rhetorical skills. The fact that in the middle of this 'barbaric' space a racially ambiguous figure can be found reflects, similarly to *Dracula*, doubts about the ideological city-country opposition.

Moreover, she is described as a *femme fatale* in the tradition of Homer's Circe. Although she does not transform humans into animals in the literal sense, she nevertheless has the power of

[314] The centrality of the place where Ayesha lives is expressed in the name *Kôr*, which is similar to English *core* and Latin *cor* 'heart'; this notion was also taken over by Joseph Conrad in the title of *Heart of Darkness*. Cf. Schnierer, *Entdämonisierung*, 122.

degrading them into an animal-like state. Whereas the Amahagger are supposed to crawl in her presence, the Englishmen, who refuse to do this, are given names like "the Baboon", "the Lion" and "the Pig".[315] She is also a beautiful woman no man can resist while simultaneously exhibiting monstrous traits, which are now expressed in Gothic and sublime features. During his first meeting, for instance, Holly notes her extraordinary beauty, accompanied by the "softest and yet most silvery voice" (142). At the same time, there is also something formidable about her: The narrator experiences a sublime sensation of terror which he cannot account for (141; 142) and refers to her appearance in Gothic terms as "a corpse in grave-clothes" (142), which moves "with a certain snake-like grace" (143).[316]

In Haggard's novel, the monster figure's characterisation as alluring and terrifying alike must be seen in connection with the portrayal of the surrounding landscapes. Not only does her description as both sexually attractive and dangerous correspond to the image of a feminised African wilderness the protagonists initially traversed. It also matches up with the combination of pastoral and sublime or Gothic elements, which confronted the intruder, who progressively unveiled the truth about this place, with a permanent sense of deception and menace. After the white men's arrival at the centre of this *locus conclusus*, the final unveiling occurs when the queen literally withdraws her veil and reveals herself to them. The aforementioned combination of beautiful and sublime/Gothic traits she thereby exhibits stands in a metonymic relation to the dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and Gothic/sublime features typical of the African countryside.[317]

Besides her Gothic appearance as outlined before, the closeness of sublime and beautiful elements is particularly striking. Holly, exposed to a degree of beauty which appears "celestial" to him, at the same time notes that there is also an evil quality about it (156). His further comments reveal the sublime nature of his experience:[318]

> But *beautiful*, surpassingly beautiful as were all these, her loveliness did not lie in them. It lay rather, if it can be said to have any abiding home, in a visible *majesty*, in an *imperial grace*, in a

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315 According to Gilbert and Gubar, the colonisers' animalism is also emphasised by their consummation of meat, while Ayesha is a strict vegetarian. Cf. Gilbert and Gubar, *No Man's Land*, 15.

316 Because of this hybrid portrayal of a woman that has an aura of beauty and morbidity/viciousness about her, Gilbert and Gubar perceive her as a crossing between Venus and Persephone, as a destroyer and a preserver. Cf. Ibid., 15-17.

317 Indeed, as Roberts notes, the category of the beautiful corresponds to the idyllic sceneries as associated with pastoral landscapes. Cf. Roberts, *Ecogothic*, 17.

318 Cf. Andrew Libby. "Revisiting the Sublime: Terrible Women and the Aesthetics of Misogyny in H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*". *The CEA Critic* 67.1 (2004): 9.

> *godlike* stamp of softened *power* […]. Never before had I guessed what *beauty made sublime* could be. (156; my emphasis)

Interestingly, in Ayesha's case, not only a closeness of both the beautiful and the sublime seems to be typical; there is even a complete annihilation of the distinction between these categories, since it is stated that "beauty" is "made sublime". This is insofar remarkable as both categories have been traditionally perceived to be distinct. Moreover, the beautiful, relating mainly to domestic affections like love, tenderness and pity, has usually been ascribed to the female while the sublime has been seen as a male category, associated with notions like fortitude, strength and independence.[319]

Combining feminine and masculine elements in one person and thus blurring the traditional Victorian distinction between the sexes, Ayesha can be seen as a monstrous representation of the New Woman, which reflects particularly male anxieties of the time. In addition, the metonymic link between her beautiful and sublime/Gothic appearance with a Gothic-pastoral Africa subverts imperial fantasies of penetrating the Dark Continent by revealing its dangers for the British adventurer. Reflecting anxieties connected to unrests in the colonies, where Britain suffered many losses,[320] the novel undermines the image of Africa as an idyllic place containing harmless country-dwellers which can be easily submitted by the superior urbanite.

Fears of the Empire's and a more general male weakness are also evoked in the depiction of the intruding 'hero'. In Haggard's novel, the figure of Homer's Odysseus, who united traits like cleverness, masculinity and extraordinary strength within one person, has been split up. He is now represented by two characters that are complementary in several respects:[321] Whereas Leo, with his golden curls, embodies the classic ideal of beauty known since Greek antiquity, Holly is described as extraordinarily ugly and deformed. On the other hand, it is stated that Leo is only of average intelligence, whereas Holly's cleverness and education is frequently emphasised throughout the book. As in the previous novels, this imperfection of the urban intruders reflects doubts about the supposed 'flawlessness' of the British race. Besides, it is again implicitly indicated that the 'savage' is a trait not only integral to the supposedly 'civilised' man but also necessary for his survival in a Darwinian world of eating

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319 Cf. Edmund Burke. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* [1757]. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 103.

320 Cf. Stott, *Fabrication*, 89.

321 Westerweel even suggests that they might be read as Gothic doppelgangers. Cf. Bart Westerweel. "An Immense Snake Uncoiled": H. Rider Haggard's Heart of Darkness and Imperial Gothic", in *Exhibited by Candlelight: Sources and Developments in the Gothic Tradition*, eds. Peter Davidson and Jane Stevenson. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995, 260.

and being eaten: While Leo shows signs of weakness in the African jungle at times, e.g. when he is unable to shoot a buck (68) or gets sick, Holly, who is referred to as an atavist, is the one that appears most able to deal with the dangers of this environment. This is reminiscent of the Wellsian split of the human race into two types of degenerates, the Eloi and the Morlocks. It conveys a similar mood of pessimism by silently suggesting the inevitability of this devolutionary process.

Whereas during their journey, at least some partial strength is attributed to the protagonists, they are depicted as totally helpless in their attempts to deal with She-who-must-be-obeyed. During his first meeting with Ayesha, for instance, Holly initially refuses to crawl on his knees because, as an Englishman, he feels superior to this supposedly 'savage' woman. This corresponds to the ideological depiction of the pastoral confrontation between the 'superior' urbanite and the 'inferior' country-dweller. However, shortly afterwards this situation is subverted; having been reduced to nothing more than the state of an animal by "this modern Circe" (160), he tells her on his knees "that I worshipped her as never a woman was worshipped, and that I would give my immortal soul to marry her" (191). Leo's humiliation by the African queen is even worse: Although 'engaged' to Ustane according to the Amahagger custom, he swears his undying love for Ayesha next to the dead body of his fiancée right after watching her being killed by She. The queen even manages to threaten the long-established bonds between the white men: Holly, confounded by her supernatural charms, gets jealous of Ayesha's love for Leo, who turns out to be her reincarnated lover Kallikrates (226-7).

The modification of the hero and the monster figure hence indicates that, similarly to *Dracula*, where Jonathan Harker was depicted as feeble and passive while being confronted by the powerful vampire ladies, the roles between the 'active' man and the 'passive' woman have been reversed in *She*. In a Gothicised version of a hybrid other blurring the distinctions between notions like the 'refined' and the 'barbaric' or the 'male' and the 'female', Ayesha threatens the manhood as well as the superiority of the English imperial explorers.

The notion of a powerful threat to the British Empire is particularly emphasised in the modifications of the retreat-return movement. Similarly to *Dracula*, the novel presents a frightening version of the country-dweller planning to invade the civilised world, which – considering the weakness of its representatives – appears to be an easy task: "'But we have a queen already,' interrupted Leo hastily. 'It is naught, it is naught,' said Ayesha; 'she can be overthrown.'" (251-2). In contrast to Stoker's novel, however, the invasion is not enacted, as Ayesha is eventually destroyed by the Pillar of Life. By reversing the process of lengthening

her life, it brings about her diminution in a kind of devolutionary process. Ayesha's and, by implication, the New Woman's as well as the colonist's atavist nature are at last exposed in this reverse development, at the end of which the formerly powerful queen is "no larger than a monkey" (292) and "swept back into nothingness" (293). By enacting the destruction of the monstrous female other, the novel finally seems to reconstitute traditional Victorian ideas of femininity and hence also of the distinction between the sexes. Moreover, with the spatial distance of the Gothic-pastoral context from the heart of the British Empire being retained, Haggard's novel appears to be more successful than *Dracula* in its re-establishment of the boundaries between the 'cultivated' city and the 'primitive' country at first.

However, there is still a strong undertone of pessimism here. Despite the reconstitution of the categories necessary for the ideological system of the British Empire to legitimise and perpetuate itself, the movement to the Dark Continent proves fatal to the protagonists. It results either in death (in Job's case) or in an inability to live a former life of tranquillity and scholarly detachment in Cambridge again. The retreat into the rural context of Africa has no healing powers but makes the urbanites even less vigorous; not only do they look much older and weaker (294; 305) but, haunted by their memory of She, will be forever unable to love another woman again. Moreover, it is explicitly made clear that She-who-must-be-obeyed is only temporarily banished: Having predicted her rebirth in her last words to Leo (292), she returns in the sequel *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905) in Asia, where she reattempts her planned invasion of the West. The novel thus suggests that the dangerous other lurking within the depths of the African continent is not easily expelled once it has been woken up by the representatives of imperialism. This probably hints at Haggard's own experience with continually returning native resistance like the Boer uprising.[322]

Accordingly, the retreat-return movement again leads to an insight which shatters the intruder's ideas concerning his own, 'civilised' world. In Haggard's novel, this insight consists of a 'truth' which one should better not discover and is therefore frequently referred to metaphorically as 'veiled'. Leo already anticipates this on his way to She, when, looking at the stars, he says: "Truth is veiled, because we could no more look upon her glory than we can upon the sun. It would destroy us. Full knowledge is not for man" (119). The novel enacts this very idea: After gradually uncovering the nature of this place, which is hidden behind the idyllic façade of nature, Holly and Leo finally arrive at the centre and unveil Ayesha's 'true' beauty and sublimity; having fallen victim to her terrible charms, Holly

[322] Cf. Stott, *Fabrication*, 124.

curses “the fatal curiosity that is ever prompting to draw the veil from woman […]! It is the cause of half – ay, and more than half, of our misfortunes” (160). While in *She*, this ‘truth’ is before its discovery merely hinted at by the occurrence of sublime or Gothic features within an otherwise deceptively idealised bucolic landscape, in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, such an opposition has been entirely given up; the result is a profoundly sinister depiction of the natural context, which is depicted as undoubtedly evil right from the beginning.

4.3.3. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899)

Joseph Conrad’s classic novella, which has been heavily influenced by Haggard’s *She*,[323] belongs to the genre of the African Gothic-pastoral romance in so far as it is concerned with the penetration of the Dark Continent by white male explorers. The scenes Marlow witnesses during his journey are, however, much more politicised and subversive than in Haggard’s story. The text is largely based on what Conrad saw during his six months’ employment in King Leopold II’s Congo reserve in 1890 and partially recorded in his *Congo Diary*. Its emergence must be seen in the context of the extreme atrocities and violent acts that were committed against the Africans during that time, resulting in the decimation of the native population by perhaps as many as six million people.[324] Appalled by the shocking conditions he found in the African colonies, Conrad wrote in a propaganda letter to Roger Casement: “It is an extraordinary thing that the conscience of Europe which seventy years ago […] put down the slave trade on humanitarian grounds tolerates the Congo state today”.[325]

This atmosphere of hopelessness and inhumanity that the author was confronted with during his stay in Africa is reflected in the way he constructs the natural context in *Heart of Darkness*.[326] In this story of Marlow’s expedition into the African wilderness, where he encounters the fallen European Kurtz, the dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements as typical of this hybrid mode breaks down in favour of the latter.

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323 Cf. Murray Pittock. “Rider Haggard and *Heart of Darkness*”. *Conradiana: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 19.3 (1987): 206-208; Evelyn J. Hinz. “Rider Haggard’s *She*: An Archetypical ‘History of Adventure’”. *Studies in the Novel* 4 (1972): 416-431; Westerweel, “Snake”, 255-270.

324 Cf. Brantlinger, *Darkness*, 257; Edmund D. Morel. *History of the Congo Reform Movement*, eds. W.R. Louis and Jean Stengers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, 7.

325 Quoted in Edmund D. Morel. *King Leopold’s Rule in Africa*. Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970, 351-352.

326 From now on abbreviated as *HD*.

The result is a dark environment totally devoid of any comforting features, thus conveying an atmosphere of extreme pessimism without making use of any beautiful elements anymore for the purpose of deceiving the urban intruder. Paradoxically, however, this context still has the same irresistible attraction on the city-dweller which previously originated in the idyllic traits associated with the pastoral ideal.

Despite his clear aversion to the European cruelty in Africa, Conrad's general attitude towards the ideological foundations of imperialism as exposed in *HD* is contradictory and has been the subject of intense debate up to this day. In this context, criticism during the last decades has often been based on Chinua Achebe's famous accusation of the novel's racism[327] and the question whether such a strong statement holds true or not. While some accounts have taken a relatively firm stand for either side,[328] others have emphasised the novel's ambiguous nature, linking its incorporation of opposing notions to its proto-modernist, impressionist style.[329] In the following, a reading will be provided which places this use of contradictory elements into the tradition of the late nineteenth-century Gothic-pastoral romance tradition as outlined so far. As it will turn out, the tension the text establishes is a very conservative trait and can ultimately be traced back to Virgil's *Eclogues*. Whereas this feature was used by all *fin-de-siècle* authors to some extent, in Conrad's novel, it is a central device for the author to express his ambivalent attitude towards the current system. Thus, it can be argued that the novel represents an endpoint in the development of the late nineteenth-century Gothic-pastoral romance and a climax of this hybrid mode in general.

The first ambiguous trait of the text is the portrayal of the opposition between city and country. Throughout the story, there is a continuous oscillation between an establishment of the dichotomy as typical of the Empire fiction and a blurring of it. This uncertainty

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327 Cf. Chinua Achebe. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*". *The Massachusetts Review* 18 (1977): 782-794.

328 Among the numerous critics who argue against Achebe, two of the most prominent ones are Cedric Watts and Hunt Hawkins. Cf. Cedric Watts. "'A Bloody Racist': About Achebe's View of Conrad". *Yearbook of English Studies* 13 (1983): 196-209; Hunt Hawkins. "*Heart of Darkness* and Racism", in Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness* [1899], ed. Paul B. Armstrong. A Norton Critical Edition. 4th ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006, 365-375. For arguments in favour of Achebe see, for instance, Susan L. Blake and Eugene B. Redmond. Cf. Susan L. Blake. "Racism and the Classics: Teaching *Heart of Darkness*". *College Language Association Journal* 25 (1982): 396-404; Eugene B. Redmond. "Racism or Realism? Literary Apartheid, or Poetic Licence? Conrad's Burden in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*", in Joseph Conrad. *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York: Norton, 1979, 358-68.

329 Cf. Ian Watt, who attributes the novel's ambiguous nature to both its impressionist and symbolist style, and Frederic Jameson, who claims that Conrad's fiction is schizophrenic in so far as it shows a symptomatic split between a highly developed but essentially hollow impressionism and the reified, mass-culture tendencies of romance conventions. Cf. Ian Watt. *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979, 168-200; Fredric Jameson. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981, 206-280.

concerning the boundaries between both concepts has already been shown to be a general feature of the Gothic-pastoral mode at that time. In *HD*, however, this is not something suggested silently anymore but very explicitly expressed right from the start. In his use of a dark/light symbolism, for instance, Conrad is keen to confirm but at the same time to refute any clear opposition in which 'white' stands for the 'civilised' city and 'black' for the 'savage' colonies.[330] Although, for instance, in the initial scene the "luminous estuary" of the Thames in London is set against the "brooding gloom" of the surrounding environment, the narrator also states that "a mournful gloom [is] brooding motionless over the biggest, and greatest, town on earth" (3).[331] Furthermore, the novel's opening conveys an atmosphere of serenity and ennobles the past of the British Empire by mentioning the fact that the Thames carried many famous men and ships who brought the light of culture into the gloomy jungle (4-5). Nevertheless, Marlow immediately afterwards utters his famous sentence "And this also […] has been one of the dark places of the earth" (5), which shows the temporal and spatial closeness of both categories.

The subversion of the imperial city-country opposition is continued by depicting the notion of a 'dark' nature as the more original condition, which "was here yesterday", while the 'light' of civilisation is presented as merely a "flicker" (6), which will soon yield to the surrounding gloom again. Marlow reminds his listeners that London was also once not the centre but "the very end of the world" (6) and was colonised by a more 'enlightened' Roman Empire. This reverses the image of the English as the 'light-bearers' of civilisation and reminds the reader that all powerful empires will sooner or later vanish. It is hence suggested that it is just a question of time until London will become a place of barbarism again.

Besides these clear references to current anxieties concerning the possible downfall of the 'superior' capital, *HD* confines the negotiation of these issues not to the British Empire with London at its centre; instead, it introduces a more wide-ranging concept of the unspecified European city, which suggests that European imperialism in general is an artificial construct. After his arrival at the Belgian city, which is probably Brussels, Marlow has the impression of being in a "whitened sepulchre" (9), where a "dead silence" prevails (10). Here, anonymous and undead figures, who are metonymically reduced to "a white-haired

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330 Cf. Phil Joffe. "Africa and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: The 'Bloody Racist' (?) as Demystifier of Imperialism", in *Conrad's Literary Career*, ed. Keith Carabine [et al.]. Lublin: Curie-Sklodowska University Press, 1992, 83.

331 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness* [1899], ed. Paul B. Armstrong. A Norton Critical Edition. 4th ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.

secretarial head" and "a skinny forefinger" (10), live in a kind of vast tomb. In the middle of this place the Company's office can be found, where two women, who are "uncanny and faithful", guard the "door of Darkness" (11). Not only does the lack of individuality imply that this could be any urban environment in Europe; it also suggests the emptiness of the category of 'civilisation' by conveying the image of a city that is hollowed out and dark inside. Although Marlow, after entering the African wilderness, has the impression of being "buried in a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets" (62), this refers to any capital associated with the European imperial powers as well, which must be seen as an extreme blurring of the city-country contrast.

Nevertheless, the novel's subversion of the ideological premises European imperialism is based on is ambiguous here, since the belief in the 'civilising' mission is not given up completely. Marlow does not perceive it as something bad *per se* as long as there is an benevolent plan behind it, which is "not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea" (7). This seems to be partially the case at least as far as British imperialism is concerned: Looking at the red patches on a map in a shop window, he is glad because "one knows that some real work is done there" (30).

Concerning the pastoral confrontation of 'higher' and 'lower' figures, *HD* also contains a stronger oscillation between conforming to versus subverting the existing ideology than the previous novels. On the one hand, the depiction of the African natives as savages who are further down the evolutionary scale corresponds to contemporary ideas. On board of the steamer, for example, Marlow compares the Europeans, who are "at the end of countless ages", with the colonists, who "still belonged to the beginnings of time" (40). On the other hand, this stereotypical portrayal is strongly undermined. In contrast to the European agents and traders, for instance, whom Marlow ironically names "the pilgrims" and who display an unrestrained voraciousness in their greed for ivory under the pretence of pursuing a supposedly benign mission, the cannibals on the steamer exhibit a restraint in one of their most basic desires, i.e. to eat (41-42). Moreover, Conrad seems at times keen to present the world of the Africans as the context where man still lives a more original life in accordance with nature and which stands in contrast to the absurd emptiness of life in the "sepulchral city". Although the Africans have "faces like grotesque masks", for instance, they nevertheless have "bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement that was as natural and true as the surf along the coast. They wanted no excuse for being there" (14).[332]

[332] Cf. Hawkins, "Racism", 371.

Besides, the appearance of Kurtz's African mistress, who seems to be "the image of [the wilderness's] tenebrous and passionate soul" (60), stands in contrast to the portrayal of his Intended, who leads an existence of moderation and chastity in a sarcophagus-like building in a funereal urban context. At one point, Conrad even attributes a certain degree of humanity to the Africans:

> They howled and leaped and spun and made horrid faces, but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough, but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of the first ages – could comprehend. (36)

This passage clearly blurs the ideological boundaries between the 'superior' city-dweller and the 'inferior' countryman by linking both figures in evolutionary terms. On the other hand, however, even this acknowledgement of a "remote kinship" remains highly ambiguous. Instead of resisting contemporary prejudices towards Africans, the novel rather seems to confirm them, since the thought of a common ancestry appears to Marlow merely as "ugly". This was one of the major reasons why Achebe accused Conrad of being a "bloody racist".[333]
Despite the image of life in the natural context as the more authentic and original state of mankind, this is nevertheless not a pastoral Golden Age, where everything is in joyful accordance, but rather a Dark Age, the union with which reveals man's bestial side. Similarly to the previous novels, the rural setting is the place where man unleashes the more primitive instincts he has so far suppressed because of his life in the city. This is mostly illustrated in the case of the depraved Europeans, especially Kurtz, who lives as a ruler over primitive tribes and exhibits an alarming degree of cruelty.
In *HD*, however, the image of the Golden Age is not even used as an empty category for deceptive purposes anymore. In general, the novel lacks any beautiful/pastoral elements which could convey at least a temporary atmosphere of false tranquillity. Instead, nature is consistently depicted as a dangerous, primeval force, which has extremely negative effects on the intruding urbanite. The African coast, for example, is described by Marlow as

> smiling, frowning, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering – come in and find out. This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. (13)

[333] Cf. Achebe, "Image", 788. In a revised later version of his essay, Achebe somewhat softened this expression into "thoroughgoing racist". Chinua Achebe. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*", in *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1990, 11.

Besides this formlessness and monotony in the depiction of the coastal structure, it is also associated with a mood of extreme hopelessness and misery. Marlow comments on its rivers, "whose banks were rotting into mud, whose waters, thickened into slime, invaded the contorted mangroves that seemed to writhe at us in the extremity of an impotent despair" (14). This portrayal stands in contrast to the pseudo-idyllic description of the coast where the protagonists of *She* arrive and which at least initially has a tranquilising effect on them. Rather, it is made unmistakably clear from the beginning that this is a hostile environment, which will not provide the intruder with renewed spirits but rather with an idea of senselessness. McCarthy therefore calls this setting a "horrific anti-pastoral of despair".[334]

The complete association of nature with an anti-pastoral/Gothic pessimism becomes also obvious when the intruder reaches the first human habitation. Unlike in *She*, where Leo and Holly, coming across the home of the Amahagger, entered a deceptively harmless pastoral inset, Marlow, after reaching the Outer Station, encounters a "grove of death" (19). The shade of the trees, which is in the pastoral tradition usually a place of temporary comfort, where shepherds come together for recreative purposes, is now the spot where the workers go to die (17). Moreover, the bucolic motif of peaceful tranquillity is subverted, since "the mournful stillness of the grove, where not a breath stirred, not a leaf moved" (16-17) has an ominous quality. Consequently, despite the novel's use of traditional pastoral elements in the description of the natural environment, these are used to aggravate the sense of pessimism conveyed by the African wilderness, which renders this place entirely anti-pastoral and Gothic.

However, in the case of the "grove of death", nature is not anti-pastoral *per se* like the sinister image of the coast that Marlow encounters initially. Similarly to *IM*, it is suggested that the European, the "flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly" (16), spoiled this context, where the inhabitants used to live in accordance with nature:

> Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. (17)

Like the previous novels, *HD* hence not only portrays a natural setting that is generally hostile towards the white male intruders; it also links this image to the cruelty of imperial exploitation by highlighting its consequences for the natives.

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[334] Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy. "'A Choice of Nightmares': The Ecology of *Heart of Darkness*". *Modern Fiction Studies* 55.3 (2009): 626.

With the overall lack of any idyllic elements, there is also a breaking down of the traditional day-night opposition typical of the Virgilian pastoral. In the previous novels, the coming of night was associated with Gothic dangers and hence stood in contrast to the (seemingly) peaceful mood of daylight. In *HD*, however, Marlow travels into the "night of first ages" (36), a place of eternal darkness and shadows. In this environment of black monotony, nightfall only aggravates the gloomy atmosphere that is already in the daytime an inherent feature of this retreat:

> The dusk came gliding into it long before the sun had set. The current ran smooth and swift, but a dumb immobility sat on the banks. The living trees, lashed together by the creepers and every living bush of the undergrowth, might have been changed into stone, even the slenderest twig, to the lightest leaf. It was sleep – it seemed unnatural, like a state of trance. Not the faintest sound could be heard. You looked on amazed and began to suspect yourself of being deaf – then the night came suddenly and struck you blind as well. (39)

The monotony characteristic of the natural setting is even stronger in the hours of darkness, where Marlow feels blinded by the surrounding gloom. Besides, it is extended from the mere visual to the aural sense, since at night, absolute stillness prevails.

In contrast to the previous *fin-de-siècle* novels, not even before the actual voyage to the Dark Continent starts the deceptive image of a pleasant environment is established anymore. Intruder figures like Leo and Holly, as long as they were still in the city, had at least a falsely idealised image of an idyllic Africa in mind, which only after their arrival there turned out to be illusionary. In *HD*, however, even prior to the protagonist's journey, it is openly indicated that this is a hostile environment, where man's bestial nature is fully unleashed. Besides the story of Marlow's predecessor Freshsleven, who had been killed in a fight with the natives because he "started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick" (9), the doctor at the Company's office says that he never sees the people again who go to the Congo and is interested in certain "changes [that] take place inside" them (11). Moreover, there is also a clear anticipation of the generally sinister character of this rural retreat: When Marlow looks at an African map before his journey, the Congo appears to him as an "immense snake uncoiled" (6). The river is described as overpowering in comparison to the male explorer: "And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window it fascinated me as a snake would a bird – a silly little bird" (8).

Although the novel's beginning explicitly anticipates that the country is thoroughly evil without making use of any deceptively idyllic elements, there is interestingly still the traditional longing for the withdrawal into the natural context as was formerly associated with

the pastoral ideal; after all, Marlow states that "the snake had charmed me" (8). This attraction he feels towards entering an openly Gothic environment is astonishing. Besides youthful foolishness, it must be seen in connection with a particular modification of the prison-like character of the *locus conclusus*, which is the endpoint of a wider tendency of all the novels analysed in this chapter. In contrast to the texts treated before, no violent (threatening monsters), geographic (island, castle, mountains) or deceptive (pastoral/beautiful elements) means are necessary anymore to entrap the intruding urbanite; the evil quality of a gloomy nature itself seems to be alluring, so that the city-dweller will come by himself and become the new monster figure. The longer he stays in this "heart of darkness", the more it will reveal the 'truth' about him, i.e. the emptiness of his supposed racial and moral superiority.

In general, a shift from a merely physical to a rather psychological prison can be observed in the Gothic-pastoral romance of the *fin de siècle*, which reaches its climax in Conrad's novel. Whereas in the case of protagonists like Prendick, the Time Traveller or Jonathan Harker, there was an emphasis on the mainly physical character of the prison they had entered (e.g. island, castle, stealing of the time machine), in *She*, Leo and Holly were trapped both physically (in the tomb-like lodgings of She, surrounded by dangerous marshes) and psychologically (by their attraction to Ayesha). In *HD*, this internalisation of the prison-like character has progressed even further. Besides some remaining physical traits, e.g. the portrayal of the surrounding nature as an enclosing entity (35), the main emphasis is clearly put on the psychological aspects. The novel suggests that the longer you stay in this place, the less easy it will become for you to get away on your own accord, since you lose the will to return to the 'civilised' world. Conrad's text places particular stress on the alluring quality of this environment for the European intruders, since it evokes a familiar and not entirely unpleasant response in them; Marlow, for instance, notes that "yet it was not altogether depressing, that feeling" (35). Whereas the protagonist only feels a slight pull of the wilderness, in the case of Kurtz, who has been in there for a very long time, it is already too late. Because he has given in to the spell of the jungle, it has become a prison for him, which he cannot get out of by himself anymore. Marlow learns that he had suddenly decided by choice to return to his outpost in the wilderness, although his task was already finished there:

> It was a distinct glimpse: the dugout, four paddling savages, and the lone white man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters, on relief, on thoughts of home perhaps, setting his face towards the depths of the wilderness, towards his empty and desolate station. (32)

While in the traditional pastoral romance, at least a temporary stay in the natural environment was salutary for the intruder, *HD* presents the closeness to nature in general as something that – despite representing man's more original state - has devastating effects on the individual. Kurtz's union with the wilderness denotes an extreme endpoint of this exposure, since it is described as an intimate relation:

> The wilderness had patted him on the head, and behold, it was like a ball – an ivory ball; it caressed him and – lo! – he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite. (48)

Whereas the other Europeans have all been exposed to the power of the wilderness to a certain extent, he is the only one who has reached a real unity with it; as a consequence, he has developed into the monster figure of this *locus conclusus*. Accordingly, Conrad's novel not only conveys without any doubt the idea that the savagery of a Dark Age is the more 'original' condition of nature surrounding the "flicker" of civilisation; it also suggests that this darkness is so alluring that no deceptively idyllic pastoral elements or material constraints are necessary anymore to keep the intruder away from his supposedly 'enlightened' world.[335] Thus, although the dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic features completely breaks down in the depiction of the natural environment, it can be argued that it is preserved as a state of mind, i.e. the attraction this context still exerts on the intruding urbanite.

The author makes it clear that the figure of Kurtz is representative of European imperialism in general, since Marlow states in an often-quoted sentence that "all Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (49).[336] Moreover, he started out as an extremely idealistic person, an "emissary of pity, science and progress" (25). However, it is also stated that after his intimate union with the wilderness, which "had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know" (57-58), it turned out that he was "hollow at the core" (58), and a greedy person,

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335 This notion is also underlined by the fact that all the scenes of inhumanity Marlow encounters are accompanied by images of a personified nature which seems to know this 'truth'. After complaining about the pilgrims' pretentiousness and their greed for ivory, for instance, Marlow describes the wilderness around him as follows: "And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth" (23). The natural environment is hence described as an overpowering force that knows man's 'real' character, i.e. his inherent primitivism. No matter how the Europeans struggle to evolve from their animal ancestors, the darkness of nature has been there before them and will still exist after their empires have perished again; it can therefore just wait "patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion" (23).

336 Cf. Henryk Zins. "Joseph Conrad and the Condemnation of Colonialism in Africa at the End of the Nineteenth Century". *Africana Bulletin* 48 (2000): 72; 76.

who "open[s] his mouth wide – it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him" (59). Not only does this blur the post-Darwinian distinction between the 'higher' coloniser and the 'lower' colonist and thus stigmatise the greediness of the Europeans; it also reveals the emptiness of their false ideology.

The dangers of such a pretentious ideology, in particular its abuse of language for propagandistic and manipulative purposes, is heavily emphasised by the way this monster figure is depicted as alluring and fascinating alike. Despite being clearly portrayed as the fallen European who has 'gone native' and adopted savage customs, Kurtz is an extremely fascinating figure, able to carry his listeners away by the mere power of his words. His report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, for instance, which for Marlow conveys the image of an "exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence", also contains the phrase "Exterminate all the brutes!" (50). His murderous intentions, which are embedded in a propagandistic masterpiece, reveal that he typifies many Europeans who went to Africa and practised genocide under the veil of a humanitarian mission; besides, he can be perceived as an anticipation of the dictator figures of the twentieth century (e.g. Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini), who, despite their political eloquence and exertion of a dangerous fascination, were also responsible for the deaths of many innocent people.[337] As Kurtz's alleged cousin comments after his death: "He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party. […] Any party" (72). Marlow's fascination with him thus not only represents the general attraction to evil but also the particular fascination these political leaders exerted on the common man. Whereas the protagonist is still able to reflect on this process and hence stays alert to the dangers of this manipulation, people like the young Russian at Kurtz's outpost represent those who are most easily manipulated and will follow their leader blindly; accordingly, his unreflected devotion to Kurtz appears to Marlow as "the most dangerous thing in every way he [the Russian] had come upon so far" (55).

Considering the fact that Marlow is the hero figure of this *locus conclusus*, a paradoxical image emerges. As Michael P. Jones has pointed out, he has certainly several features traditionally associated with this concept:[338] Like Odysseus, he is clever, inventive and able to defend his boat against attacks from outside with a determination that the rather weak anti-

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337 Cf. Brantlinger, *Darkness*, 268; Frederick R. Karl. "Conrad Pioneers New Themes and Methods", in *Readings on Heart of Darkness*, ed. Clarice Swisher. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1999, 69.

338 Cf. Michael P. Jones. "Marlow's Character is Suited to His Task", in *Readings on Heart of Darkness*, ed. Clarice Swisher. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 1999, 98.

heroes of Wells, Stoker, and Haggard often lack. Moreover, he displays a sensitive awareness towards the real character of his employer's 'civilising' mission; this becomes obvious, for instance, in his ironical comment on the faithless 'pilgrims' or his remark that he does not know anything about the "fate of the less valuable animals" on receiving news that the donkeys of the "Eldorado Expedition" are dead (33). In general, his moral consciousness, which expresses itself in his ability to distance himself from the scenes he encounters and to judge them from a perspective which is somewhat outside the ideological dogmas of the society he comes from, clearly marks him off as a hero.

On the other hand, Marlow does not completely refute the common stereotypes of Africans as typical of the nineteenth century but at times even uses them in his description of the natives he encounters; during his approach to Kurtz's outpost, for example, he evokes the contemporary image of the savage African who is in a constant stage of frenzy:

> But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked glass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing on us, praying to us, welcoming us – who could tell? (35)

Furthermore, his irresistible attraction to Kurtz demonstrates not only the ease with which he can be manipulated by the rhetoric of a leading figure of European imperialism but also his general proximity to the darkness of nature. This portrayal of the hero's vulnerability and his closeness to the monster figure can be conceived of as representative in Alpers's sense; after all, it suggests that Kurtz's sinister traits and desires embody everyone's secret wishes.[339]

As is typical of the Gothic-pastoral romance, the country is the place where the city-dweller gets an insight into his supposedly superior culture, whose representatives turn out to contain the seeds of evil within. Similarly to Haggard's *She*, this insight is depicted as a 'truth' one should better not discover and is hence referred to as 'veiled'. When Kurtz utters his famous words "The horror! The horror!", Marlow has the impression that "a veil had been rent" (69). The exploration of this 'truth' is again seen as fatal for the intruding urbanite; whereas Kurtz dies shortly after his last words, Marlow is, similarly to figures like Prendick or Jonathan Harker, unable to join his former life of blissful ignorance in the city again, the artificial character of which he has exposed:

339 Cf. Karl, "Themes", 66.

> I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. […] They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating presence because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. (70-71)

Having learned the lesson that the surrounding world of nature is uncaring, unethical and hostile as well as that life is merely "the mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose" (69), Marlow finds an urban existence, whose "perfect safety" (71) is based on a lie, offensive. The fact that the darkness he encountered in the African wilderness is everywhere, in particular in the allegedly culvivated city, is emphasised by the image of a haunting wilderness in the final scene of the novel. Listening to the words of Kurtz's Intended, who reveals her ignorance of the 'truth' by saying that "no one knew him so well as I!", Marlow notes that the room is growing darker with a "triumphant darkness" (75).

Despite the clear pessimism which is conveyed by this last scene, the novel's attitude towards Marlow's insight and the way it should be dealt with remains ambivalent. Although he complains about the ignorance of the people in the city, the protagonist lies to Kurtz's Intended, sparing her the real nature of "the horror". This aspect must surely be seen in the context of his opinion that the truth about civilisation should be generally kept from women, whose urban life in a state of ignorance he sees as bliss (48). More importantly, it is also another lesson he learned in the rural retreat and which clearly marks him off from Kurtz: Whereas the latter willingly committed himself to his more bestial nature once he had discovered it, the protagonist, despite feeling the pull of the wilderness too, also learns that the notions connected to the civilised world must, despite their artificial character, nevertheless be kept alive through positive action.[340] This maturation of the hero figure reveals its inner strength and must be seen as a moral victory; standing in contrast to the weakness of Haggard's protagonists, who were absolutely powerless after their discovery in the country, it is a factor that works against the general mood of pessimism which pervades the novel.

Consequently, *HD*, despite its very clear portrayal of a dark and anti-pastoral nature that is conceived of as the more 'original' state into which humanity will sooner or later relapse, ends highly ambiguously. On the one hand, the artificial character of the ideological system of European imperialism is revealed and the pretentiousness of its supposedly humanitarian

[340] Cf. Joffe, "Demystifier", 88.

practices heavily stigmatised; on the other hand, the lies that build the foundation of its shared values and norms are nevertheless seen as necessary, since they are still preferable to the darkness of the African wilderness. The retreat into the Gothic-pastoral context and the return to the city serves the purpose of exploring the real character of contemporary society; however, in spite of giving a clear solution concerning how to merge this insight with existing notions or what conclusions are to be drawn from it, the novel leaves both positions, i.e. the lie and the truth, unresolved and ends in a state of tension. This must be seen in the larger context of the text's ambiguous nature, which more openly than the previous novels confirms but at the same time blurs the boundaries between notions connected to the 'civilised' city and the 'savage' country.

In the past, this ambiguity gave rise to many discussions, particularly the question whether Conrad's novel can be regarded as racist or anti-racist, pro-imperialist or anti-imperialist etc.[341] As has been mentioned before, several scholars tried to solve this riddle by attributing the ambiguous style of the novel to its impressionism or proto-modernism[342] as well as to the ambivalent attitude of an author with a Polish background towards the system of British imperialism.[343] However, the exploration of contemporary issues in a natural retreat and the depiction of contrary positions - one supporting the current system, the other refuting it, without resolving the existing tensions between both - is in fact a very conservative feature and has been typical of the pastoral mode since the first *Eclogue*. As in Virgil's text, where the system under Octavian is praised but at the same time criticised by the portrayal of one shepherd who has been fortunate and one who has been dispossessed, in Conrad's novella, the ideological foundations of his time are confirmed but also undermined without a clear positioning of the author himself. This feature is also typical of the Gothic mode, which on the one hand verifies existing notions but on the other hand transgresses them, eventually leaving their boundaries unclear. Whereas this tension has been established by all texts of the Gothic-pastoral romance of the *fin de siècle* to a certain extent, in *HD*, it is most clearly elaborated, which has given rise to the many discussions concerning its ambiguous nature in the past. Thus, it is impossible to make the statement that *either* Achebe *or* his opponents are right in their claims. Instead of a very strong judgement, a careful approach should be chosen towards Conrad's novella, which neither establishes a clear-cut system of values and morals

341 Cf. Achebe, "Image" and the discussion that followed in his wake, which has been outlined at the beginning of this subchapter.

342 Cf. Watt, *Conrad*; Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 219.

343 Cf. Hawkins, "Racism", 372.

nor completely contradicts it; rather, the text creates a Gothic-pastoral environment in order to consciously combine a whole range of antithetical views of dominant ideas, thereby reflecting uncertainties and anxieties concerning their ideological foundations.

5. Some Versions of Twentieth-Century Gothic Pastoral

5.1. Diffusion and Transformation

In the twentieth century, there is a broad diffusion of the Gothic. Not only does it emerge in a wide range of genres, e.g. science fiction, the adventure novel, romantic fiction or horror writing; it also reaches beyond the medium of traditional literature, now also appearing in forms like the graphic novel or film. At the same time, a transformation of conventional features usually assigned to this form takes place; whereas, for instance, there are still long-established stock figures like the vampire, the monstrous threat is also represented by psychopaths, extraterrestrials and supernatural mutations.[344] With its wide dissemination and modification, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, the question has surfaced if it makes still sense to speak of a Gothic mode or whether the limits of this form have been reached once and for all.[345]

A similar situation can be observed for the pastoral. Many critics have stated its dispersal into a variety of different forms, e.g. "Freudian pastoral", "the pastoral of childhood", "proletarian pastoral" or even "urban pastoral", resulting often in an inflationary use of the term;[346] as a consequence of the enormous spread and alteration of the conventional repertoire usually associated with this mode, some have even declared its death, suggesting a "post-pastoral" phase for the twentieth century and beyond.[347]

Since both the Gothic and the pastoral develop into a multiplicity of manifestations, it is not surprising that the combination of these forms also spreads into several directions. In fact, the uniform genre of the Gothic-pastoral romance as typical of the late nineteenth century now branches out into various modal forms again. Authors as diverse as Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, H.P. Lovecraft, William Golding or Stephen King, who will constitute the focus of the following chapter, take up features typical of the late nineteenth-century tradition; among them are, for instance, dichotomies between an idyllic versus a Gothic environment or

344 Cf. Botting, *Gothic*, 13.

345 Cf. Warwick, "Feeling Gothicky?"; Botting, "Candygothic". For a comprehensive account of this question, see chapter 6.

346 Cf. Loughrey, *Pastoral Mode*, 8; Gifford, *Pastoral*, 4.

347 Cf. Gifford, *Pastoral*, 146-174; Barrell and Bull, *Pastoral Verse*, 432. For a comprehensive account of this question, see chapter 6.

the ‘civilised’ city versus the ‘savage’ country, the motif of the *locus conclusus*, the insistence on representative vulnerability or the establishment of a tension between contrary voices. However, there is no necessity for all these features to be employed within a uniform and coherent way anymore; instead, they can be present or absent to different degrees in these texts. Besides, particularly in postmodern times, many of these elements are often increasingly modified up to the point where it could be argued that it becomes doubtful whether they can still be assigned to the Gothic-pastoral mode at all.

The subsequent analysis will trace the development of this hybrid mode in the twentieth century in a selected body of texts written by the aforementioned authors. For this purpose, it will proceed chronologically in order to highlight the change of this form with regard to the shifting cultural contexts up to the end of the century; moreover, the texts have been selected and ordered with regard to the question in how far a progression can be demonstrated that finally reaches the margins of this form. Against the background of the manifold diversification of the Gothic-pastoral mode after the late nineteenth century, it is impossible to give a comprehensive overview of all its developments at that time. Instead, it is only possible to trace several versions of Gothic pastoral, which continue the previous tradition in their respective way.[348] Therefore, the following chapter has been divided into two parts, each of which traces a specific version of this mixed form. The major difference between both sections lies in the respective authors’ modification of the typical pastoral city-country dichotomy (which, as outlined in the introductory chapter, corresponds to the Gothic opposition of civilisation versus nature/savagery). In the fiction of Machen, Blackwood and Lovecraft, this contrast has been widened in an extreme way in order to negotiate fears of the unspeakable and man’s marginal position within the universe. In Golding’s and King’s texts, on the other hand, there is an increasing approximation of both categories up to the point where the distinction eventually completely breaks down. This modification of the nature-nurture opposition goes along with an extreme transformation and decrease of a whole range of other features usually ascribed to both modes. However, as will be demonstrated in the following, this does not mean that the Gothic and the pastoral become obsolete in the course of the twentieth century. Instead, since some basic elements remain stable in all the texts under consideration, it will eventually be argued that one can speak of a continuation (albeit in a highly modified form).

[348] For further examples of Gothic-pastoral occurrences in the twentieth century and beyond which have been neglected in this analysis, see chapter 6.

5.2. Gothic Pastoral and the Terror of the Unspeakable

5.2.1. The Country as a World Beyond

Apart from the development of the Gothic-pastoral mode throughout the *fin de siècle* as demonstrated in chapter 3, another tendency starts to crystallise during that time, which reaches into the early twentieth century. In the tradition of a group of texts, the natural context is still characterised by the typical oscillation between pastoral and Gothic/anti-pastoral elements in order to veil a horrible 'truth', which serves the negotiation of contemporary fears concerning the 'civilised' world. However, this dichotomy is now further expanded to a new extreme: The idyllic landscapes of the *locus amoenus* serve to deceive the ordinary observer from perceiving a hidden monstrosity which is, in contrast to figures like Dracula or Ayesha, not an earthly entity anymore but the representative of an alternative reality. The world which lies behind the beautiful sceneries of an untouched nature is inhabited by powerful beings, which are much older than and far from benevolent towards humanity; they are either indifferent with regard to an irrelevant human race or pursue malevolent intentions. The idealised description of green landscapes is therefore insofar deceptive as it masks the fact that the real world beyond the visible reality is either chaotic or, due to its vastness, incomprehensible to human beings and the tools they have at hand (e.g. language, science).

This expansion of the discrepancy between pastoral and anti-pastoral elements goes along with an extreme widening of the opposition between city and country. Whereas the former is still conceived of as an emblem for the civilised world, the latter is now regarded as a gateway to an existence far removed from anything related to human culture. The movement from the city two this rural enclave not only leads to the insight into the nothingness of the concept of 'civilisation' - it even highlights the insignificance of the human existence from a cosmic perspective.

The main focus of this subchapter will be placed on the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft, whose Gothicised countrysides are the most prominent examples of this tendency. Beforehand, Arthur Machen's and Algernon Blackwood's version of Gothic pastoral, which highly influenced Lovecraft, will be briefly outlined in order to demonstrate the development from the late nineteenth century onwards. Whereas the former authors still write from a British background to reflect anxieties typical of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the latter transposes these issues into a specifically American setting.

The question which will be of particular importance in this respect is the following: Does the tremendous divergence between city and country, which goes along with the extreme externalisation of the monster found within the rural context, also mean that the typical Gothic-pastoral tension between evil as something both external and internal breaks down? After all, this tension was one of the major features of the Gothic-pastoral mode at the *fin de siècle*, where the barbaric countryman the 'superior' city-dweller encountered always at the same time turned out to represent an integral part of him. With the excessive separation of the country's savagery from anything related to the world as mankind knows it, one should actually expect that this oscillation does not exist anymore. However, as it will turn out, the evil other can even in those instances never be fully separated from the urban intruder who encounters it.

5.2.2. Machen, "The Great God Pan" (1894)

Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan", which was published at the *fin de siècle*, occupies an intermediate position in terms of the tendency mentioned previously: On the one hand, it still exhibits features typical of the Gothic-pastoral romance but on the other hand also reveals traits associated with the notion of the country as the entry to an otherworldly existence. In his laboratory in the idyllic Welsh countryside, Dr Raymond conducts a scientific experiment with the street child Mary; after a surgical intervention into her brain, she is able to see the Great God Pan, as a result of which she is immediately driven mad. Several years afterwards, a mysterious woman named Helen Vaughan arrives in London, where she is responsible for the suicides of several gentlemen and the devastation of their existence. As it turns out in the end, she is the child of Mary, who had been impregnated by the Great God Pan during the dreadful experiment.

Machen's novella is a typical Gothic-pastoral text of the late nineteenth century for several reasons. First of all, there is the notion that the idyllicism of the pastoral *locus amoenus* just serves as a façade to veil a horrible 'truth'. As Dr Raymond explains:[349]

> Look about you, Clarke. You see the mountain, and hill following after hill, as wave on wave, you see the woods and orchards, the fields of ripe corn, and the meadows reaching to the reed-

[349] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Arthur Machen. "The Great God Pan" [1894], in *The Three Impostors and Other Stories: The Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen*, Vol. 1, ed. S.T. Joshi. Call of Cthulhu Fiction. Hayward: Chaosium, 2007, 1-51.

> beds by the river. […] But I tell you that all these things […] are but dreams and shadows; the shadows that hide the real world from our eyes. (2)

The exploration of this 'truth' proves fatal, since it is linked to contemporary anxieties of degeneration: Mary, after her encounter with Pan, is driven mad and dies. Her child is not subjected to the restraints of the civilised world and poses a danger to the male society of London; particularly the fact that the gentlemen who commit suicide after a visit to her house have stayed there until late at night would have probably led the Victorian reader to conclude that this degeneration is of a sexual nature.

The fact that the murders in the city are committed by a person who was created by a woman's union with the natural environment reveals the idea that nature and hence the life principle itself is evil.[350] But not only is evil seen as the more original condition; mankind's relation to the dark side of nature is depicted as extremely close, since Mary can be impregnated by the natural godhead and only "a slight lesion in the grey matter" (2) of the brain is sufficient to make human beings see Pan. The only way for the civilised world to keep this vicious side at bay is by its rigid repression; the notion of civilisation is hence regarded as an artificial category based on the renunciation of man's more savage condition.[351]

Finally, the tool to open the gateway to the horrors of nature is science, which must be seen particularly in the tradition of Wells's rural retreats. Similarly to *IM*, the novella undermines current beliefs in scientific progress and its beneficiary purposes for humanity by demonstrating the dangers of a science which is released from any ethical purpose and only used out of mere curiosity; this is epitomised by Dr Raymond's experiment on Mary and its horrific outcome.[352]

On the other hand, Machen's text also contains a notion which is yet only emerging at the *fin de siècle* and which will occupy a more dominant position in Blackwood's and Lovecraft's fiction: The Gothic-pastoral context is perceived as the gateway to an existence beyond the visible reality, where horrible, other-worldly beings lurk which resist any human attempt at categorisation. In fact, this is not a world remote in space or time anymore but rather an alternative reality, entirely removed from the measures and rules of the human sphere.

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350 Cf. S.T. Joshi, "Introduction", in *The Three Impostors and Other Stories: The Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen*, Vol. 1, ed. S.T. Joshi. Call of Cthulhu Fiction. Hayward: Chaosium, 2007, xii.

351 Cf. Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 146.

352 Cf. Christine Ferguson. "Decadence as Scientific Fulfillment". *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 117.3 (2002): 474-476.

This notion becomes particularly obvious in the portrayal of the monster. In the novella, this figure is the representative of an older, terrible world; the plot is hence referred to as "an old story, an old mystery played in our day, and in dim London streets instead of amidst the vineyards and olive gardens" (43). Machen takes up the ancient figure of Pan, the rural god of shepherds and flocks, to symbolise the evil powers of nature: "The ancients knew what lifting the veil means. They called it seeing the great god Pan" (2).[353] Despite the clear imagery invoked in the reader's mind by employing the traditional representation of an ancient deity (e.g. hindquarters, horns of a goat), the monster has lost a clear shape by which the human characters are able to describe it. While witnessing Dr Raymond's preparations for his experiment, Clark dozes off and dreams of an idyllic spot of nature which he used to visit as a child. Behind the façade of a pastoral *locus amoenus*, characterised by "beech trees", the "trickle of water dropping from a limestone rock" and the "dark shadows of the ilex", he suddenly sees the old godhead (6). He refers to it as "a presence, that was neither man nor beast, neither the living nor the dead, but all things mingled, the form of all things but devoid of any form" (6). The blurring of categories like 'human' and 'beast' or 'life' and 'death' has led Punter to the conclusion that Pan must, similarly to Dracula and Moreau, be regarded as symbolising the consequences of breaking existing taboos.[354] While this is undoubtedly true, Machen's god represents more than a figure linked to the transgression of the values and morals associated with late-Victorian society. In the aforementioned paradoxical description, he is neither of these categories but at the same time all of them and has the form of all things but is also referred to as formless. This contradictory portrayal is against the physical laws of the human sciences; it reveals that the monster now represents not only an other that is opposed to the notion of 'civilisation' but an extra-dimensional being which stands in contrast to humanity in general and the world as perceived by it. This widens the gap between the 'enlightened' city-dweller and the 'savage' countryman by rendering the latter the representative of a more powerful, alternative existence. Besides, instead of conveying an atmosphere of relief due to the expanding of this distance, the novel rather aggravates the fears connected to the threat posed by the evil figure: After all, it emphasises the inability of humanity and its tools, in particular science, to understand and thus combat the monster by which it is threatened.

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353 This awkward use of images relating to an Italian *locus amoenus* as typical of the ancient pastoral within the Welsh countryside can be found throughout the story; it shows that the author consciously places the portrayal of his rural retreat within the classic pastoral tradition.

354 Cf. Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 264.

Consequently, the retreat into the pastoral context leads to the insight that the universe is dark and chaotic, with forces that are indifferent and hostile towards humanity. Alpers's dictum that the pastoral explores the relation of humanity in relation to its environment is Gothicised in a cosmic perspective, since human concerns are revealed to be utterly insignificant in comparison to the omnipotence of these forces. Thus, Clarke remarks that "'if such a case were possible, our earth would be a nightmare'" (13).

However, the process of linking the monster figure to the unspeakable by revealing the failure of human language to assign clear categories to it is not completed yet. In fact, Machen still makes use of some of the traditional imagery associated with the ancient god: The little boy who sees Helen V. with Pan in the forest refers to him as a "'strange naked man'" (11) and panics after seeing the Roman statue of a faun or satyr (12). The story hence represents an initial stage of portraying the Gothic-pastoral retreat as the gateway to the 'real' world beyond; it depicts a monster figure which, in spite of exhibiting signs of extra-dimensionality, still has an 'earthly' degree of physicality.

Moreover, despite the greater distance between the monster and the human race, there is paradoxically also a certain closeness of both species. As has been mentioned before, only a slight surgical intervention is necessary to enable mankind to see the monstrosities within nature; besides, even miscegenation is possible. Indeed, as will be demonstrated in the following, notwithstanding all attempts at an extreme externalisation, the evil menace hidden within the façade of nature can never be fully separated from humanity.

5.2.3. Blackwood, "The Willows" (1907)

The concept of externality has further progressed in Algernon Blackwood's fiction. His texts are often based on the idea that there are secret spots in hitherto largely untouched places of nature where primeval beings have survived, which are extremely powerful and threaten the human intruder's life. In the rural retreat, the separation line between the earthly world and the alternative reality has become thin, which is why the urbanite runs the risk of getting lost in the other dimension. In contrast to Machen, however, Blackwood portrays the forces behind the façade of his green landscapes not as generally hostile but rather indifferent towards his human characters, who could be wiped out at any moment by them and whose unimportance is thus emphasised more strongly. Moreover, the beings threatening mankind have even more lost shape; unlike Machen's Pan, they cannot even be referred to

symbolically anymore and are characterised by a high degree of vagueness. These aspects become particularly obvious in Blackwood's most famous short story, "The Willows".

On their canoe trip on the Danube between Vienna and Budapest, the nameless protagonist and his fellow enter a "region of singular loneliness and devastation" (1).[355] Although its landscape exhibits a more 'original' nature with abundant vegetation, in particular a large number of willows, it has not the complete quality of a *locus amoenus*: The willows are of a "bewildering beauty" and never "attain the dignity of trees" but "remain humble bushes" instead (1). Coupled with the image of an imperfect idyll is an uncanny atmosphere, as the trees' continual shifting somehow suggests that they are alive (1).

The form of the river in this ominous area appears to be a continuation of the classic Gothic labyrinth. After Pressburg, the Danube branches out into three arms, which only reunite a hundred kilometres later; here, the intruder can get easily lost or even starve once the wrong side channel is taken (5). Structures like these, which pose - due to their unobservability - a serious risk to the explorer, must surely be seen within the general tendency of Blackwood's fiction to convey the dangers of being exposed to the vastness of open nature.[356] However, this does not mean, as Punter argues, that the author completely rejects traditional Gothic concepts like claustrophobia.[357] Instead, he combines both: In the midst of this gigantic maze, the protagonists decide to spend their night on an island, where they are soon trapped within a *locus conclusus*. After their first night, during which the narrator has the feeling of seeing horrible monster figures in the willow bushes, they find out that the steering paddle is missing and the bottom of their canoe has been torn (25). Together with the fact that the isle is getting constantly smaller because of erosion by the heavy current of the Danube, this creates a persistently increasing atmosphere of claustrophobia and terror.

The major threat on this island, however, arises less from its prison-like character and proceeding geological diminution than from a monstrous presence. Similarly to the previous text, the traits associated with the evil found in this *locus conclusus* reveals that the traditional city-country dichotomy has been tremendously widened. The pastoral context is not only conceived of as remote from the civilised, urban world; it is also defined by a large distance

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355 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Algernon Blackwood. "The Willows" [1907], in *Best Ghost Stories of Algernon Blackwood*. New York: Dover Publications, 1973, 1-52.

356 This idea is articulated in several other stories written by Blackwood. The most prominent examples are "A Haunted Island" (1899), "The Wendigo" (1910), "The Man whom the Trees loved" (1912) and "The Man who found out" (1921).

357 Cf. Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 330-331.

from the human sphere in general, since here, strange beings from another dimension can be found:

> We had 'strayed', as the Swede put it, into some region or some set of conditions where the risks were great, yet unintelligible to us; where the frontiers of some unknown world lay close about us. It was a spot held by the dwellers in some outer space, a sort of peep-hole whence they could spy upon the earth, themselves, unseen, a point where the veil had worn a little thin. (37)

In Blackwood's story, the attribution of an unearthly physicality to the monster is even more elaborated than in "The Great God Pan". Having no name or a clear shape anymore by which human beings can refer to it, the menace remains a vague presence. In fact, the only visible embodiment of this entity are the willow bushes, in which, however, only the effects of an extraterrestrial invasion can be observed. After waking up at night, the protagonist notes that "the tops of the bushes opposite, with their moving tracery of leaves, made shapes against the sky", which are of an indeterminate nature and form a "series of monstrous outlines" (17). In his final confrontation with this being, he perceives something that is neither human nor animal, but "as large as several animals grouped together, like horses, two or three, moving slowly" (45).

At first, it appears that Blackwood continues the tradition of Machen's Pan by ascribing the supernatural powers of this figure to its status as a rural deity. During his uncanny encounter, the narrator considers going down on his knees and worshipping this creature (19); besides, his companion mentions that they both might serve as a sacrifice to the local gods (35; 37-38). However, this notion is soon refuted when the Swede guesses the otherworldly nature of the menace:

> You think […] it is the spirit of the elements, and I thought perhaps it was the old gods. But I tell you now it is – *neither*. These would be comprehensible entities, for they have relations with men, depending upon them for worship or sacrifice, whereas these beings who are now about us have absolutely nothing to do with mankind, and it is mere chance that their space happens just at this spot to touch our own. (41)

The almost complete lack of an earthly corporeality and the inability of man to provide a rational explanation for this sinister threat give the motif of the *locus conclusus* a new quality of fearful uncertainty. Previously, the evil nature of the place was 'unveiled' to the intruder once he discovered the monster's real character and the sinister intentions it pursued. In this case, however, the protagonist is, apart from some slight indications of his fellow, left in the dark concerning the precise constitution of the evil they are confronted with, which even enhances the atmosphere of anxious apprehension. In fact, this anticipates an important

aspect of the works written by H.P. Lovecraft, who claimed that the horror story's most effective device is to create fear of the unknown.[358]

The insecurity concerning the monster's exact characteristics is even enhanced by being placed within a psychological framework. For a long time, the narrator doubts if the supernatural events really happen or whether they are just the result of his imagination; this becomes obvious, for example, when he is unsure if the willow bushes are really closing in on him and his fellow (15). After his attempts at finding rational explanations have become increasingly absurd, it more and more turns out that the menace is real.

The psychological aspects of this monstrous threat are also important for another reason. In accordance with its largely metaphysical nature, the danger it poses is less a material than a mental one: "As the final result of our long sojourn here, we should be carried over the border and deprived of what we called 'our lives', yet by mental, not physical, processes" (37). This idea corresponds to Blackwood's general philosophy underlying his horror fiction. According to him, when the cosmic forces lurking within nature and the human individual encounter each other, a link between both is established by certain "faculties" every man possesses; these "register beyond the normal gamut of seeing, hearing, feeling" and create an "expansion of consciousness".[359] In a correspondence with Peter Penzoldt, he wrote:

> My fundamental interest, I suppose, is signs and proofs of other powers that lie hidden in us all; the extension, in other words, of human faculty. So many of my stories, therefore, deal with extension of consciousness; speculative and imaginative treatment of possibilities outside our normal range of consciousness. […] Also, all that happens in our universe is *natural*; under Law; but an extension of our so limited normal consciousness can reveal new, extra-ordinary powers etc., and the word "supernatural" seems the best word for treating these in fiction. I believe it possible for our consciousness to change and grow, and that with this change we may become aware of a new universe.[360]

Although he does not describe the resulting state of heightened awareness or its origins in greater detail, it is obvious that it has an extremely dangerous side: Not only does it enable man to see the horrific monsters hidden behind the green landscapes but it simultaneously allows these beings to assault his mind. Thus, it strongly emphasises the vulnerability of the human species, which can be even threatened from within. This notion finds particular expression in "The Willows". Being confronted with a mental invasion, the human

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358 Cf. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror*, 12.

359 Algernon Blackwood. "Introduction" [1938], in *Best Ghost Stories of Algernon Blackwood*. New York: Dover Publications, 1973, xiv.

360 Quoted in Peter Penzoldt. *The Supernatural in Fiction*. New York: Humanities Press, 1965, 229.

protagonists appear to be tremendously powerlessness and passive, as they can do nothing apart from trying to shut their minds against it: "It's not a physical condition we can escape from by running away […] we must sit tight and wait" (39). At the same time, the intrinsic connection between man and the forces of the universe reveals that the separation between both by means of an excessive externalisation is incomplete; instead, like Machen, the author continues the tradition of the Gothic-pastoral romance by depicting a monstrous other which nevertheless seems to be linked to the human race.

Confronted with the overwhelming strength of this entity and unable to describe it in words, the narrator is touched with a sense of awe (7). From this reaction, it could be concluded that he has a sublime encounter. However, this incident goes far beyond a traditional sublime experience. The protagonist comments on this by comparing his own situation to a subliminal one:

> Mountains overawe and oceans terrify, while the mystery of great forests exercises a spell peculiarly its own. But all these, at one point or another, somewhere *link on intimately with human life and human experience*. They stir *comprehensible*, even if alarming, emotions. They tend on the whole to exalt.
> With this multitude of willows, however, it was something far different, I felt. […] A sense of awe awakened, true, but of awe touched somewhere by a vague terror. Their serried ranks, growing everywhere darker about me as the shadows deepened, moving furiously yet softly in the wind, woke in me the curious and unwelcome suggestion that we had trespassed here upon the borders of an *alien world*; a world where we were intruders, a world where we were not wanted or invited to remain – where we *ran grave risk* perhaps! (8; my emphasis)

This passage shows why the conventional categories ascribed to the (Burkean) sublime do not hold anymore: Although the situation triggers feelings of awe in the narrator, whose language fails to describe them properly, this does not stem from the insight that the world is ordered by a divine being, which has a benevolent plan for humanity. Instead, it is caused by the emerging understanding that a confrontation with a creature takes place which has nothing to do with human conceptions of the universe. Even worse, the encounter emphasises man's insignificance and deprives him of his formerly assumed privileged position in the cosmos. In a traditional subliminal experience, there is the essential step of the sublime turn. During this process, the subject, after perceiving the overpowering forces of nature, returns with a reformulated sense of integrity and sees its humanity as well as its culture reaffirmed.[361] This was the case, for instance, in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, where Emily could often gain new strength after watching the Alpine or Apennine mountains.

[361] Cf. Vivian Ralickas. "'Cosmic Horror' and the Question of the Sublime in Lovecraft". *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 18.3 (2007): 365.

Blackwood's story, however, lacks such a salutary feature. Here, the human self, after facing a more potent natural force, stays fragmented, and its belief systems are irreversibly shattered. Ralickas therefore argues that situations like these must be rather assigned to Kristeva's notion of the abject; according to her, the defiling of the subject's "clean and proper body"[362] resulting from the process of abjection forms the basis for the destruction of subjective integrity which takes place during the confrontation with the horrors of the cosmos.[363] Whereas both the sublime and the abject encounter overwhelm the experiencing subject and give rise to feelings of terror, the former reasserts its culture and humanity while the latter

> subverts it by reminding us not only that we are inseparable from that nature we seek to dominate, but that our culture, from which our idea of mastery originates, is simply a fiction, a story we tell ourselves to anchor our identities.[364]

Accordingly, Blackwood's rural retreat offers the insight into a 'truth' which not only devastates the intruder's conceptions of his civilised world but even of ordinary reality as well as the position of his own race within it. Knowledge of this truth, even if it just consists of a short glimpse, can already prove fatal, which is why the narrator tries to stick to his rational account of the strange events:

> An explanation of some kind was an absolute necessity, just as some working explanation of the universe is necessary – however absurd – to the happiness of every individual, who seeks to do his duty in the world and face the problems of life. (28)

As a consequence of this emerging insight, the sojourn in the pastoral enclave results in a yearning for an urban context which is still in accordance with human concepts and explanations. The narrator's evocation of the streets of London does not serve anymore to call to his mind the rules and restrictions valid in the civilised world as was the case at the *fin de siècle*; instead, the city now embodies the ordinariness and laws valid in the human world as such:

> I chanced to look down at my sand-shoe – the sort we used for the canoe – and something to do with the hole at the toe suddenly recalled to me the London shop where I had bought them, the difficulty the man had in fitting me, and other details of the uninteresting but practical operation.

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362 Julia Kristeva. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, 72.

363 Cf. Ralickas, "Sublime", 388.

364 Ibid., 389.

> At once, in its train, followed a wholesome view of the modern sceptical world I was accustomed to move in at home. (43-44)

The lesson the intruder finally learns concerns his own insignificance, which is conceived of as being representative of humanity in general. Moreover, his inability to provide a valid explanation for the supernatural events highlights the meaninglessness of all developments resulting from the progress of the human race since Enlightenment times; most of all, this applies to anything connected to the investigation of the world by means of rationality (e.g. science).

In contrast to Machen, however, not a scientist and his active research are necessary anymore to discover the hidden secrets of nature; instead, these are disclosed rather by chance to a couple of harmless tourists, whose only mistake is their camping on the dangerous island. In addition, the horrible entities behind the veil of the natural landscapes are not understood as inherently hostile but just indifferent towards mankind, which appears completely irrelevant; once disturbed, however, they can easily release their tremendous powers and destroy the human explorer:

> There are forces close here that could kill a herd of elephants in a second as easily as you or I could squash a fly. Our only chance is to keep perfectly still. Our insignificance perhaps may save us. (39-40).[365]

The fact that every ordinary person like the protagonist and his fellow could accidentally become the prey of forces much larger and more potent reveals a deeply pessimistic attitude underlying Blackwood's story. It conveys the image of a human race which could - due its great vulnerability - at any moment become the puppet of beings able to interfere at will with its concerns. Alpers's definition of the pastoral mode in terms of its exploration of man's weakness in relation to his environment is even more than in Machen Gothicised here; since the notion of 'environment' is extended to the whole universe, all "earthly affairs, the rise and fall of nations, the destinies of empires, the fate of armies and continents, are [...] as dust in the balance" (40-41).

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[365] This idea of powerful forces which are hidden within the depths of an untouched nature and are indifferent towards humanity but will wreak havoc once disturbed underlies several of Blackwood's stories. In "The Wendigo" (1910), for instance, a group of adventurers penetrates the Canadian wilderness; in the course of this expedition, the French Canadian Défago is captured by the Wendigo, a primeval beast "that had survived somehow the advance of humanity [..] and had emerged terrifically, betraying a scale of life monstrous and immature". Algernon Blackwood. "The Wendigo" [1910], in *Best Ghost Stories of Algernon Blackwood*. New York: Dover Publications, 1973, 205.

5.2.4. Lovecraft, "The Colour out of Space" (1927) and "The Dunwich Horror" (1929)

Whereas the preceding two subchapters dealt with writers of a British background, in the following, emphasis will be placed on an American author. Despite this shift of the socio-cultural context, it still makes sense to treat Howard Philips Lovecraft's fiction within the previous tradition. After all, he was in general a great admirer of Anglo-Saxon language and culture; particularly the English eighteenth century was an epoch he nostalgically regarded as a kind of Golden Age.[366] Besides, he was heavily influenced by Gothic authors like Machen and Blackwood, from whom he took up many features and transposed them into an American setting.

For this reason, the texts belonging to Lovecraft's "Mythos" group,[367] which will constitute the focus of this chapter, exhibit a merger of two different backgrounds: On the one hand, they use the rural landscapes of New England and their fictional communities (Arkham, Innsmouth, Dunwich, etc.) in order to reflect typically American fears.[368] On the other hand, like their British predecessors, they portray the Gothic-pastoral context as the gateway to an alternative reality in order to mirror more general anxieties regarding man's position within the universe.[369] In fact, Lovecraft took over the idea that the cosmos was once inhabited by beings much greater and more powerful than humanity. Whereas he continued the tradition of assigning extra-dimensional traits to these entities, he was also influenced by Lord Dunsany, whose gods of Pegana constituted the background for the creation of an artificial pantheon of otherworldly 'gods' (e.g. Yog-Sothoth, Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep).[370]

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366 Cf. Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 283-284.

367 The term was coined independently by S.T. Joshi and Donald R. Burleson; it refers to the stories exhibiting the features as described in the following, e.g. the use of a fictional New England setting or the insistence on the principle of *cosmicism*. In particular with regard to their location, these narrations differ from the "Dreamcycle" stories, which are placed in the so-called "Dreamland". Cf. S.T. Joshi. *H.P. Lovecraft*. Mercer Island, WA: Starmont House, 1982; Donald R. Burleson. "The Lovecraft Mythos", in *Survey of Science Fiction Literature*, Vol. 3, ed. Frank N. Magill. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1284–8. For an analysis of pastoral elements within the "Dreamcycle" stories, see Oliver Plaschka. *Verlorene Arkadien: Das pastorale Motiv in der englischen und amerikanischen fantastischen Literatur - H.P. Lovecraft, James Branch Cabell, Mervyn Peake, William Gibson*. Diss. Heidelberg: 2009. <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/10106>.

368 Cf. Alan Lloyd-Smith. "Nineteenth-Century American Gothic", in *A Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001, 109.

369 Cf. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror*, 89-97; S.T. Joshi and David E. Schultz. *An H.P. Lovecraft Encyclopedia*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001, 20.

370 Cf. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror*, 98-100; —-. "Some Notes on a Nonentity", in H.P. Lovecraft. *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. S.T. Joshi. Sauk City: Arkham House, 1995, 561.

The resulting "Cthulhu Mythos"[371] is based on the assumption that these beings had arrived at and ruled over the earth in prehistoric times; at some point, however, they had been forced to give up their reign, which they would someday reclaim:

> All my stories, unconnected as they may be, are based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practising black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside, ever ready to take possession of this earth again.[372]

With regard to man's insignificant position within the larger scheme of the universe and the futility of all human achievements, Lovecraft's fiction can be perceived as the climax of the early twentieth-century development as outlined so far. After all, he even developed a distinctive principle in this respect, which he subsumed under the term *cosmicism*. He defined it as follows:

> Now all my tales are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and interests and emotions have no validity or significance in the cosmos-at-large. […] To achieve the essence of real *externality*, whether of time or space or dimension, one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of *a negligible and temporary race called mankind*, have any essence at all.[373] (my emphasis)

The writer from Providence hence carries on the tradition of highlighting the meaninglessness of the human existence and the progress of the sciences by distilling those ideas into his intended effect of "externality"; similarly to the previous texts, the term emphasises the omnipotence of cosmic monster figures in comparison to a "negligible" humanity, whose existence is only "temporary". In "At the Mountains of Madness" (1936), one of his most famous stories, it even turns out that life on earth has been created accidentally by the Old Ones as "jest or mistake".[374] As in Blackwood's fiction, the meaninglessness of the human existence as revealed during the confrontation with the vastness of these otherworldly powers does not allow for a sublime experience anymore; making the cultural affirmation and

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371 The term was first recognised and elaborated by August Derleth in 1937. Cf. August Derleth. "Lovecraft, Outsider" [1937], in *Lovecraft Remembered*, ed. Peter Cannon. Sauk City, Wis.: Arkham House Publishers, 1998, 410-414.

372 Quoted from Colin Wilson. *The Strength to Dream: Literature and the Imagination*. London: V. Gollancz, 1962, 26.

373 H.P. Lovecraft. *Selected Letters*, Vol. 2, eds. August Derleth and Donald Wandrei. Sauk City: Arkham House, 1965, 150.

374 H.P. Lovecraft. "At the Mountains of Madness" [1936], in *The Whisperer in Darkness: Collected Stories*, Vol. 1. Tales of Mystery & the Supernatural. Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 2007, 295.

reassurance concomitant to a sublime turn impossible, such an experience must again be rather attributed to the notion of the abject.[375]

The literary technique the author makes use of to achieve the effect of "externality" is referred to by Berruti as the "vagueness of the Cosmic-Terror hint".[376] The term designates Lovecraft's constant allusions to an ulterior reality different from the phenomena of the visible world, the knowledge of which shatters man's conception of his own existence without ever clearly confirming this 'truth'. This principle is in accordance with his philosophy of horror fiction, which is based on the notion that "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown".[377]

In the face of a such a pessimistic worldview as exposed in Lovecraft's *oeuvre*, it is not surprising that as far as its pastoralism concerned, the use of positive elements has been given up to a large extent. This particularly refers to the question whether a return to an idealised existence within a Golden Age is possible. The beginning of "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928), which reveals one of the basic ideas underlying his fiction, is programmatic in this regard. It represents the dark mirror of the pastoral ideal by subverting the prophesy of man's salvation as described in Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*:

> The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences […] have hitherto harmed us little, but someday the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.[378]

As is typical of the pastoral tradition, the tools connected to the city and civilisation are seen as intrinsically bad, since they have alienated man from a supposedly wholesome state of being in accordance with nature. However, the time stage which preceded this existence is not a Golden Age of bliss but a Dark Age. The only safety it harbours is the fact that

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375 Cf. Vivian Ralickas, who convincingly refutes Dale J. Nelson's and Bradley A. Will's arguments for the existence of the Burkean or Kantian sublime in Lovecraft's fiction. Cf. Ralickas, "Sublime"; Dale J. Nelson. "Lovecraft and the Burkean Sublime". *Lovecraft Studies* 24 (1991): 2-5; Bradley A. Will. "H.P. Lovecraft and the Semiotic Kantian Sublime". *Extrapolation* 43.1 (2002): 7-21.

376 Cf. Massimo Berruti. "H.P. Lovecraft and the Anatomy of the Nothingness: The Cthulhu Mythos". *Semiotica* 150.1-4 (2004): 364.

377 Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror*, 12.

378 H.P. Lovecraft. "The Call of Cthulhu" [1928], in *The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982, 72.

humanity lives in a condition of ignorance, from which it increasingly turns away with the progress of the sciences until either a new Dark Age or the devastation of the whole race follows. Thus, whereas the ancient poem heralded the coming of a new Golden Age, characterised by man's reunion with nature, Lovecraft's prediction does not even contain the slightest hope of salvation. Even worse, it suggests that humanity will either turn to madness due to the insight into its cosmic irrelevance and/or return to a new state of darkness. This mood of hopelessness must be seen in the context of Lovecraft's negative attitude towards the sciences; in his view, they had deprived man of his self-confidence and belief in his central position in the universe but nevertheless remained incomprehensible to ordinary people.[379]

The author's scepticism towards the trust in the constant progress of the sciences and civilisation in general can be particularly observed in his conception of the country, which is a pastoral counter-world depicting an earlier, pre-industrial time stage.[380] Moreover, its opposition to the notion of the city reflects Lovecraft's general aversion to urban life, in particular New York City, where he lived from 1924-1926.[381] Since the rural environment turns out to be rather sinister at its core with insights that prove harmful to the intruder, a pessimism concerning the escapist longing for the flight into nature is revealed. After all, it is – due to its distance from the modern world – often also conceived of as the place which is closer to the savagery and darkness associated with the cosmic forces threatening humanity.

In the following, the analysis will centre on Lovecraft's portrayal of the Gothic-pastoral retreat in two of the best-known short stories from the 'Cthulhu Mythos'. While "The Colour out of Space" (1927) deals with the devastation of the countryside by a meteorite carrying a strange extraterrestrial being along, "The Dunwich Horror" (1929) focuses on a family's conjuration of Yog-Sothoth, a primeval being that haunts the rural community of Dunwich.

In "The Colour out of Space", a surveyor is sent into the rural area of Massachusetts, which is supposed to serve as a new water reservoir for the fictional town of Arkham. As Joshi states, the real Quabbin reservoir is the setting for the story, which places this community within an

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379 Cf. Plaschka, *Arkadien*, 71; Roger Caillois. "Das Bild des Phantastischen: Vom Märchen bis zur Science Fiction", in *Phaïcon 1*, ed. Rein A. Zondergeld. Frankfurt a.M.: Insel Verlag, 1974, 80.

380 Wilson states that "he hated modern civilization, particularly its confident belief in progress and science". Wilson, *Dream*, 8. Houellebecq formulates this a bit more drastically: "Absolute hatred of the world in general, aggravated by an aversion to the modern world in particular. This summarizes Lovecraft's attitude fairly accurately". Michel Houellebecq. *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life* [1991], trans. Dorna Khazeni. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006, 57.

381 Cf. Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 283.

authentic New England context.[382] This tension between real and imaginary elements in the portrayal of the rural retreat is a typical feature of both the Gothic and the pastoral tradition. As has been pointed out in the introductory chapter, both employ artificial traits which are nevertheless in some way always linked to the reader's own world. In the course of the story, the unrealistic traits increase subsequent to the impact of the meteorite and its dreadful consequences.

Against the background of the tradition investigated so far, it can be argued that the story establishes a tension not only between categories like real and unreal but also between pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic. Initially, the text portrays the countryside west of Arkham as a spot of untouched nature with "valleys with deep woods that no axe has ever cut" and "dark narrow glens where the trees slope fantastically, and where thin brooklets trickle without ever having caught the glint of sunlight" (193).[383] However, instead of conveying an atmosphere of bucolic peacefulness and tranquillity, there is something wrong with this place, which "is not good for imagination, and does not bring restful dreams at night" (193). The landscape is also characterised by oddness, since "the trees grew too thickly, and their trunks were too big for any New England wood" (194). The "blasted heath" is the climactic centre of this anti-pastoral setting, since there is no vegetation at all and only a "fine grey dust or ash" between sickly trees and dead trunks (194).

Similarly to Virgil's first *Eclogue*, the text describes a landscape that has been devastated by the intrusion of more powerful forces from a larger world against which the inhabitants of the country are completely helpless. In Lovecraft's story, these forces are not more potent men from the city anymore but extraterrestrial beings; this results in an unearthly and surrealistic quality of the anti-pastoral elements: "Upon everything was a haze of restlessness and oppression; a touch of the unreal and the grotesque, as if some vital element of perspective or chiaroscuro were awry" (194). Indeed, as the narrator learns from Amni Pierce, the impact of a meteorite is responsible for the atrocious state of the natural environment, which gradually deteriorated in the aftermath until everything was dead.

At the beginning of Amni's story, the surrounding area of the Gardner farm, which will turn into the blasted heath, is described as a kind of *locus amoenus*: "That was the house which

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382 Cf. S.T. Joshi. "Explanatory Notes", in *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, ed. S.T. Joshi. London: Penguin, 2002, 399; Rebecca Janicker. "New England Narratives: Space and Place in the Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft". *Extrapolation* 48 (2006): 57-58.

383 Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: H.P. Lovecraft. "The Colour out of Space" [1927], in *The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982, 193-217.

stood where the blasted heath was to come – the trim white Gardner house amidst its fertile gardens and orchards" (196). This portrayal of an idealised setting conveys an image of a simple, pastoral life in close proximity to an original nature. After the meteorite's impact, however, the idyllicism and harmony associated with this spot is quickly subverted. The anti-pastoral component within the region by and large increases, eventually replacing all elements representing this ideal lifestyle. Not only is the harvest poisoned but the condition of all animals and plants worsens. For the Gardner family, their life in close proximity to nature leads to a deterioration in terms of their physical and mental health. The hostile being which arrives with this rock quickly turns their farm into a *locus conclusus*, at whose centre, the well, it hides.

As is typical of the monster figure, it has an alluring quality for the human characters and more and more gains influence over them. Despite the obvious bad effects the Gothicised surroundings have on the family, its members nevertheless exhibit a "stolid resignation" and cannot leave the place anymore (204); even worse, they keep drinking water from the poisoned well and eat the sickly food from the harvests. The monstrous being even makes Nahum's sons jump into the well in order to suck their lives out. As their father remarks shortly before his death: "It beats down your mind an' then gets ye…[…] draws ye…ye know summ'at's comin' but tain't no use…" (208). In the further progress of the story, everything organic – be it the plants, animals, or even humans – finally dies.

In accordance with the previous Gothic-pastoral tradition, the portrayal of a rural context and its disturbance by a force from without is representative of specific anxieties. In this case, it can be linked to fears associated particularly with the history of early American settlement. Leo Marx states that the natural environment of the New World provoked ambivalent feelings: On the one hand, it was associated with the freedom of being able to live a harmonious existence in unison with the fertility and seemingly infinite resources of an untouched nature; on the other hand, life on the frontier was also dangerous, as it was connected with an untamed wilderness, extreme temperatures and the encounter with the indigenous people, who were often perceived as a 'savage' threat:

> In a sense, America was *both* Eden and a howling desert […]. The infinite resources of the virgin land really did make credible […] the ancient dream of an abundant and harmonious life for all. Yet, at the same time, the savages, the limitless space, and the violent climate of the country did threaten to engulf the new civilisation.[384]

[384] Marx, *Machine in the Garden*, 43-44.

Thus, in Marx's view, the dichotomy between idyllic elements and their opposite was often employed to express the discrepancies between the image of America as a pastoral idyll and the anti-pastoral reality of the frontier experience.[385] In Lovecraft's text, these images associated with the dangers and harshness of the American wilderness are Gothicised in order to give shape to the fears regarding man's inability to cope with it. As Oakes states, the deterioration of the natural environment as exposed in "The Colour out of Space" not only reflects contrary feelings towards life in the supposedly idyllic New World but eventually even subverts the pastoral ideal completely; in the end, the Gardner family's dream to lead a simple existence away from the life in the city is revealed to be impossible in the face of their extremely malevolent and hostile surroundings.[386]

However, the author severely aggravates this long-established contrast between idyll and disturbance. After all, he adds features to his portrayal of the anti-pastoral/Gothic counterforce which stand within the tradition of authors like Machen and Blackwood and must be seen in the context of his *cosmicism*. As mentioned before, the increasing deterioration of the land, which will eventually result in the "blasted heath", is not attributed to the forces lurking within the wilderness but to an invasion from outer space. Therefore, in the description of the meteorite and the consequences of its impact for the environment, specific emphasis is placed on the unearthliness or, in Lovecraft's terms, the "externality" of the threat. The rock, whose material cannot be found on earth (198), quickly turns the rural context into an unearthly setting: Besides the local animals' outer appearance, which has a bizarre quality, something seems to be wrong with the plants, who by and large attain the same strange colour as the meteorite (199-201). The oddness of the vegetation gains a particularly uncanny quality in the depiction of the trees around the Gardner farm, which, like Blackwood's willows, sway even if there is no wind (201).[387]

In accordance with Lovecraft's "vagueness of the Cosmic-terror hint" technique outlined previously, the monster figure is an extraterrestrial being whose precise nature cannot be understood by the human characters (and by implication the reader). Similarly to "The Great God Pan" and "The Willows", it is also defined by a high degree of indistinctness. As Nahum says, "the way it's made an' the way it works ain't like no way o' God's world. It's some'at from beyond" (211). Therefore, even when the family notices the apparent menace lurking

385 Cf. Ibid.; Janicker, "Space and Place", 60.

386 Cf. David A. Oakes. *Science and Destabilization in the Modern American Gothic: Lovecraft, Matheson and King*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000, 40; Janicker, "Space and Place", 60-61.

387 Cf. Blackwood, "The Willows", 1.

underneath their soil, they are unable to describe its exact constitution. Mrs Gardner, for instance, has the feeling that "something was taken away – she was being drained of something – something was fastening itself on her that ought not be" (202-203), but cannot account for its origins. In fact, one of the few traits that still link it to earlier monster figures like Dracula is its vampiric quality, as it sucks the life out of the vegetation and the humans (208-209). The only aspect by which it is actually visible is its colour, which comes out of the well and spreads throughout the farm during the night (208). Still, even this quality is linked to the unspeakable, since it is not of the chromatic spectrum known to man.

In the face of such powerful forces, the simple countryman, like Virgil's Tityrus and Meliboeus, is presented as absolutely powerless. Accordingly, the Gardner farm, together with its surroundings, eventually perishes until nothing is left but the "blasted heath". However, it is not only the country-dweller who is conceived of as helpless and unable to change his dreadful destiny; it is also the man from the city and by implication the civilised world of scientific progress which is unable to confront this monstrous invasion. During the first signs of damage after the meteorite impact, the city-dwellers are still represented within a traditional city-country opposition as more 'sophisticated' urbanites, who look down on the 'superstitious' peasants. When Nahum Gardner presents the unearthly blossoms of saxifrage grown at his farm to the editor of the *Gazette*, he writes a "humorous article about […] the dark fears of rustics" (201). Immediately afterwards, however, the narrator concludes that "it was a mistake of Nahum's to tell a stolid city man about the way the great, overgrown mourning-cloak butterflies behaved in connection with the saxifrages", which hints at the real nature of this cosmic terror (201). Moreover, when the situation at the farm finally escalates and the signs of extraterrestrial threat cannot be negated anymore, Nahum sadly realises that it is no use "telling the city people in Arkham who laughed at everything" (206). Similarly to the late nineteenth century, the city-country opposition is hence established but at the same time blurred: The self-perception of the city-dweller as more superior and refined turns out to be a state of mere ignorance after the 'truth' which can be found in the rural context has been disclosed.

Lovecraft's text predominantly highlights the ineffectiveness of the urbanite's tools, in particular such as relate to the field of science, as revealed during his encounter with the malignant being. Indeed, specific emphasis is placed on the association of the city-dweller with the academic world of scientific progress: After all, the only people from the city who take an interest in the strange occurrences at the Gardner farm are the professors from Miskatonic University. Their inability to provide a rational explanation for the consistency of

the meteorite's material or its devastating effects for the environment (196-198) and the fact that they eventually flee from the life-sucking colour themselves (210-215) must be seen against the background of Lovecraft's sceptical view of the sciences; according to him, these would be totally useless when confronted with the forces of cosmic terror. This pessimism is also underlined by the story's ending: Although the extraterrestrial threat is gone, it nevertheless seems to have left some of its essence behind, which is why the land has never recovered properly. Even worse, at the time the narrator hears the story, the local inhabitants keep telling the story that the blasted heath still grows each year. The people in the city, on the other hand, have returned to their former state of ignorance, discarding the strange events told by the country people as "queer" tales (216).

In "The Colour out of Space", all human beings – whether from the city or the country – are hence revealed to be totally weak in comparison to the monsters of the cosmos. One could even argue that humanity as a whole is put into the traditional position of the feeble country-dweller, who, being not confronted with a human but an omnipotent extraterrestrial threat, appears to be absolutely unimportant. Whereas the city-dweller is presented as being in a blissful condition of unawareness and the peasant is perceived of as the one who at times comes closer to the 'truth', the menace posed by the cosmic terror is seen as constantly present for both.

While this thoroughly negative mood associated with the insight in the country stands in the tradition of Machen's and Blackwood's Gothic-pastoral retreats, Lovecraft's version of the sinister country exhibits a significant difference. In the previous texts, either the active pursuit of the scientist or the journey into the depths of untouched nature far away from the civilised world was necessary for the discovery of the horrible 'truth'. In other words, despite underlining man's weakness, these stories nevertheless conveyed the image of an urban world that would remain safe as long as its representatives would not penetrate too far into the secrets of nature. In this case, the entry of the horrible being into the human world still occurs in the countryside. The people who first encounter the monster figures, however, are no scientists or daring adventurers anymore, who conjure up their doom by transgressing the borders of the enlightened world; instead, they are harmless farmers, whose confrontation with the cosmic terror is just accidental. This conveys the image of a human race that, even if it does not actively seek to transgress its limitations, can still fall victim to these monstrosities at any time. The fact that they come from the sky even underlines the notion of a world where anyone can always be the prey of extraterrestrial invasion. Accordingly, the withdrawal into the Gothic-pastoral context not only disturbs the narrator's rational understanding of the

world but he is henceforth also scared of anything related to the firmament, e.g. the stars at night (196).

As far as the retreat-return movement is concerned, another deeply pessimistic feature characteristic of Lovecraft's version of Gothic pastoral becomes obvious. The monstrous secrets hidden within the countryside are so horrible that not even a direct encounter with them is necessary anymore to return to the urban world in a state of devastation. Instead, the mere hint at them already proves damaging: After all, the narrator only gains his insight concerning the 'truth' lurking in the country, i.e. mankind's marginal role within a cosmic scheme, merely in a mediated way, as he only listens to Amni Pierce's recount of the events. This horror of gaining knowledge in a second-hand fashion is even more emphasised in "The Call of Cthulhu". Here, no 'physical' retreat-return movement is made by the protagonist; instead, he remains in his supposedly safe academic world of research and pieces together certain accounts of people who went to the Gothic country (i.e. inspector Legrasse; captain Johanson). The results, however, are still the same as in the previous Gothic-pastoral tradition: After reading about the insights gained by these people, the narrator's worldview is irreversibly destroyed.[388]

So far, the analysis of the Lovecraftian Gothic-pastoral mode has given rise to a pessimistic image not only of the people who encounter the cosmic monstrosities but also of humanity in general; after all, it can at any time fall prey to extraterrestrial forces or gain the devastating knowledge of the threat posed by these entities. Moreover, mere allusions to the real nature of these monsters suffice to shatter man's conceptions of his own world as well as his position therein. Hence, it seems that the process of externalising the monster figure and describing mankind's insignificance has reached its climax. However, the human race in Lovecraft's fictional universe, in particular his countrymen, are not just passive and innocent farmers who are accidentally confronted with the horrors from beyond. Even in this story, which deals with the terrible fate of a rustic family, this is slightly indicated. In fact, the surrounding countryside of the Gardner farm exhibits already before the arrival of the meteorite a few evil traits: Not only had it been the scene of witch trials, but the devil is supposed to appear at times on a small island in the Miskatonic, where a strange stone altar can be found (196). These factors suggest that while on the one hand the place is inviting because of its idyllic quality, it is nevertheless also dangerous as it appears to be particularly susceptible to the invasion by evil powers. After all, some of the peasants seem to have been involved in

[388] Cf. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu", 72-73.

sinister acts and cooperated with these monsters. Whereas this idea is very silently conveyed in this text, in others, it is explicitly expressed. Here, the country people actually are not only openly characterised as close to evil but even attempt to help it gain entry into the human world. The concept of the monster in Lovecraft's texts is hence not only something external but also, similar to the *fin de siècle*, a threat from within; a prominent example of this phenomenon is the second story to be discussed within this subchapter.

Like "The Colour out of Space", "The Dunwich Horror" opens with the description of an environment which is defined by its richness of vegetation and untouched nature but at the same time appears odd and therefore anti-pastoral/Gothic. In this "lonely and curious country", the trees have an unnatural size and the "wild weeds, brambles, and grasses attain a luxuriance not often found in settled regions" while the "planted fields appear singularly few and barren" (98).[389] The climax of this uncanny atmosphere are the hills and mountains, whose unnaturalness is connected to traditional evil and devilish imagery: Not only are they "too rounded and symmetrical to give a sense of comfort and naturalness" but most of them are even crowned with "queer circles of stone pillars" (99). At the centre of this location is Dunwich, a typically Gothic village with deserted houses, an atmosphere of decay and a hostile odour in its village street (99).

Similarly to the previous story, the sinister quality of this setting is attributed to the invasion of external entities, which are of an indistinct quality and cannot be measured by means of scientific rationality: "Noises from the hills continued to be reported from year to year, and still form a puzzle to geologists and physiographers" (100). However, there is a significant difference regarding the means by which evil gains entry into the human world. Whereas beforehand, innocent farmers became the random victims of a cosmic presence, in this case, it has been conjured up by the local inhabitants. The story centres on the Whateley family, who successfully attempts to help one of these monstrous beings to invade the earth and wreak havoc in the region. This act of seeking of a union with otherworldly powers has a long history in Dunwich, since it is stated that already the Indians performed unholy rites to call the shadows from the hills (100).

Lovecraft's fiction therefore not only portrays helpless farmers whose life in union with an unspoiled nature is disturbed by the unwanted intrusion of powerful beings; instead, it also

[389] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: H.P. Lovecraft. "The Dunwich Horror" [1928], in *The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982, 98-135.

conveys the notion that the people in the country are at times more primitive and savage than those in the city and hence closer to the evil powers lurking within the wilderness. This idea is already expressed by the general characterisation of the local inhabitants. After a long period of isolation, they "have come to form a race themselves, with the well-defined mental and physical stigmata of degeneration and imbreeding" (100). Moreover, because of their absence from the norms and values of the civilised world, they are associated with "half-hidden murders, incests, and deeds of almost unnameable violence and perversity" (100). The conception of the ruralist as a degenerate figure which is further down on the evolutionary scale continues, in particular with regard to its Darwinist undertones, the predominantly negative image of the country as typical *fin de siècle*. It stands in stark contrast to the "The Colour out of Space", where, apart from some allusions to an involvement in evil matters, the country-dweller was on the whole conceived of as a harmless figure. The contrary image of the peasant in both stories probably reflects Lovecraft's ambivalent attitude towards the countryside, which he preferred to the city but whose inhabitants often did not conform to his ideal of man as educated and upper-class.[390] Besides, it must be seen in the context of his general association of moral superiority and intellect with more 'cultivated' and 'rational' white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, from whose state every deviation he perceived as inferior.[391]

The history of this place and the degeneration of its residents paves the way for the story that follows. By showing one of the worst acts humanity can commit in the Lovecraftian universe, it reveals the author's anxieties of the racial other: The reader learns about an instance of interbreeding between the human and the extraterrestrial race in the story of Wilbur Whateley. He is the more human of the twins born subsequent to the union of Lavinia Whateley and Yog-Sothoth, a powerful being trying to enter the human world in order to destroy mankind and reclaim its former reign.

In the case of the Whateleys, the Gothic-pastoral notion that the closer to nature - and thus the more distant from the cultured context of the city - people are the more abnormal and depraved they can become has reached a new extreme. Not only is the strong connection between the natural environment and the family symbolised by the structure of their house, whose rear end leads into the hills in which the monstrous powers hide (104); it is even implied that Lavinia was impregnated by Yog-Sothoth during one of her lonely walks in

390 Cf. S.T. Joshi. *The Weird Tale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990, 223.

391 Cf. Ibid.

these hills, which is an idea Lovecraft took over from "The Great God Pan".[392] In contrast to Machen's Helen Vaughan, however, Wilbur has no beautiful traits but is referred to as a severe case of degeneration, which is linked to an anomalous physical development: Besides his unnatural speed of growing up, his speech faculties develop rapidly and at an early life stage. His half-unearthly origin is particularly prominent in his outer appearance and the language he uses. During his encounter at the library of Miskatonic University, Dr Armitage describes him as follows:

> The bent, goatish giant before him seemed like the spawn of another planet or dimension; like something only partly of mankind, and linked to black gulfs of essence and entity that stretch like titan phantasms beyond all spheres of force and matter, space and time. Presently Wilbur raised his head and began speaking in the strange, resonant fashion which hinted at sound-producing organs unlike the run of mankind's. (111)

The result of miscegenation is even more unsettling in the case of Wilbur's twin, who comes closer to his father with regard to his unearthliness. In contrast to his more human brother, he remains invisible to ordinary human beings and cannot be described in earthly terms, since he appears to unite many shapes within himself (131). The most striking aspect in this regard is the threat he poses to the community of Dunwich, which he terrorises and some of whose members he even kills. His immense powers and deep hostility towards the human characters are an anticipation of Yog-Sothoth, against whom, once released, mankind would probably be absolutely powerless.

Besides the typical insistence on human vulnerability from a cosmic perspective as conveyed by the immense strength of Wilbur's brother, the attribution of such a negative connotation to this instance of racial intermating is striking. It can be regarded to result from particularly Lovecraftian anxieties of foreign infiltration. In fact, the author was born during the third and final great wave of immigration to the United States, as the result of which around 15 million Eastern Europeans arrived.[393] During his brief stay in New York City, his hate of the foreign population, which had already before been very marked, reached its peak, since he blamed them for his inability to find gainful employment.[394] The supposed threat of an external element which is able to assimilate into one's own culture by miscegenation reflects fears that America could be overrun by immigrants and that the 'purity' of Lovecraft's beloved Anglo-

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392 Cf. Joshi, *Encyclopedia*, 79-80.

393 Cf. Janicker, "Space and Place", 68.

394 Cf. Bennett Lovett-Graff. "Shadows over Lovecraft: Reactionary Fantasy and Immigrant Eugenics". *Extrapolation* 38.3 (1997): 175.

Saxon race could be spoiled. Particularly the fact that Wilbur tries to open the gate for Yog-Sothoth conveys the image of the 'dangerous' half-breed, who, after gaining firm foothold in the 'civilised' world, would try to pave the way for more people from abroad.

As in the preceding text, the people opposing the cosmic threat from without are the representatives of the American educated, scientific, urban, upper-middle class world. After learning about the horrible being terrorising the Dunwich community, Professor Rice, Dr Armitage and Dr Morgan from Miskatonic University go to Dunwich to fight the monster in the mountains. Despite their victory, which stands in contrast to the scholars' powerlessness in "The Colour out of Space", the ending is far from optimistic. The invasion by the monster figure has, similarly to the meteorite, left an anti-pastoral landscape of decay, with a vegetation that "never came right again" (134). It is clear that the Old Ones are still waiting for their resurrection and their return to earth domination, which will undoubtedly take place one day. Besides, the suspicion remains that the monster could only be defeated because of its partly human qualities (being Lavinia Whateley's son), which emphasises man's weakness even more distinctly. The final triumph appears therefore as insignificant as mankind's role in the universe.

However, the greatest sense of pessimism is conveyed by the image of man's relation to evil that the story evokes: As has been outlined before, not all members of the human species are opposed to the monstrous beings trying to invade and destroy their existence; instead, some of them actively help them to achieve their vicious aims, thereby turning against their own species. This notion of evil ruralists who cooperate with the horrible forces of the cosmos and even go to such lengths as spoiling the 'purity' of their own race occurs in several of Lovecraft's stories. Whereas "The Dunwich Horror" contains only a single family entering a union with evil, "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1938) depicts a whole community which has miscegenated with the race of the Old Ones, gigantic fish-frog-like beings from the sea. Captain Obed made a deal with these creatures: In exchange for human sacrifices and interracial mating, the inhabitants of Innsmouth were promised to always catch fish in their waters to boost the local economy. The foreign intrusion of the place, resulting from the citizens' moral depravity, is not only linked to the decay and desolation of the houses but again to an anti-pastoral quality of the landscapes surrounding the town. The environment, which was once "fertile and thickly-settled", has turned into a place of infertility and devastation simultaneously with the "Innsmouth epidemic of 1846", the time around which

the cross-breedings began.[395] For the protagonist, the whole community turns out to be a *locus conclusus* full of half-human monsters that threaten him with his life because he discovers their awful secret. However, the escape from the rural enclave does not give him any safety either. Rather, his worst anxieties are confirmed, as he discovers that his own family line can be traced back to Innsmouth (his grandfather was Captain Obed Marsh) and that he actually is one of these half-breeds. Even worse, he finally accepts this monstrous part of himself and announces his plans to return to "marvel-shadowed Innsmouth"[396] in order to join his relatives in the sea.[397]

Evil in Lovecraft therefore poses, despite its extreme othering in terms of a cosmic terror, also a threat from within; especially the country-dweller, who is perceived as more primitive and hence closer to the evils of nature, often seems predisposed for the collaboration with the irrational, monstrous forces. This conception of a threat that occurs from both outside and inside is also mirrored in the surrounding landscapes of Lovecraft's communities, which show the consequences of external invasion and internal degeneration by their deterioration from idyllic, fertile *loci amoeni* into anti-pastoral wastelands. The latter aspect must be seen as a Gothicised continuation of the landscape depiction within the ancient pastoral tradition, where the state of the surrounding environment reflected the inner condition of its inhabitants.

In conclusion, it has become increasingly obvious that the extreme widening of the distance between city and country as well as the concomitant notion of externalising the monster figure is not unproblematic. In Machen, Blackwood and Lovecraft, the person entering the Gothic-pastoral retreat always finds a horrible threat which at first, due to its unearthly quality, seems to have absolutely nothing in common with humanity. A closer look, however, often reveals that mankind is in one way or the other linked to these monsters – be it through the possibility of miscegenation, the possession of sensory faculties which establish a connection to these otherworldly beings or even the will to collaborate with them and hence work against one's own species. Thus, despite their attempts at an extreme distancing of the

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395 H.P. Lovecraft. "The Shadow over Innsmouth" [1938], in *The Best of H.P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982, 272.

396 Ibid., 317.

397 According to Eduardo Garcia Augustín, the whole narration of the protagonists' journey into a dangerous place, where he is threatened by an external monstrosity, hence turns out to be an attempt of coming to terms with the fact that this monster is in fact an integral part of himself. Cf. Eduardo García Augustín. "Travelling into the Shadow of Innsmouth". *British and American Studies* 10 (2004): 26.

evil country from the ‘cultivated’, urban world, all of these authors paradoxically at the same time suggest that such a simple black-and-white opposition is not possible. Instead, their texts use Gothic and pastoral motifs in order to continue the tradition of showing a menace from outside that at the same time is somehow linked to man’s own dark condition. On the one hand, this must be seen as a continuation of the negative post-Darwinist image of the human condition prevalent at the *fin de siècle*; on the other hand, this takes up the typical Gothic-pastoral oscillation between two voices, one of which supports the idea of a ‘civilised’ world while the other heavily undermines this notion by blurring its allegedly well-demarcated borders.

5.3. Gothic-Pastoral Limits

5.3.1. The Country as a World Within

In the early twentieth-century occurrences of the Gothic-pastoral mode as analysed previously, there was an extreme widening of the city-country dichotomy; this went along with a tremendous - but nonetheless incomplete - externalisation of the monster found within the rural environment. The texts within the following chapter, which deals with the continuation of this mixed mode up into postmodern times, display precisely the opposite tendency. Here, central concepts formerly related to the urban and the rural context respectively exhibit an unprecedented closeness. This particularly refers to notions like ‘civilisation’ and ‘savagery’. Since the image of the ‘cultivated’ city is often either reduced to an ironic usage or not established at all, the natural setting is, particularly as far as its barbarism is concerned, right from the beginning depicted to be merely a microcosm of the larger world. This development, in turn, gives rise to a tremendous internalisation of the monstrous threat hidden within the country. The malignant being the urban intruder is confronted with is now either an imaginary projection of his own, inner monster, which does not exist outside of him. In other cases, where it actually exists as a physical entity, it is not presented as the uncanny other but only appears to be the outer mirror of man’s inherent demons.

In the subsequent chapter, the development of this postmodern version of Gothic pastoral will be exemplarily analysed with the help of two authors. In his famous novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954), William Golding continues the tradition of the Gothic-pastoral romance by

transposing the representatives of the British Empire into a 'savage' context. Although many features of the previous genre have been severely reduced, the writer still uses some of them in an altered form or at least maintains the terminology of the late nineteenth century to some degree. Stephen King, on the other hand, employs typical Lovecraftian principles like that of *cosmicism* and places the monsters invading the country among other things into the tradition of the American horror movie of the 1960s and 70s. In his fiction, the aforementioned commodification of the city-country dichotomy and the tension between contrary notions often goes along with a whole range of transformations and reductions of other Gothic-pastoral features.

Against the background of such an extreme degree of change within the repertoire of the Gothic-pastoral convention, it can be argued that the limits of this hybrid mode have been reached, particularly with regard to King's rural fiction. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in the following, it does not make sense to assume a general obsolescence of this form in the late twentieth century. This is mainly due to the fact that its attitude, i.e. the insistence on representative vulnerability, has been preserved - even in those texts in which all conventional features allowing for an overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral have been given up to a large extent.

5.3.2. Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (1954)

Of all the texts to be analysed in this chapter, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* constitutes the most obvious continuation of the Gothic-pastoral romance. With its depiction of an enclosed natural environment which stands in a dialectic relation to the larger world of politics and society, the novel explores basic questions concerning the human condition as well as fundamental concepts connected to the British Empire and the notion of 'civilisation' in general. For this purpose, it employs the typical pastoral retreat-return movement, which goes along with a devastating insight for the imperial intruder. At the same time, it represents a deviation from a core situation typical of the *fin de siècle*, which is mainly due to the changed context in which Golding wrote his novel.

The economy and influence of the Empire had suffered immensely during the two World Wars. The ideological superiority of its representatives as claimed earlier was now increasingly undermined by nationalist movements in the colonies and a general anti-colonial

feeling, resulting in the process of decolonisation.[398] Moreover, the darkness of man's heart, which had been anticipated in the *fin-de-siècle* and early-twentieth-century texts, had now become clearly visible not only in the African wilderness but also in the middle of Europe, epitomised by the extreme cruelties committed by Nazi Germany and the states involved in the Second World War. To make things even worse, the ending of the war did not completely restore the desired peace; with the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 as well as the beginning of the Cold War, the world had moved into the nuclear age, where the total annihilation of the human race could happen at any moment.[399]

Despite the fact that the dark side of humanity had become apparent in recent history and was still palpable in the present menace of an atomic apocalypse, according to Golding, western society was suppressing the knowledge that this was actually something integral to every man. One of his main intentions was to demonstrate the dangers of assuming evil to be something external and blaming the 'others' instead of accepting that it is in fact part of being human:

> *Lord of the Flies* was simply what it seemed sensible for me to write after the war, when everybody was thanking God they weren't Nazis. And I'd seen enough and thought enough to realize that every single one of us could be Nazis […]. Nazi Germany was a particular kind of boil which burst in 1939. That was only the same kind of inflamed spot we all of us suffer from, and so I took English boys and said, 'Look. This could be you.' This is really what the book comes to.[400]

The context of the novel seems to be ideally suited for the emergence of the Gothic, which, according to Hogle, "exists [...] to raise the possibility that all 'abnormalities' we would divorce from ourselves are a part of ourselves", and which uses monstrous images to negotiate these issues in displaced form.[401] Nevertheless, *Lord of the Flies* is traditionally not mentioned within the 'classic' canon of the Gothic tradition, which is probably due to its lack of typical Gothic stock features (e.g. decayed buildings, ghosts, dungeons, etc.).

However, it could be argued that Golding's text includes some conventional traits usually ascribed to this mode, albeit in a somewhat modified form. The sinister jungle, for instance, with its density of enclosing creepers and bushes, could be seen as a modern continuation of

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398 Cf. Stefan Hawlin. "The Savages in the Forest: Decolonising William Golding". *Critical Survey* 7.2 (1995): 125.

399 Cf. Carter, McRae and Bradbury, *History*, 411.

400 Quoted in Jack I. Biles. *Talk: Conversations with William Golding*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970, 3-4.

401 Hogle, "Western Culture", 12.

the Gothic labyrinth. Moreover, the rotten corpse of the parachutist, who continually stands up and bows down until he is released by Simon, represents the nightmares of human history in a monstrously Gothicised shape. According to Golding, this figure symbolises "the thing which threatens every child everywhere, the history of blood and intolerance, of ignorance and prejudice, the thing which is dead but won't lie down".[402] Finally, there is at least a symbolic castle on the island ("Castle Rock"), into which Jack and his hunters withdraw after their final separation from Ralph.

Apart from these external features, the novel also incorporates the so-called "internal" criteria which Punter holds as more significant for the Gothic mode:[403] First, the children's fears of a beast as well as their steady doubts about its existence can be read as Gothic paranoia. Second, the regression of the boys, who increasingly develop bestial traits that turn out to be an integral part of them, reflects anxieties of barbarism and especially of racial degeneracy. Third, the fact that these monstrous traits, which represent aspects suppressed by contemporary society, are not only repulsive but also alluring to the children shows that Golding's novel is concerned with taboo.[404]

A similarly scant situation can be observed for the state of research regarding the novel's use of the pastoral mode. Whereas some critics completely dispute the continuation of this form into the literature of the twentieth century,[405] among those who argue in favour of its persistence, only Marinelli briefly mentions *Lord of the Flies*. According to him, since the notion of childhood is often rather associated with evil than with innocence in the twentieth century, the "post-Arcadian phase of the pastoral of childhood" has emerged; he names Golding's text as a prominent example of this development.[406]

Indeed, it is from now on also the pastoral motif of childhood that is established only to be increasingly subverted in the course of the novel. In contrast to previous pastoral texts that made use of this element (e.g. Virgil's fourth *Eclogue*), there is no dichotomy between the supposedly innocent existence of the child and the fallen adult world anymore; instead, the

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402 William Golding. *The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces* [1964]. London: Faber & Faber, 1984, 95.

403 Cf. Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 404-410.

404 According to Punter, taboo comprises "areas of sociopsychological life which offend, which are suppressed […] in the interest of social and psychological equilibrium" and "the emotional reaction to which is "a dialectical one in which the mind oscillates between attraction and repulsion, worship and condemnation". Ibid., 405; 410.

405 Cf. Barrell and Bull, *Pastoral Verse*, 432.

406 Marinelli, *Pastoral*, 81.

former turns out to bear the same cruelty as its depraved parent within. This goes along with a reduction and modification of other features typical of the pastoral tradition.

The novel starts *in medias res* with the establishment of the pastoral ideal, which is mainly associated with the time of childhood. The island is depicted as a paradise-like idyll, where the supposedly innocent children think they can live in a state of bliss without the restraints imposed on them by the adults at home. During their first exploration of the place, Ralph, Jack and Simon feel that[407]

> a kind of glamour was spread over them and they were conscious of the glamour and made happy by it. They turned to each other, laughing excitedly, talking, not listening. The air was bright. (25)

The children assume that this is a "good island", a playground with food, drinks, rocks and flowers (34), where they can have fun (35). So, similarly to intruding figures like Jonathan Harker or Leo and Holly, the representatives of the outside world at first do not take the natural environment seriously and merely see it as a nice spot for games and adventures. Moreover, this depiction of an innocent existence within an idealised environment seems to stand in contrast to and thus to offer an escape from the fallen adult world outside, which is presently at war (14).

However, the motif of childhood is not only presented as a state of bliss but also associated with fear and evil, which must be seen within the typical oscillation between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements. In the beginning, the dichotomous character of this early life stage is connected to the traditional pastoral day – night opposition. Whereas during the day, "play was good and life so full that hope was not necessary and therefore forgotten" (58), the coming of night has an ominous and threatening quality. It renders the island, like the African wilderness in *Heart of Darkness*, a place of black monotony and fear: "When the sun sank, darkness dropped on the island like an extinguisher and soon the shelters were full of restlessness" (58-59). This is the time when the "littluns" suffer "untold terrors in the dark" (59), since they are afraid of an imagined beast, which is supposed to live in the forest.[408]

In the course of the novel, the oscillation between the good and evil side of childhood more and more shifts to the latter. Whereas initially, the monster on the island is only a falsely

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[407] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: William Golding. *Lord of the Flies* [1954]. A Perigree Book. New York: Penguin, 2006.

[408] Cf. L.L. Dickson. "*Lord of the Flies*", in *William Golding's* Lord of the Flies, ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999, 216.

externalised projection of the children's irrational fears, they increasingly develop bestial traits, which have, as it turns out, always been an integral part of them. The boys' reversion to savagery and brutality, which can be seen as a parallel to the war and atrocities of the adult world, blurs the opposition of childhood innocence on the island versus the fallen world of their parents outside. In Kathleen Woodward's view, the novel eventually even completely annihilates this contrast by attributing a degree of cruelty and sadism to the children that seems to excel its grown-up counterpart.[409]

The same neutralisation can be observed for the contrast between city and country. As in the Gothic-pastoral romance, it is described in terms derived from the Empire fiction. The children are referred to as the representatives of the British Empire, whose 'civilised' character is opposed to the 'darkness' of savagery. Ralph, for instance, who is the elected leader of the island society, has "a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil" (10). Moreover, on his suggestion that the boys need more rules, Jack assents: "After all, we're not savages. We're English, and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things" (42). However, two things are striking with regard to this comment: Not only does the person who will most quickly revert to primitivism utter this, but it is also said that the world where the children come from has probably been devastated in a nuclear war (14). This shows the way the Gothic-pastoral opposition of the 'superior' capital and the 'inferior' colonies has developed since the *fin de siècle*: In contrast to authors like Haggard, Conrad or Wells, who were officially expected to support but silently questioned the current image of a still powerful – albeit already declining – Empire, there is no need for a writer like Golding to be apologetic of such a restrictive ideology anymore. Accordingly, Jack's statement as regards the supposedly 'cultivated' nature of the English must be read as an ironic comment by the author.[410] With the lacking dichotomy of the larger world of the city and the enclosed space of the country, the latter appears just as a microcosm of the former.

The breaking down of this contrast becomes also obvious at the end of chapter 5. Piggy and Ralph, shocked about the developments on the island, desperately wish for a signal from the world outside, whose representatives would use no brutal means to solve conflicts but "have tea and discuss" (94). In the next chapter, they indeed receive a sign from without when the dead parachutist lands on the top of the mountain. Since it has already been stated that this

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409 Cf. Kathleen Woodward. "On Aggression: William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, in *No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, ed. Eric S. Rabkin [et al.]. Carbondale: Southern Ilinois University Press, 1983, 219-220.

410 Cf. Schnierer, *Entdämonisierung*, 161.

figure symbolises all the evils connected to the miseries of human history, the association of the larger world of politics and society with the notion of 'civilisation' must again be read as ironic.

Although typical Gothic-pastoral dichotomies as the ones outlined above have been reduced, some traces of them can nevertheless still be observed. Regarding the opposition between a 'civilised' city and a 'savage' country, the text establishes a micro-dichotomy of civilisation versus savagery within the island by opposing two groups of children representing either concept. The author hereby still uses images derived from the terminology of the Empire: Ralph's world of order, symbolised by the white conch, stands in contrast to the darkness of Jack's tribe, with its spears, ululation and body-paint.[411] This shows that Golding, although he does not need to conform to such ideas anymore, is nevertheless the inheritor of their traditional categories. Along with Raymond Williams, it can hence be argued that the imperial city-country opposition, despite having ceased to be dominant a feature at Golding's time, is still existent as a residual element in his novel.[412]

Likewise, the dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements has not been entirely given up. Although it has been annihilated with regard to the distinction between childhood innocence versus adult depravity, it has been preserved in the depiction of the natural environment. When Ralph and Piggy arrive at the shore for the first time, they encounter an exotic *locus amoenus*:

> The shore was fledged with palm trees. These stood or leaned or reclined against the light and their green feathers were a hundred feet up in the air. […] Within the irregular arc of coral the lagoon was still as a mountain lake – blue of all shades and shadowy green and purple. (9-10)

This description of a pleasant and inviting spot conveys an atmosphere of Eden-like tranquillity, where man can live in harmony with his surroundings. However, the fact that this environment might not be as benevolent as assumed at first is already indicated by death-like images of "fallen trees" and "skull-like coconuts" (10). Moreover, its generally hostile side is exemplified by the heat of the sun, which is at times hardly endurable (10; 14), or the creepers and thorns which make the jungle hardly passable (7). The forest is once even compared to an "enraged monster" (28) when the boys unleash a rock into it. The fact that

411 Hawlin therefore places Golding within the tradition of Conrad and accuses the author of being racist; however, there are no real 'Africans' in Golding's novel – it is made unmistakably clear that the British boys are evil. Cf. Hawlin, "Savages", 126-127.

412 Cf. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 122-124.

this is not a place where mankind can regain its former unity with nature but rather the opposite is also underlined by the deteriorating physical state of the children, who suffer from stomach-aches and chronic diarrhoea (59).[413]

The climax of this contrary description of nature is reached at the spot where Jack and his hunters kill the sow. The "open space where bright flowers grew and butterflies danced round each other and the air was hot and still" (135), is a typical *locus amoenus* and should hence create an atmosphere of peacefulness. However, the portrayal of this idyllic place is used as a contrast to the violence and cruelty of the hunters' killing and thus emphasises it all the more. Moreover, after Jack's group as left the sow's head on the stake, the butterflies give way to a "black bob of flies" (138), which normally accompanies the devil. In the following, Simon indeed has a conversation with the devil (albeit only imagined) and explores the truth about evil within man.

In fact, Golding' novel, which deals with the retreat of figures from the larger world to an island whose exact position is unclear[414] and which is associated with an idyllic nature that seems to bear a monster, makes use of the motif of the *locus conclusus*. Accordingly, the natural environment is not only depicted in terms of a pastoral/anti-pastoral dichotomy but also as a prison. When Ralph looks at the ocean, for instance, he thinks:

> This was the divider, the barrier. On the other side of the island, swathed in midday with mirage, defended by the shield of the quiet lagoon, one might dream of rescue; but here, faced by the brute obtuseness of the ocean, the miles of division, one was clamped down, one was helpless, one was condemned, one was-. (110-111)

However, the prison-like character is not only attributed to the physical characteristics of this natural retreat. In fact, Golding's text continues the late nineteenth-century shift from a rather material to a psychological prison, which is so alluring to the intruder that it becomes increasingly harder for him to leave it the longer he stays there. By and large, Jack and his hunters turn their backs to Ralph's efforts of maintaining an order, indulging in their newly-discovered savagery. Like Kurtz, they turn their backs to the civilised world, in this case symbolised by Ralph, Piggy and the conch, and establish a savage tribe, which puts heads on stakes. Significantly, the first stage of the hunters' degeneration is their refusal to maintain

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413 Cf. Dickson, "*Lord of the Flies*", 216.

414 According to Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub, "the island seems to lie somewhere in the Indian or Pacific Ocean, probably on a line extending from England to Australia". Bernard S. Oldsey and Stanley Weintraub. "Beelzebub Revisited: *Lord of the Flies*", in *William Golding's* Lord of the Flies, ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999, 18-19.

the signal fire, which is not only the means by which the children can achieve a return to the larger world but also symbolises the advent of civilisation in general.

While this development was already a feature of the previous tradition, the concomitant internalisation of the monster figure has reached a new extreme. In Golding's *locus conclusus*, there are no figures like the Morlocks, Ayesha, Dracula or evil-looking natives anymore, who stand for the dangerous other at first but in whom the representative of the Empire nevertheless recognises parts of himself. Instead, the island is completely devoid of any local inhabitants, with which the typical pastoral confrontation of 'higher' and 'lower' figures could take place and in the process of which the boundaries between both could be blurred. If there are external entities connected to evil, they are wrongly assumed by the children to be a beast (the parachutist) or the result of hallucination (the head on the stake which becomes the Lord of the Flies). This constitutes the culmination of a notion which had increasingly become apparent in the course of the *fin de siècle*: Since evil exists within everybody, man's regression to primitivism results not from the presence of a monstrous tempter figure but merely from the absence of civilised values. Besides, it is not the fallen adult who in this case unleashes his dark side but the supposedly innocent child. Revealing that even a group of little boys can turn an uninhabited island into a dangerous *locus conclusus*, the text very openly suggests that evil is part of everyone and at every life stage.

This notion of an internal monster is also highlighted by the typical Gothic-pastoral insistence on human weakness, which, with the absence of an external other threatening the children, is now mainly conceived of as the weakness towards one's own savage side within. After all, the fact that – with the exception of Simon – even those children who try to maintain the signal fire by and large discover their inherent barbarism suggests that sooner or later even the most cultured people will fall victim to it. While for some this is a quicker process (e.g. Jack, Roger), others manage to resist the lure of reversion longer (e.g. Ralph, Piggy) but in the course of the book also yield to the pull of their own bestiality. Although Ralph, for instance, is angry at Jack because of his neglecting the signal fire and hence preventing the boys from their rescue, he accepts the meat which Jack and his hunters have gained and "gnawed it like a wolf" (73). Furthermore, Ralph himself admits that at times he does not care about the fire anymore (139) or forgets about the purpose of it (163). Feeling "defenceless with the darkness pressing in" (164), he eventually – together with Piggy – partakes in the killing of Simon.

To make things worse, as long as those children who try to maintain an order have not yielded to the alluring spell of their sinister side, they are depicted as extremely weak in

comparison to their already more primitive fellows. This is a continuation of the Wellsian dilemma that civilisation will regress either into a Morlock-like ferocity or to a state of weakness as typical of the Eloi. Ralph, for instance, does not manage to uphold his established position as a leader figure and cannot think clearly in decisive moments (78; 141). Likewise, Piggy is the most rational character, who knows that rules are necessary and that certain procedures, e.g. the blowing of the conch, must be established and preserved;[415] on the other hand, he cannot swim, wears glasses (which symbolise fragility), has asthma and is, due to his obesity, continually ridiculed by the other children, including Ralph (13). Simon, who is the only one to discover the true nature of evil, faints after his walks with Jack's choir (20) and suffers from epilepsy. He and Piggy are eventually killed by Jack's tribe while Ralph, after being hunted like a pig, escapes only by chance (due to the naval officer's arrival). The feebleness of civilisation becomes particularly apparent in the climactic scene when Piggy tries to get his glasses back from the hunters, who have withdrawn to their 'castle'. After his pivotal question "which is better – to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?" (180), he is murdered by a stone released from Roger; during this process, the conch, whose fragility stands for the vulnerability of the civilised world, is destroyed, which symbolises the final victory of savagery. This emphasis on the children's weakness, which is seen as representative of the notion of civilisation in general, reveals that Golding's novel has preserved this basic attitude which is at the heart of the Gothic and the pastoral.

Despite the depiction of an overpowering beast from within, however, it should be noted that the process of internalising evil is not fully complete. As has been pointed out, the natural environment is not only made a hostile place after the arrival of the children but is already before characterised by a dualism between pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements. This aspect at least slightly alludes to the possibility that the island could somehow have triggered the development of the children's vicious traits. Moreover, Schnierer argues that the scene in which Simon meets the Lord of the Flies could also be regarded to reveal a partial externalisation. In his view, the statement "his [Simon's] gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition" (138) can either mean that the boy recognises evil or that the latter -

[415] Because of character traits like his maturity or his baldness and his reference to the other children as "a crowd of kids" (38) at one point, critics like Claire Rosenfield and Patrick Reilly see Piggy even as a kind of father figure. Cf. Claire Rosenfield. "'Men of Smaller Growth': A Psychological Analysis of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*", in *William Golding's* Lord of the Flies, ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999, 4-5; Patrick Reilly. "*Lord of the Flies*: Beelzebub's Boys", in *William Golding's* Lord of the Flies, ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999, 175.

as a physical other - perceives him.[416] This occurrence of features speaking for a threat from outside does not mean, however, that Golding's novel preserves an oscillation between the monster as external and internal as his early twentieth-century predecessors still did. Whereas these texts emphasised both aspects very openly, in *Lord of the Flies,* the indicators of a dangerous other are rather exceptional or, in the case of Simon's conversation with the devil, expressed in an ambivalent way; the internal character of the monster, however, is very explicitly highlighted right from the beginning.

In light of the novel's overall insistence that the real danger lies within man, it is striking that the children are unable to understand this 'truth' and keep believing in a real beast roaming the island. This notion must be viewed against the background of the major intention Golding pursued in his novel. As has been outlined initially, he wanted to stigmatise the general process of attributing the atrocities human beings are able to commit to another nation instead of accepting that these things could happen everywhere:

> One of our faults is to believe that evil is somewhere else and inherent in another nation. My book was to say: you think now the war is over and an evil thing destroyed, you are safe because you are naturally kind and decent. But I knew why the thing rose in Germany. I know it could happen in any country. It could happen here.[417]

Because of their failure to realise that the only monster on the island is the one each of them carries within themselves, the boys allow this evil side to eventually be fully unleashed. This aspect can be seen as representative of Golding's view of contemporary society, which he perceived as being unable to learn that it was also capable of the horrible deeds committed in Germany during the war.

In *Lord of the Flies,* this criticism of the idea that monsters can only be found elsewhere is also related to the notion of pastoral escapism. Since the island turns out to be such a horrible context, Ralph in his mind constructs an imaginary refuge. Besides his wish to return to "a tamed town where savagery could not set foot" (164), i.e. the supposedly safe haven of the city, he dreams of a retreat into the English countryside. The latter is described as a pastoral idyll, set in a Golden Age when he spent time with his parents in a cottage by the moors of Denport (112; 164). Accordingly, since the pastoral enclave has proven to be an evil

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416 In this context, Schnierer argues against Johnston, who considers the process of internalisation to be complete. Cf. Schnierer, *Entdämonisierung*, 161-162; Arnold Johnston. *Of Earth and Darkness: The Novels of William Golding*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980.

417 Golding, *Hot Gates*, 89.

environment for Ralph, he creates a second retreat based on wishful thinking and supposed to stand in contrast to the shortcomings of the first one.

However, in constructing an imaginary idyll where he believes an escape from the current atrocities to be possible, Ralph makes a fundamental mistake. After all, he assumes that evil is something that emerges only as a result of life on this particular island and can therefore be left behind after a withdrawal to the tamed English countryside has taken place. As has been stated before, the isle is, like Nazi Germany, not a particular spot where people act under exceptional conditions; instead, it is a microcosm of the larger world, and its inhabitants, in particular as regards their weakness towards evil, are representative of the human condition in general. In the course of the novel, Ralph will therefore change his mind. The lesson that he (and the reader) learns from the retreat into this Gothic-pastoral space is a very pessimistic one: Since evil is an integral part of humanity, it cannot be escaped by moving into the promising idyllicsm of any inviting countryside; on the contrary, the seclusion and loneliness associated with a rural setting will, due its distance from the regulations of the larger world, even accelerate the development of man's inner beast. As a result of such a process, even little children can develop a Nazi-like cruelty that parallels or even exceeds the behaviour of the adults. Accordingly, the loss of innocence which Ralph weeps for at the end of the novel is not merely to be seen as the result of the change from childish blamelessness to adult violence which took place within the society on the island; it is also due to the insight that evil, as a component of every man's heart, can never be fled (202).[418]

The author's stigmatisation of the idea that evil can be escaped or that its existence is confined merely to a specific place is also expressed in the children's movement of retreat and return. At the close of the novel, there is a situation which is reminiscent of the encounter between the 'cultivated' city-dweller and the 'inferior' countryman as typical of the Gothic-pastoral romance: The naval officer, in his polished uniform bearing the signs of the British Empire (200), meets upon savage figures, who have painted faces and are hunting after one of their fellows with spears. In the past, several critics interpreted this ending as a mere "gimmick"; according to them, Ralph is saved with the arrival of this *deus ex machina* and returns to the haven of civilisation with the other children.[419] However, the savage peasants the officer encounters are no natives of the island but English children, which again wipes out

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418 Cf. S.J. Boyd. "The Nature of the Beast: *Lord of the Flies*", in *William Golding's* Lord of the Flies, ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999, 191.

419 Cf. R.C. Townsend. "*Lord of the Flies*: Fool's God?". *Journal of Education* 26 (1964-1965): 153-160; Frederick R. Karl. *A Reader's Guide to the Contemporary English Novel*. Rev. ed. New York: Farrar, 1972.

any distinctions between the 'superior' city and the 'inferior' country or the 'innocent' child and the 'depraved' adult. Moreover, the officer himself is a highly dubious representative of civilisation, since his revolver and his fellow's machine gun imply that the world where they come from is at war and hence only a macrocosm of the brutal events which happened on the island.[420] Considering the fact that Golding is no apologist of an imperial ideology anymore, the last comment of the officer must, similarly to Jack's initial remark on the cultured character of the English, be taken as ironic: "I should have thought […] that a pack of British boys – you're British boys, aren't you? – would have been able to put up a better show than that" (201-202). It is hence implied that the children cannot leave behind the evils they encountered on the island; instead of returning to a safe and cultivated existence, they rather go back to another, larger world of an even more elaborated savagery. As Golding himself pointed out,

> the officer, having interrupted a manhunt, prepares to take the children off the island in a cruiser which will presently be hunting its enemy in the same implacable way. And who will rescue the adult and his cruiser?[421]

Despite this pessimistic image as conveyed by the retreat-return movement and the insight gained in the country, the text also exhibits some optimistic undertones, which work against the profoundly sinister image of the human condition. The figure of Simon plays a central role in this respect. Whereas all the other children on the island by and large fall victim to the beast within, he is able to resist it. Moreover, he is the only one who, due to his intuition, doubts the existence of an external monster and attributes it to man in general: "However Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human at once heroic and sick" (103). After his assumption about the internal nature of the beast has been confirmed during his hallucinatory conversation with the Lord of the Flies, he finally climbs the mountain and releases the dead parachutist, because, as he says himself, "What else is there to do?" (145). He therefore frees the island from a figure that has been falsely assumed by the children to be the beast because they have not understood the latter's true nature.[422]

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420 This also contradicts Hawlin's argument that the novel re-establishes the imperial city-country dichotomy of the nineteenth century in the end, since according to him the book closes with the rescue of the African children by the white colonisers and hence confirms nineteenth-century racist stereotypes. Cf Hawlin, "Savages", 133.

421 Quoted in Woodward, "Aggression", 219.

422 Besides, by freeing the parachutist, who is a symbol of the horrible deeds humanity is capable of, Simon offers the hope that the vicious circle of the recurring evils in human history can be broken through. Cf. Boyd, "Beast", 205.

Thus, whereas in general the retreat into nature results in a more primitive state for mankind, whose civilised values are seen as highly artificial, there are nevertheless those who can discover the evil side of man without developing bestial traits themselves. The difference lies in the fact that people like Simon refuse to externalise the beast and accept it as part of their inner nature. In fact, the character of Simon corresponds to Golding's highest ideal of man; according to him, this is a person who has the courage to face his own sinister side, thereby trying to come to terms with the "terrible disease of being human".[423]

However, it is doubtful to what extent the author believed that this step is actually possible for most people or whether there is really a chance for humanity in general. After all, Simon's insight is exceptional. And even Piggy, who is the novel's most rational character, fails to comprehend the true character of the beast. Moreover, Simon cannot really be seen as the hero figure within this *locus conclusus*. As has been stated before, he is frequently depicted as rather weak; in the end, he is even killed by the other children before he can deliver his important insight because ironically he is assumed to be the very monster whose false character he intended to expose.

Still, this optimistic 'voice' which can be observed speaks – albeit very faintly – against the general mood of pessimism conveyed by the events on the island. Similarly to the Gothic-pastoral romance of the *fin de siècle*, the result is hence an ending in a state of ambivalence. In this case, however, the question is not whether the content of a contemporary ideology is false or how to deal with the insight that civilisation is an artificial construct. Instead, since the evil within man is a fact that could be hardly doubted at Golding's time anymore, the opposition of two contrary voices has shifted to the question whether there is any hope for mankind against this background; the novel does not give a clear solution to this dilemma but ends in a state of Gothic-pastoral tension of pessimism versus optimism and consciously leaves it unresolved by providing an image of the human condition as both "heroic and sick".

In conclusion, *Lord of the Flies* displays a high degree of modification regarding the features typical of the Gothic-pastoral mode. Here, elements like the dichotomy between city and country have been severely reduced to a point where the distinction between both can at times be barely recognised. Moreover, there is an extreme internalisation of the monster figure within the *locus conclusus*, which, far from appearing as other and self alike, is depicted as the manifestation of man's undoubtedly evil side within. Nevertheless, one can

[423] Ibid.; cf. also Leighton Hodson. "The Metaphor of Darkness: *Lord of the Flies*", in *William Golding's* Lord of the Flies, ed. Harold Bloom. Modern Critical Interpretations. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999, 90-91.

speak of a continuity of this hybrid mode in the novel. This is due to the fact that there are some remains of the former urban/rural and pastoral/Gothic dichotomy; besides, the text has preserved the insistence on representative vulnerability as well as an ending in a state of ambivalence. In Stephen King's fiction, which will be the focus of the next chapter, this transformation of Gothic-pastoral elements has progressed even further, resulting in a marginal form of this mixed mode.

5.3.3. King, "The Mist" (1980), *Needful Things* (1991) and "Children of the Corn" (1978)

In the previous chapter, it turned out that the Gothic-pastoral mode had moved away from a core situation typical of the late nineteenth century, e.g. in the former ideological distinction between city and country, which for the most part broke down with the depiction of an island and its evils as a microcosm of the larger world. Nevertheless, the novel still preserved some remains of all four features allowing for an overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral mode. In Stephen King's version of this hybrid form, it has been further transformed up to a point where one could argue that it becomes doubtful whether it is still in line with the tradition as outlined so far. Here, the features typical of Gothic-pastoral convention have been severely reduced or even disappeared in the depiction of an urban retreat that is thoroughly depraved and where it seems that almost every inhabitant is characterised by viciousness.

On the one hand, the general intention King pursues within his *oeuvre* still ties in with the Gothic-pastoral tradition. In his theoretical work *Danse Macabre* (1981), the author states that the horror genre (which he uncritically sees as a straightforward continuation of the Gothic) works on two levels. The first one is a "gross-out level" of repulsive pictures and behaviour, mainly used to evoke a shocking reaction within the reader.[424] This includes all the stock features traditionally associated with this type of literature, e.g. monsters, psychopaths, gory scenes, physical mutilation, etc. The second level is more important, as it emphasises the internal, more primitive side of the monstrous threat in the literary characters themselves and by implication of the reader:

> But on another, more potent level, the work of horror really is a dance – a moving, rhythmic search. And what it's looking for is the place where you, the viewer or the reader, live at your

[424] King, *Danse Macabre*, 3.

> most primitive level. The work of horror is not interested in the civilized furniture of our lives. […] It is in search of another place, a room which may sometimes resemble the secret den of a Victorian gentleman, sometimes the torture chamber of the Spanish Inquisition…but perhaps most frequently and most successfully, the simple and brutally plain hole of a Stone Age cave-dweller.[425]

Accordingly, despite dealing with traditional monsters like the devil, the vampire, the zombie etc., King's fiction not only serves the function of mere shocking entertainment. Instead, it stands in the previous tradition by providing a fundamental analysis of the abysses of the human condition as well as the society and its institutions resulting from it:

> [My] work underlines again and again that I am not merely dealing with the surreal and the fantastic but, more importantly, using the surreal and the fantastic to examine the motivations of people and the society and the institutions they create.[426]

In order to achieve this aim, King concentrates on small, rural communities, e.g. Castle Rock, Haven, Derry, in many of his novels. His particular strength in this regard lies in the extensive portrayal of individual characters, whose averageness makes it easy for the reader to identify with and who can hence be seen as representative figures in Alpers's sense.[427]
On the other hand, King's texts are based on the general idea that almost any human congregation – be it urban or rural - is seen as something bad. Here, individual seclusion is preferred to the larger social context, which has, as it awakens man's evil side, harmful effects on each of its members. In *The Stand* (1978), the sociologist Glen Bateman provides an illustration of this when he talks about the origins of human society and its growth:

> Shall I tell you what sociology teaches us about the human race? I'll give it to you in a nutshell. Show me a man or woman alone and I'll show you a saint. Give me two and they'll fall in love. Give me three and they'll invent the charming thing we call 'society'. Give me four and they'll build a pyramid. Give me five and they'll make one an outcast. Give me six and they'll reinvent prejudice. Give me seven and in seven years they'll reinvent warfare. Man may have been made in the image of God, but human society was made in the image of His opposite number, and is always trying to get back home.[428]

This statement transcends the pastoral longing for the seclusion from larger crowds of people, since it expresses a particularly negative view not only of the city with its massive population but of the small community typical of the country as well. Even worse, any human society

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425 Ibid., 4.

426 Quoted in Tony Magistrale. *Stephen King: The Second Decade*. New York: Twayne, 1992, 15.

427 Cf. Ben P. Indick. "What Makes Him So Scary?", in *Discovering Stephen King*, ed. Darrell Schweitzer. Starmont Studies in Literary Criticism, Vol. 8. Mercer Island, Wash.: Starmont House, 1985, 9.

428 Stephen King. *The Stand* [1978]. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007, 458.

that has more than two members, whose evil traits will be brought about in the process of social interaction, is conceived of as bad. This extremely negative attitude towards the evolution of any kind of organised society can be found throughout King's fiction.[429] Here, it often seems that not even such a small social unit as the family can guarantee the individual a safe existence. King's famous novel *The Shining* (1977), for instance, features a dysfunctional family, which, even before its encounter with a monstrous threat at a haunted hotel, is at the verge of implosion. Due to his addiction to alcohol and a generally choleric temperament, Jack Torrance frequently has violent outbreaks, resulting at times even in the physical abuse of his son.

Such a negative view of human society has far-reaching consequences for the depiction of the Gothic-pastoral environment in King's fiction. Here, the three conventional features allowing for an overlap between the Gothic and the pastoral have vanished. There is no establishment of a dichotomy between idyllic/pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements anymore. Instead, it is often made clear from the beginning that the rural context is an extremely antisocial and inhuman place, where miseries and evils are not mitigated but rather aggravated by human company. The same applies to the former opposition between city and country, which completely breaks down in light of the fact that both categories are perceived as inherently evil. Although there is, in contrast to Golding's novel, usually an external monster figure (or several of them) threatening the rural enclave, its existence emphasises the inhabitants' internal viciousness all the more; after all, far from being depicted as the uncanny other which is both external and internal alike, it mainly serves as a mirror of man's inherent evil side. Unlike in *Lord of the Flies*, there is no tension anymore between two voices, one emphasising man's inherent bestiality while the other reveals his capacity for good. Rather, emphasis is on the overall negative side of humanity. The only aspect of the Gothic-pastoral tradition which has been preserved is its attitude, i.e. the insistence on representative human vulnerability. The result of this commodification of the repertoire of Gothic-pastoral convention and the simultaneous preservation of the attitude at the heart of this hybrid mode leads to a marginal form which nevertheless still continues the previous tradition. Key texts in this respect, which will be exemplarily analysed in the following, are the novella "The Mist", the novel *Needful Things* and the early short story "Children of the Corn". Whereas

[429] Cf. Tony Magistrale. *Landscape of Fear: Stephen King's American Gothic*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988, 95-96.

the former two portray the image of a rural community threatened by the forces of the larger world, the latter employs a highly modified version of a *locus conclusus*.

Similarly to Lovecraft's "The Colour out of Space", King's "The Mist" provides a Gothic version of Virgil's first *Eclogue* by showing the intrusion of more powerful, extra-dimensional forces into the countryside and its devastating consequences for humanity. The setting is the small town of Bridgeton and the surrounding area, where, in the morning after a violent thunderstorm, a white mist spreads across the nearby lake, eventually reaching the local community. It contains bizarre, primeval creatures that are extremely hostile and immediately kill anyone who enters the mist. The story is centred on a group of people enclosed within a supermarket and their respective attempts at coping with the new situation. There is no dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements anymore; instead, emphasis is placed on the latter. The story begins *in medias res* with the onset of the thunderstorm, which completely devastates the surrounding landscape. Besides fallen trunks that are scattered everywhere and images of destruction like a fallen power pole and a shattered barn, "the sky, which had been a mushy, hazy color during the heat wave [of the day before], had regained a deep, crisp blue that was nearly autumnal" (30).[430] The mist itself even more deteriorates this anti-pastoral environment by turning it into a place of Gothic dangers and general despair. Similarly to *Heart of Darkness*, it functions as an extinguisher, rendering the surroundings a space of white monotony: "The blue sky disappeared to a white stripe, then to a pencil line. Then it was gone. Blank white pressed against the wide show window" (59). Besides causing this chromatic reduction, the mist extinguishes all sounds, resulting in an atmosphere of eerie stillness which is only interrupted by occasional shrieks (100-101). The natural environment does not convey comfort anymore but, in a Conradian manner, a sense of absolute hopelessness: "It was the mist itself that sapped the strength and robbed the will" (141). Towards the end of the novel, the group of people who manage to escape from the supermarket finally see that the environment has turned into a hell-like landscape of semi-darkness, where "the earth had been through some terrible contortion" (147). Nature outside has become an extremely hostile and infernal environment, where going out means immediate death.

[430] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Stephen King. "The Mist" [1985], in *Skeleton Crew*. New York: Signet, 1986, 24-154.

Another typical Gothic-pastoral opposition which has been given up in King's text is the dichotomy between city and country. There is not even the slightest upholding of the idea of a 'civilised' city anymore which opposes the savagery found within the country. Instead, the people from the larger world of politics and science, in particular those belonging to the government, are right from the start referred to as evil, since they seem responsible for the devastation of the rural environment. The mist comes from the direction of the site of the "Arrowhead Project", where the government is said to conduct strange experiments, whose nature is kept a secret. The aforementioned creatures are probably the result of an accident during one of these experiments, which destroyed the boundaries between the human and the extraterrestrial dimension, allowing the horrible beings to roam the earth. The image of a more 'cultured' world of politics and sciences is hence given up in this novella, where the government secretly acts in ways whose outcome threatens to destroy humanity once and for all. This must be seen in the context of King's sceptical attitude towards his own government, resulting from personal experience. In *Danse Macabre*, he comments on the ideological premises the America in which he grew up was based on. He describes the contradictory atmosphere of a 'superior' and 'progressive' nation, whose shortcomings and façade-like character could be guessed at a closer look:

> We were fertile seeds of terror, we war babies; we had been raised in a strange circus of atmosphere of paranoia, patriotism, and national *hubris*. We were told that we were the greatest nation on earth and that any Iron Curtain outlaw who tried to draw down on us in that great saloon of international politics would discover who the fastest gun in the West was […], but we were also told exactly what to keep in our fallout shelters and how long we would have to stay in there after we won the war. We had more to eat than any nation in the history of the world, but there were traces of Strontium-90 in our milk from nuclear testing.[431]

As Magistrale argues, King's generation was particularly sceptical towards the image of the official ideology, in particular after it had seen the Vietnam crisis and the Watergate affair.[432] Whereas in the case of the former, the official idea of an 'invincible' nation had been severely shattered, the latter had given rise to the notion of a government pursuing intentions far from being for the good of the population.[433]

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431 King, *Danse Macabre*, 9.

432 Cf. Magistrale, *Landscape*, 32.

433 The idea that behind the façade of the official American ideology something might be terribly wrong with the government, which might even work against its own citizens, is evident throughout King's fiction. In fact, he completely refutes the image of a 'superior' and 'invincible' America, whose representatives he depicts as extremely hostile and malevolent. In his monumental novel *The Stand*, for instance, an accident within a secret research facility run by the government sets a kind of 'super-influenza' loose, which kills almost the entire world's population.

This revelation of the forces traditionally associated with the city as depraved has been a typical feature of the Gothic-pastoral texts treated before. However, in "The Mist", not even the slightest attempt at upholding a current discourse which supports the notion of a 'good' city, which can then be blurred in the course of the story, is given. The representatives of the larger, urban world are right from the beginning depicted as evil – albeit, as they work secretly and anonymously, their horrible deeds can only be perceived in their consequences for the rural environment. Accordingly, there is no Gothic-pastoral tension of conforming to and subverting a current ideology anymore.

The mist itself, whose monsters lurk behind a white curtain and can thus only be guessed at, is a symbol of a government that works against its own species and tries to hide its evil intentions. The fact that it has been created by humans is underlined by its unnatural and anti-pastoral quality. Watching the mist spreading slowly across the lake, David Drayton notes that it moves against the direction of the wind (38) and that unusually straight lines mark its border (46). He thus concludes that "nothing in nature is that even; man is the inventor of straight edges" (46).

The depiction of the forces of the city as thoroughly evil does not mean, however, that the country-dwellers are referred to as the innocent victims of this intrusion. King's text does not oscillate in its image of the country as partly innocent and partly evil as was the case in Lovecraft. Instead, it is made unmistakably clear from the beginning that its inhabitants contain the same evil as the depraved representatives of the larger world within. The people enclosed within the supermarket increasingly discover their own sinister side and, in a way similar to *Lord of the Flies*, regress into a primitive society. This process not only reveals their weakness in relation to an external, hostile environment but also to their own evil within.

The novella does not even initially evoke the image of 'innocent' peasants living in perfect harmony with each other in order to subvert it afterwards. Already before the coming of the mist, the local inhabitants are described as having their individual flaws and mutual emnities. David had a boundary dispute with his neighbour Norton once, which ended up in court. This already existing tension is increased when he and his wife notice that their boathouse has been destroyed because of a tree that Norton should have removed (36). Mrs Carmdoy is presented as a superstitious and harmless woman, who runs a curious junk shop and utters dark predictions; among these, there is the tale of a black spring of 1888, when the lake was allegedly so frozen that the ice turned black (34). Whereas these aspects convey the image of a fragmented society, which lacks a sense of community and cooperation, these are still

minor issues; after all, they call forth the notion of country-dwellers who have their individual spleens and disputes but who are quite harmless on the whole.

However, these minor issues are severely aggravated to the point of outright hostility and lethal danger after the coming of the mist. This deterioration is seen as the result of several people's inability to accept and deal with the sudden change of the world known to them. As a consequence, they develop dangerous traits and behave irrationally, bringing death among themselves and others.[434] Norton, a man from the city, who has, since his boundary dispute with David, grown constantly suspicious of the country-dwellers, gets increasingly paranoid, believing that the locals play a kind of trick on him. He finally becomes the leader of the "Flat-Earth Society" (88), a group of people supporting his firm belief that the mist is harmless and who finally go out to find their immediate death. Norm, an eighteen-year old boy, is unwilling to accept the reality of a monstrous threat either. He therefore opens the backdoor in the storage room and is eaten up alive by huge tentacles coming in from outside. Here, King stigmatises the lack of human community by depicting Jim and Myron's unwillingness to help the boy, since they are too scared of the monstrous threat (64-77).

The most dangerous case of regression, however, is represented by the figure of Mrs Carmody. Whereas immediately after the coming of the mist, no one takes her warnings not to go out or her apocalyptic interpretation of the events seriously, she more and more exerts a fatal influence over a growing number of people, who willingly become her followers. She turns into the witch-like leader of a superstitious, fundamentalist religious society, which gathers around around her, muttering horrible prayers and repeating her incantations. At the climax of this development, the group even accepts her pronouncement that a sacrifice is necessary in order to mitigate the creatures of hell, for which she chooses Bill Drayton and Amanda Dumfries (142-145).

The monstrous menace from outside hence works as a catalyst for the development of a more primitive side from within, which was already noticeable before but which appeared as a more or less harmless eccentricity. Drayton illustrates this thesis by comparing the image of a slightly odd but overall harmless woman with the powerful and threatening figure Mrs Carmody has become:

> It was the mist that had given [Mrs Carmody] that power – the power to cloud men's minds, to make a particularly apt pun – just as it had taken away the sun's power from the rest of us. Before, she had been nothing but a mildly eccentric woman with an antiques store in a town that

[434] Cf. Magistrale, *Landscape*, 96-97.

> was lousy with antiques stores. Nothing but an old woman with a few stuffed animals in the back room and a reputation for (*that witch…that cunt*) folk medicine. (141)

Concerning this notion of the monstrous threat being only an outer manifestation of the local inhabitants' inner demons, King's text differs from most of its predecessors (e.g. Lovecraft's rural fiction), which often oscillated between an evil other and self; rather, like Golding, the author makes it clear from the beginning that the real creatures that threaten humanity are within themselves.[435] The only difference from *Lord of the Flies* lies in the fact that there are actual external entities threatening the human characters; however, since they are merely the mirror of man's integral viciousness, their existence even more emphasises the internal character of evil.

Therefore, whereas the mist with its hidden monstrosities stands symbolically for the secret intentions of a hostile government, the supermarket epitomises the human condition in general with its depiction of the development of a handful of local people. Being threatened by forces from without, man appears absolutely weak and develops his own, evil nature to a point where he becomes a threat for others. Similarly to *Lord of the Flies*, the rural enclave is hence just a microcosm of the evils associated with the larger world of society and politics. However, in contrast to Golding's novel, there is not even a remainder of the former dichotomy between city and country left, nor is it referred to in ironic usage anymore. Since both the city and the country are depicted as antisocial and even inhuman from the beginning, the typical pastoral dichotomy between both has broken down.

Despite this negative image of the human condition, there appears to be, similarly to *Lord of the Flies*, an oscillation between pessimism and optimism at first sight. Initially, David Drayton joins in the development of an irrational, internal side as a consequence of the sudden change of worldview: Already during the first night at the supermarket, he cheats on his wife when he sleeps with Amanda Dumfries. However, on the whole, he is one of the most rational characters, who quickly accepts the change of consensus reality and tries to convince other people that the threat from outside is real and deathly. When Norton thinks that the whole situation is merely a local prank in order to ridicule him, for instance, Drayton forces him to see the piece of tentacle he cut off during his desperate attempt to save Norm (86-87). In the course of the novella, he by and large overcomes his internal demons and emerges as a hero figure, eventually resisting Mrs Carmody's spell and leaving the

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[435] Cf. Uwe Anton. *Wer hat Angst vor Stephen King*? Taschenführer Populäre Kultur, Vol. 2. München: Tilsner, 1994, 6.

supermarket with a small group of people behind. This is an important step the hero must undergo: In order to face the threat from without, he must, like Golding's Simon, at first overcome the evil from within.[436] In contrast to most people in the supermarket who surrender to their inner demons (e.g. alcoholism, religious fanaticism or suicidal depression), Drayton rises above them and finally escapes the *locus conclusus*, which has already been referred to as symbolising the prison of man's inner self. He manages to go through this development by accepting a more naïve view of reality which he had abandoned during his childhood:[437]

> I realized with fresh horror that new doors of perception were opening up inside. New? Not so. Old doors of perception. The perception of a child who has not yet learned to protect itself by developing the tunnel vision that keeps out ninety percent of the universe. Children see everything their eyes happen upon, hear everything in their ears' range. But if life is the rise of consciousness […], then it is also the reduction of input. (116-117)

This is clearly a remnant of the pastoral motif of childhood innocence and hence an idyllic feature opposed to an anti-pastoral/Gothic element (the depraved adult world). King takes up the notion that this is the state in which the world can be seen in its purer and more original shape and which opposes the narrowed and false view of the adult. In fact, the text aggravates the image of a hopelessly lost fallen existence which brings about its own downfall by confronting the child's innocence with its threats: David's son Billy, who is actually the most helpless victim of the events, is chosen as the first victim for sacrifice by Mrs Carmody.

However, despite the capacity for good that seems to be inherent in the human condition, the novel ends in highly pessimistic undertones. The people within the supermarket are unwilling or too scared to believe Drayton's theories concerning the monstrous threat; Mrs Carmody even tries to prevent him from going outside and must therefore be killed. The grown-up who has finally managed to broaden his view of the world and to accept its changed reality with child-like naivety is unheard by his fellows, who for the most part desperately cling to their narrowed state of mind. Only a small group of people finally believes Drayton and flees with him from the supermarket. The open end of the story further provides an image of hopelessness by conveying an atmosphere of Gothic inescapability. Having finally escaped from man's internal prison, symbolised by the supermarket, the narrator still has to face the external threats outside, against which he appears to be absolutely powerless. After reaching

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436 Magistrale places this idea, which can be found in the texts of authors like Melville, Hawthorne and Twain, into the American romance tradition. Cf. Magistrale, *Landscape*, 21-22.

437 Cf. Oakes, *Science*, 97.

his car, Drayton, together with his companions, drives through a hellish landscape of decay and destruction. While it is clear that at some point the engine will run out of fuel, David and his group runs the risk of ending up somewhere, since many bridges within the region have probably been destroyed. It is not clear whether the whole earth has suffered its apocalypse or whether the mist is only within a limited region; the group can only hope that Drayton really heard something on the radio (153) and that they will somehow manage to escape from the mist. What man finds after overcoming his inner demons is hence a landscape that has features of a Gothic labyrinth and where beings lurk that could crush him immediately. Therefore, even if he manages to escape his own prison, his future is nevertheless highly unsure as it might be already too late for any salvation. The dark experiments of the government have turned the environment into a hostile context, where there are forces outside which make mankind appear utterly helpless and insignificant.

This idea of man's absolute vulnerability in relation to a hostile environment as conveyed by the novel's ending can be regarded as a feature of the Gothic-pastoral mode that has been preserved in "The Mist". In fact, it can be found throughout the story. Already in the beginning, human weakness and passiveness in comparison to a much more potent nature is depicted: After the Draytons have had to wait for the storm to pass, on the next day, they find their boathouse and one of the house windows destroyed; moreover, a tree has fallen on Brent Norton's car. Whereas the thunderstorm and its consequences already expose mankind's inability to cope with the unleashed forces of nature, it nevertheless still represents a natural intrusion, which is only a slight anticipation of the unnatural, Gothic threat that is about to come.

The monstrous beings in the mist are, in the tradition of the unknown evil typical of the early twentieth-century writers, defined by a high degree of vagueness, which underlines their unearthly character and creates an atmosphere of gloomy suspense. In the beginning, the people within the supermarket can only hear a thud (61) and other strange noises, which they cannot account for. The vicious quality of the entities outside can already be guessed at from the fact that no one comes back from the mist. Soon, however, King makes use of a whole palette of gigantic monsters typical of the horror movie genre – be they tentacles, gigantic insects, pterodactyl-like creatures, spiders or giant lobsters. Despite the employment of these rather hackneyed figures, the novel tries to make them more fearsome by attributing extra-dimensional characteristics to them. One if the spiders, for instance, is referred to as being "no ordinary earthly spider blown up to horror movie size; it was something totally different, perhaps no spider at all" (133).

Although Drayton notes that the monsters are "no Lovecraftian horrors with immortal life but only organic creatures with their own vulnerabilities" (140-141), the weakness of their victims, who are unable to escape their death once the monsters take hold of them, is shocking: Norm, for example, is almost ripped apart by the tentacles that feed on him; Buddy Eagleton quickly bleeds to death when a spider wraps an acidic web-strand around his leg. In those cases, man appears to be entirely defenceless and is put into the position of a mere housefly killed by gigantic monsters, which do not really care for him due to his insignificance.

This continuation of the Gothic-pastoral insistence on mankind's vulnerability, in particular with regard to Lovecraft's *cosmicism*, becomes especially obvious in a key scene at the end of the novel. Here, the group of people that has left the supermarket encounters a monstrous behemoth, which, due to its vastness, defies everything human imagination allows for. Drayton and his companions can only see the bottom of its "Cyclopean legs going up and up into the mist like living towers until they were lost to sight" (151). The narrator concludes that it must be of extraterrestrial origin, as something of this size has never existed on earth (152). Giving rise to feelings of awe and terror, the monster's omnipotence underlines the unimportance of humanity, which seems to occupy a marginal position within the universe after all.[438]

In accordance with the previous tradition, this insistence on human vulnerability is conceived of as representative of contemporary anxieties. As has been stated before, the devastation of the countryside by an anti-pastoral, extra-dimensional force reflects fears concerning a hostile government which, behind the official ideology of a democratic and benevolent America, pursues malevolent intentions. On the one hand, this severe mistrust of the American authorities must be seen as a reaction to current events associated with the Watergate affair. On the other hand, it highlights concerns that the technology the government – and humanity in general – makes use of could get out of control, with horrific consequences for the environment. In fact, the countryside's sudden upheaval and its deathly character, which forces people to stay within the protected space of the supermarket, carries strong undertones of a nuclear fallout, which was, in times of the Cold War, seen as a persistent threat.[439]

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438 Cf. Ibid., 96; Robert M. Price. "Stephen King and the Lovecraft Mythos", in *Discovering Stephen King*, ed. Darrell Schweitzer. Starmont Studies in Literary Criticism, Vol. 8. Mercer Island, Wash.: Starmont House, 1985, 111.

439 These fears of nuclear devastation are a persistent feature within King's *oeuvre*. To name just a few, novels which exhibit these anxieties are, for example, *The Stand* (1978), *Dead Zone* (1979) or *The Dark Tower III: Wastelands* (1991). Cf. also Oakes, *Science*, 92.

"The Mist" hence shows an extreme reduction of features typical of Gothic-pastoral convention. There is no establishment of any elements relating to the pastoral ideal anymore; nor is there a dichotomy between city and country, which are both described as inherently evil. The same holds true for the opposition of two voices, which has been entirely annihilated. Nevertheless, the attitude typical of the Gothic and the pastoral, i.e. the insistence on man's vulnerability, which is seen as representative of the contemporary reader's weakness, has been preserved. This continuation of a reduced or liminal form of this hybrid mode will be illustrated by two further examples in the following.

The extremely negative image of a rural enclave, whose inhabitants lack any sense of community for the most part and whose hostilities can easily be aggravated by an external evil to the point where open enmity results, finds particular expression in King's 1991 novel *Needful Things*. In this story, the fictional small town of Castle Rock becomes the prey of the devil figure Leland Gaunt, who opens a new shop selling useless objects disguised as the things the respective customer wants most. In exchange for these items, the customers commit themselves to playing little 'pranks' on their fellows, which intensifies already existing antagonisms and ultimately even leads to the almost complete destruction of the town.

Similarly to "The Mist", the novel lacks the classic idyllic/pastoral stock features to describe the natural surroundings. In the only case where they appear, they are used in an ironic way to underline the discrepancy between the image of a harmless community the reader maybe has in mind and the reality of a hostile and misanthropic society. In the beginning, the narrator, introducing the major characters, mockingly describes the environment of Castle Rock as a *locus amoenus* with simple inhabitants, who have their occasional but harmless 'fights':[440]

> The sun shines pretty on the lake and on the leaves of the trees, and on a clear day you can see all the way into Vermont from the top of Castle View. The summer people argue over the Sunday newspapers, and there is the occasional fight in the parkin lot of The Mellow Tiger on Friday or Saturday night (sometimes both), but the summer people always go home and the fights always end. (10)

The ironic implications of this description are soon revealed in the course of the story: Here, it is clearly emphasised that this is not a society where people live in a Golden Age of

[440] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Stephen King. *Needful Things* [1991]. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007.

harmony with each other but a depraved place, where almost everyone has his weaknesses and flaws. These negative traits make the inhabitants of Castle Rock particularly susceptible to the spell of Leland Gaunt, who knows their respective biographies and secrets. Even more than the previous novel, *Needful Things* places particular emphasis on the fact that this location is already before the devil's arrival thoroughly depraved and vicious. The invasion of a monster figure is hence not only a catalyst for the aggravation of existing tensions but even appears to be the logical consequence of the community's inherent viciousness.

Danforth Keeton, for instance, has a certain degree of authority due to his position as one of the town's selectmen. He is a brutal choleric, who often wreaks his anger on his wife Myrtle. Because of his long addiction to gambling, in particular horse racing, he has increasingly run up depths, which he paid from the town's funds, and is now scared of a coming investigation by the higher authorities. Over the years, he has become affected with paranoia, as he believes in his persecution by "Them", authority figures that want to unmask him and drive him insane. The secret double life he leads as well as his mental disposition drive him quickly into Gaunt's hands, whose assistant he becomes, eventually murdering his wife and planting dynamite around the town.

Nettie Cobb is also a mentally unstable person, but for different reasons. After years of severe abuse by her husband, she murdered him, which brought her into a mental institution. Although her deed appears to be morally ambivalent as it was the result of brutal treatment by her husband, the fact that she already killed someone demonstrates that she is capable of doing it again. After her dog has been slaughtered by Hugh Priest (who receives a fox tail from Gaunt in exchange), she wrongly accuses Wilma Jerzyck. The latter, in turn, thinks that Nettie first polluted her white sheets with mud and spoiled the interior of her house with stones (which Brian Rusk had to do for a rare baseball card obtained at "Needful Things").

Wilma Jerzyck does not even need to trade with the devil in order to contribute to the aggravation of mutual enmity in Castle Rock. Her husband, whom she has cowed into devoutness, is scared of her fierce temper, and frequently drugs her with Xanax pills when she is about to have one of her furious outbreaks. She loves challenges with her fellow citizens, which she regards as little war games. Having had earlier disputes with Nettie because she is annoyed of her dog's barking, she quickly suspects her when she finds out that someone has been playing 'pranks' on her. Even though she does not kill Nettie's dog, she stalks and threatens her with phone calls in which she announces her revenge. With Nettie and Wilma, King confronts a complementary couple, the obsessive-challenging versus the over-anxious and lonely woman, both of whom do not need much help by the catalyst powers

of evil to cause their mutual downfall. Eventually, the two women stab each other in the middle of a street.

Moral depravity is not only a feature of the individuals at Castle Rock but even typical of the institutions that should set an example of charity and compassion. Instead of observing basic Christian principles or working for the good of the community, the local churches are characterised by a high degree of mutual hostility and try to aggravate already existing tensions. The leaders of the Catholic and the Baptist church, Father Brigham and Reverend William Rose, actively call their followers into action against the other populace. Particularly the plans of the Catholics to hold a "Casino Nite" are perceived as a provocation by the Baptists, who try to prevent it by all means. Towards the end of the novel, these enmities escalate into an open battle between both sides. According to Magistrale, King's religious institutions "are all characterized as spiritually bankrupt, functioning with neither a regard for life nor a concern for the consequences of illegal and illicit actions"; besides, they feature leaders who "dedicate themselves only to the perpetuation of authority and the methods necessary for maintaining it".[441]

Leland Gaunt is the typical Gothic monster figure. Like Dracula, he says "Leave some of the happiness you bring" to his customers (e.g. 28).[442] Moreover, he is alluring and repulsive alike, since on the one hand, he pretends to sell people the thing they most desire and is very charismatic; on the other hand, close physical contact makes his customers recoil from him. Brian Rusk, for instance, who is his first customer, feels an instant liking for him; at the same time, shaking Gaunt's hands makes him feel extremely uncomfortable (28). As soon as people enter into trade with this demon, their soul belongs to him. They are imprisoned in a mental *locus conclusus*, since the attraction towards the desired objects they buy is so strong that they do not want to give them up by any means and do whatever Gaunt asks them to do.

After selling their souls to the proprietor of "Needful Things", the inhabitants of Castle Rock develop into Gothic doppelgangers. In a Dorian-Gray-like manner, they try to protect their greatest treasure (the item they bought at the shop) and secretly commit depraved deeds which no one would trace back to them. Brian Rusk, for instance, does not have any connection with Wilma Jerzyck, which makes it hard for Sheriff Pangborn to find out that the boy, and not Nettie, is responsible for the devastation of Wilma's house. Even before Gaunt's

441 Magistrale, *Landscape*, 36.

442 Stoker, *Dracula*, 16.

arrival, the rural society is not a "knowable community" in Raymond William's terms,[443] since almost everyone already had their secrets. With the advent of the devil, however, this situation is severely exacerbated: The place quickly develops into a Gothic labyrinth normally found in the city, where deeds can be secretly committed within an atmosphere of anonymity. The rural enclave increasingly becomes a Gothic community, a place of darkness and unobservability, which once again renders a distinction between city and country obsolete. The situation finally culminates in an atmosphere of open hostility, where people fight against each other in public, resulting in many deaths and the annihilation of almost the whole place.

As in the previous text, King sets the pastoral motif of childhood innocence against the fallen adult world, whose depravities have enabled the intrusion of evil in the first place. Being confronted with Gaunt in demonic form, Sheriff Pangborn can expel him by making use of simple tricks associated with the time of childish imagination and playfulness. For this purpose, he takes out a bouquet of paper flowers from a magician's trick he has with him, uttering the words "Abracadabra" (920). From the bouquet, a blinding light emerges, which harms the demon, who is then forced to leave the town and release the souls he captured. The adoption of childish innocence, even if only symbolically, is hence the only way to defeat the Gothic monster which has been conjured up by the depraved adults.

Similarly to "The Mist", however, this victory does not leave much space for hope, since it comes far too late. After all, the community, which did not need much assistance by the forces of evil to bring about its own downfall, has been almost totally destroyed. This pessimistic image is also conveyed at the end of the novel, where it turns out that Gaunt, despite having been defeated, will open a new shop somewhere else. The epilogue (directly addressing the reader with its title "You have been here before" [929]), which has the same structure as the prologue but just deals with a different community, conveys a mood of Gothic inescapability. After all, it suggests that people will fall victim to Gaunt's spell - and by implication their inner devil - as long as humanity exists.

Besides, although the adoption of a childhood perspective is necessary for the adult to face evil, this state itself is characterised by extreme weakness and vulnerability. After all, Brian Rusk, a boy, is the first one to trade with Gaunt, which demonstrates that the child can easily fall victim to the devil's corrupting influence and must hence be protected by the grown-up. This, however, seldom works and has fatal consequences, at the climax of which stands the

[443] Williams, *The Country and the City*, 165.

child's death. Brian's mother Cora, for instance, who obtained a pair of sunglasses which formerly belonged to "the King" and by means of which she can give in to her sexual fantasies with her idol, does not care for her children anymore and locks herself up in the bedroom. Being eaten up by feelings of guilt for what happened to Nettie and Wilma because of his 'pranks', Brian, left alone by his mother, finally commits suicide. This pessimistic image of a world where the child is extremely vulnerable to the sins committed by the adults and must even suffer from their consequences in dreadful ways is even more strongly elaborated in the last example of King's Gothic pastoral to be discussed in this chapter.

King's short story "Children of the Corn" represents the most extreme case of subverting the pastoral notion of childhood innocence within his rural fiction. Here, the Gothic country does not feature any fallen adults anymore; instead, similarly to *Lord of the Flies*, the community consists only of children, who have completely lost their former innocence and purity. Unlike in Golding's novel, however, there is not one example of a good child that opposes the general viciousness of this society, which appears as completely lost.

Burt and Vicky, a couple whose marriage is in ruins, driving through a vast expanse of seemingly endless cornfields in Nebraska, accidentally run over the body of a young boy, whose throat has been cut. They decide to go to the nearby town of Gatlin in order to report this to the authorities. On their arrival, they note that something is wrong with the town, which appears entirely deserted and where the last time the sign posts and calendars were actualised was in 1964. The only building with recent signs is the church, where Burt finds out that the local children killed all the adults in 1964 and worship a demonic deity, who lives in the corn fields and is referred to as "He Who Walks Behind the Rows" (418).[444] Moreover, anyone reaching the age of nineteen is sacrificed to this monstrous being. Whereas Vicky is immediately killed by the children, Burt initially manages to flee into the surrounding fields. In the end, however, both are sacrificed to the demon.

The state of the corn fields is directly linked to the killing of the representatives of a depraved adult world. As Burt reads in the church, "THUS LET THE INIQUITOUS BE CUT DOWN SO THAT THE GROUND MAY BE FERTILE AGAIN SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS" (404). The "iniquitous" are the grown-ups, whose increasingly sinful behaviour was somehow associated with the dying of the corn by the children (406). It is implied that the

[444] Subsequent references to the following edition are cited parenthetically by page number within the text: Stephen King. "Children of the Corn" [1978], in *Night Shift*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007, 380-420.

purity and wholesomeness of the fields has been re-established with the community's disposal of its adults. However, there is something odd about the corn, which, lacking any tattered leaves, caterpillar eggs or even weed, is in a state of perfectness that is uncanny (415-416). Moreover, although the smell of fertiliser brings good associations to Burt's mind since it reminds him of the beginning of summer during his childhood, he also notes that there is a "sickish-sweet undertone. Almost a death smell" (399), which anticipates the evil character of the place.

This Gothicised portrayal of the natural environment, whose idyllicism does not create an atmosphere of tranquillity but rather an ominous mood, stands in a metonymical relation to the state of the local community. Although it only consists of children, this does not convey the typical pastoral image of an original innocence. Rather, the local inhabitants have assumed the same cruelty as known from the adult world. Leaving the church, Burt is enclosed by a horde of children, whose young age and appearance stands in contrast to the brutality of their intended murder. As in the surrounding corn fields, a paradoxical image arises: "Some of them were laughing gaily. They held knives, hatches, pipes, rocks, hammers. One girl, maybe eight, with beautiful long hair, held a jackhandle" (407).

Despite this reduction the Gothic-pastoral opposition between idyllic/pastoral and anti-pastoral/Gothic elements as represented by the annihilation of the difference between childhood innocence and adult viciousness, the story preserves, similarly to the previous texts, the insistence on representative vulnerability. The corruption of the corn fields as well as the destruction of the children's innocence represents a reaction to a fallen adult society, whose depravity must be punished by the killing of its members. This depravity is seen on two levels within the text.

The first is the societal level of dysfunctional human relations, epitomised by Vicky and Burt's marriage, which is defined by mutual hate, fights, viciousness and egotism. In fact, the intruders' imprisonment within this *locus conclusus* and their death is seen as a direct consequence of their marital discordance: When Vicky begs Burt to leave Gatlin as quickly as possible, he still wants to enter the local church and even takes the keys of the car away from her. Although he notices that Vicky was right with her assumption about the dangerous character of the place once he is inside, Burt nevertheless decides to stay a bit longer in order to torture her. This, however, drives his wife and later him directly into the hands of the children.

The second is the cultural level of American politics and collective guilt. Although only implicitly, the story links the return to an uncanny childish innocence and the re-fertilisation

of the corn fields to the American engagement in Vietnam. After all, the time when the killing of the adults started was the year when the phase of American involvement began; moreover, the smell of the fertiliser with its deathly undertones brings back to Burt's mind his time as a medical orderly during the war (399).[445] The deterioration of the land hence recalls the violation of the soil and the killing of many Vietnamese people during the war; moreover, the people above the age of nineteen were most responsible for the destruction of land and lives within Vietnam but also of the image of American innocence.[446] The events that happened in Gatlin in 1964 and the establishment of a cruel child society is preceived as a punishment for America's fall from grace; driving towards the town, Burt and Vicky hear a child's voice preaching on the radio: "There's some that think it's okay to get out in the world, as if you could work and walk in the world without being smirched by the world" (388).

The larger world of adult politics and society, the corruption of its institutions and its sense of community, appears hence responsible for the destruction of childhood innocence and the surrounding pastoral idyll. Whereas the latter has been re-established to a state of purity and perfectness that borders on the uncanny, the former will be forever lost: At the end of the story, the corn deity lowers the age of sacrifice from nineteen to eighteen, which implies that America's guilt inherited from the Vietnam war will never be completely atoned for.[447] This ending conveys, similarly to *Needful Things*, a cyclic image of the history of humanity, which will make the same mistakes over and over again and for which there is hence no hope of salvation.

To sum up, an extreme reduction and commodification of features typically associated with the conventional repertoire of the Gothic-pastoral mode has taken place in King's fiction. There is often no dichotomy between idyllic and Gothic elements anymore; instead, emphasis is placed on the undoubtedly Gothic side of the rural enclave. In the rare cases where idyllic elements appear, they are either employed in an ironic way or combined with uncanny undertones. The same holds true for the temporal opposition of the state of childhood innocence and the fallen adult world, since the child can even assume the cruelty and vices of its parents. Moreover, there is no opposition between the 'bad' city and the 'good' country or

445 Cf. Magistrale, *Landscape*, 80.

446 Cf. Ibid., 79.

447 Cf. Ibid., 92.

vice versa; nor can this opposition at the same time be blurred anymore. Instead, the countryside appears as an observable microcosm of the same vices and depravity associated with the urban sphere. Accordingly, there is no tension concerning a contemporary ideology either, since the image of a 'superior' and 'progressive' America, with a government that works for the good of its citizens, is subverted from the very beginning without being established in the first place.

The result is an extremely negative portrayal of the rural retreat. Here, it seems that anyone – be it the country-dweller, the urbanite, the institutions of the larger world (e.g. the government, religion), or even the child – turns out to be evil. The monstrous intrusion of the forces of evil into the countryside appears hence as the logical consequence of the ongoing moral decay and social instability within the rural - and by implication urban – society. In fact, the motif of pastoral seclusion is strongly undermined, being only possible in a life of withdrawal from any kind of community. With a lack of a fixed value system, everything appears as inherently bad and perverted throughout King's fiction – be it human society, its institutions, its morals, or, eventually, any pastoral and/or Gothic mode that tries to oscillate between setting up and undermining a kind of order.

Despite this extreme transformation of the Gothic-pastoral mode, it does not mean that it has become obsolete or developed entirely into something else. Instead, one can still speak of a continuation, albeit in an extremely modified form. As has been demonstrated, King's texts still fulfil the basic criterion that this mode explores the weakness of humble figures in relation to their environment. Whether the author makes use of Lovecraftian monsters, typical Gothic villains like Leland Gaunt or a demon like the "corn deity" – there is always an insistence on the idea that mankind would be extremely powerless in comparison to an intruding evil force. This vulnerability is regarded as representative of anxieties typical of the contemporary reader's world. In fact, it reflects a broad spectrum of fears and uncertainties, ranging from those related to a malevolent American government and the devastation of the environment subsequent to a nuclear fallout up to feelings of cultural guilt arising from the Vietnam war. And even in a novel like *Needful Things*, which for the most part lacks any direct references to the reader's society or political reality, the general insistence on human weakness is nevertheless emphasised in the extensive portrayal of a dysfunctional society, whose individuals easily fall victim to the devil. It is by this means – the insistence on man's vulnerability in relation to his environment, which is conceived of as representative of the anxieties of its specific culture – that the Gothic-pastoral mode and therefore also each mode by itself lives on in King's fiction.

6. Conclusion

One of the basic theses of this study was the following: If one rejects the view that the pastoral is merely a sentimentalist mode portraying a pleasing idyll and the Gothic a sensationalist form emphasising only chaos and darkness, four fields of overlap between both can be found. Three of them refer to their conventional character, which means the use of a set of features that are taken up and commodified repeatedly; the fourth field comprises their shared attitude, i.e. a specific view of human possibilities within the fictional – and by implication – the real world. Whereas the conventional traits all consist of certain dichotomies (civilisation versus savagery, order versus disturbance and two contrary voices regarding dominant discourses), the underlying attitude manifests itself in an emphasis on representative vulnerability. With the help of these four features, it was argued, a whole tradition of a resulting Gothic-pastoral mode can be traced, whose roots can be already found in antiquity but which is not fully developed prior to the late nineteenth century. Before summarising the precise constituents of this hybrid form, a brief summary of its historical development, which constituted the main part of this analysis, will be given.

Virgil's *Eclogues* are the first pastoral texts in which the four elements allowing for an overlap with the Gothic occur. *Eclogue* I, for instance, explores the tension between the life within a fictional rural space and the contemporary politics associated with the city of Rome. The dichotomy between order and disturbance is represented by an opposition of pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral elements, which is linked to the fate of two shepherds; while one of them may live in harmony with an ideal nature, the other must leave his lands, which will soon be devastated by soldiers. The herdsmen's inability to change their lot is seen as typical of the contemporary reader's world, where many people shared the same fate during the land expropriations under Octavian. By presenting two voices, one of which conforms to (because it has been favoured by) while the other subverts (because it has been victim to) the current system, Virgil can utter his ambivalent attitude towards it without risking to expose himself too much. In a figurative sense, the poem enables the contemporary reader to 'move' into a borderland space, where he can not only scrutinise the shortcomings of the political system of his time but also explore his own weakness in displaced form, and eventually 'return' to his own world with a new awareness of these issues.

An important model which is particularly useful for the analysis of the Gothic-pastoral mode can be found within Homer's *Odyssey* and was referred to as the *locus conclusus*. Here, the dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral elements has been widened in an extreme way: Whereas the former are merely a façade which veils the prison-like character of the place, the latter are embodied by a dangerous monster figure. This being is always defeated by the hero, who, in contrast to the weak shepherds in the pastoral, exhibits a great strength relative to his world.

In the English literary tradition, the aforementioned features are continued in several texts from Renaissance times up to the mid-eighteenth century. The most prominent element these writings exhibit is the opposition of a pastoral idyll and its anti-pastoral disturbance; the latter can, for instance, be represented by lawless bandits (cf. Spenser's brigands), a savage outcast from civilisation (cf. Shakespeare's Caliban) or the devil (cf. Milton's Satan). In these instances, the retreat-return movement is often literally done by the protagonist, who leaves the courtly/urban world for the country and but eventually resumes his previous existence. Whereas a permanent sojourn in the rural enclave is not desirable as it will result in the hero's effemination or degeneration, a temporary stay has salutary effects: Either the protagonist gains an insight which is useful for his further quest (cf. *The Faerie Queene*) or the conflicts of the larger world are resolved (cf. *The Tempest*). In a similar way, the idea of a bucolic existence which is healthful for the city-dweller but is not possible as a permanent way of living is taken up in *Paradise Lost*: Although here, emphasis is placed on man's irreversible loss of his harmony with nature, it can still be regained as a state of mind.

In the mid-eighteenth century, a Gothicisation of the anti-pastoral component can be observed. In the poems of the Graveyard school, the country is still regarded as a desirable refuge from the troubles of the city. However, it is simultaneously portrayed with images of graves, death and decay; in addition, it is the place where Gothic themes like human finitude and mortality are explored. The positive connotations as previously linked to the rural enclave are partly undermined, since the speaker's withdrawal into the pastoral context leads to a mood of melancholy and sadness; besides, his situation of loneliness and isolation remains unchanged after the stay in the country.

From the 1790s on, the Gothicisation of the anti-pastoral component also refers to the novel, resulting often in extreme portrayals of the country as both idyllic and terrible. In the texts up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the pessimism associated with the pastoral context is severely aggravated. It is now the place where the barbarism and savagery threatening the enlightened, civilised world can be found (cf. Radcliffe's Montoni). Moreover, the retreat-

return movement has fatal consequences: Not only is the intruder still an outsider after his sojourn in the country but his already existing evil traits are even severely intensified (cf. Shelley's monster, Brontë's Heathcliff and Lockwood). In other cases, in which the pastoral enclave has retained some of its healing powers, these are nevertheless ineffective in comparison to the much more potent evils from outside (cf. Maturin's Melmoth). Pessimism also arises from the modification of the *locus conclusus*: Unlike in antiquity, the intruder is not a strong hero anymore but a weak female (cf. Radcliffe's Emily). This continues the notion of representative vulnerability in a gendered form, thereby reflecting the current situation of women. However, early Gothic-pastoral texts paradoxically also challenge traditional stereotypes of the weak female, resulting in a Virgilian tension in which these dominant ideas are both confirmed and undermined. With the Gothicisation of the four fields in which the Gothic overlaps with the pastoral, these novels reflect a whole range of contemporary uncertainties and anxieties, e.g. concerning the upheavals associated with the French Revolution or the relation of the sexes.

In the late nineteenth century, the Gothic-pastoral mode reaches its climax, being a useful means to mirror doubts concerning the ideological distinction between a 'civilised' city and a 'savage' country as typical of the Empire Fiction. In order to account for the uniform appearance of this mode in the texts of this period, it was argued that the genre of the Gothic-pastoral romance emerges. Like the previous tradition, it concentrates on the protagonist's movement to the country and his eventual return. In this case, however, the rural retreat turns out not to be a harmless spot of nature but a Gothicised version of the *locus conclusus*. Whereas the intruder had already been depicted as weak in previous Gothic-pastoral texts, emphasis is now placed on the fact that he is the male representative of the British Empire. This idea is coupled with a blurring of the boundaries between the city-dweller and the monster figure, which turns out to be an integral part of him that he has suppressed due to his life in the supposedly civilised capital. The insight into the artificial character of civilisation has devastating consequences, since the urbanite is unable to re-join his fellow beings in the city again. As in Virgil's *Eclogues,* the depiction of a rural space is also a vehicle to carefully criticise the current system or express one's ambivalent attitude towards it. This particularly applies to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, whose portrayal of a Gothicised Africa openly conforms to and subverts the current ideology without revealing the author's own voice. Concerning the pastoral/Gothic dichotomy, a breaking down can be observed in favour of the latter in Conrad's novel. Nevertheless, it was argued that a remnant of the former idyll exists in terms of the attraction this rural retreat exerts on the urban intruder. Besides, it was shown

that there is a shift with regard to the motif of the *locus conclusus* in the course of the *fin de siècle*: In fact, it develops away from a merely physical to a rather psychological prison, which more and more explicitly emphasises the civilised man's attraction to evil.

Since there is an extreme diversification and transformation of the Gothic-pastoral tradition in the twentieth century, the analysis was confined to two major continuations in that period. In the first group of texts (Machen, Blackwood, Lovecraft), there is a tremendous widening of the city-country dichotomy. Whereas the city is still regarded as the haven of civilisation, the country is closer to an existence removed from the human world in general. The monsters behind the façade of a seemingly harmless and idyllic nature are far older and much more powerful than an insignificant humanity, whose weakness is now explored within a cosmic perspective. The insight associated with the rural context, which reveals the nothingness of any human achievement such as, for instance, civilisation and science, is so devastating that no literal retreat-return movement is necessary anymore; instead, mere knowledge by way of second-hand narration or the piecing together of information relating to this 'truth' often suffices to destroy the city-dweller's understanding of his world. However, despite the insistence on the extreme otherness of the monster found within the country, it turned out that it also represents a part of the human characters; accordingly, these texts continue the late-nineteenth-century oscillation between two voices, one of which confirms the idea of a civilised world with clearly demarcated borders while the other subverts it.

The second group (Golding, King) displays precisely the opposite tendency. In these texts, there is an extreme closeness of city and country, since the latter often appears merely as a microcosm of the former. This goes along with an extreme internalisation of the monster figure, which either does not exist outside at all anymore or is merely an outer mirror of man's vicious side. Although William Golding continues the Gothic-pastoral romance of the *fin de siècle*, he does not need to officially conform to and silently undermine an ideological city-country paradigm anymore. As a result, this concept is given up to a large extent - albeit not completely, since he still uses it in an ironic way or refers to it with the previous terminology. Moreover, there is a lack of a monstrous other, which is depicted as a falsely externalised projection of man's internal evil; this idea of an undoubtedly monstrous side within everyone is strongly underlined by the fact that it is not the adult but the child who unleashes it. Despite the reduction of the Gothic-pastoral opposition of two voices regarding the imperial ideology, a tension still exists in terms of the question whether there is hope for an undoubtedly evil humanity. Besides, the novel preserves the insistence on human

weakness in comparison to an evil threat, which is mainly conceived of as a weakness towards one's own, inner bestiality.

In Stephen King's fiction, the reduction of Gothic-pastoral features has progressed even further. Here, the distinction between city and country completely breaks down, since both are depicted as evil right from the beginning. Likewise, the opposition of two voices has been annihilated. There is no establishment of an order corresponding to a dominant discourse anymore which is simultaneously subverted; rather, emphasis is placed on the subversive elements. This also applies to the contrast between idyllic/pastoral and Gothic/anti-pastoral features, which breaks down in favour of the latter; in contrast to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, however, where there was still an alluring quality of the natural environment, King's rural retreats are entirely antisocial places, which do not exert the slightest attraction on anyone from outside. The external evil threatening the people in the country only serves as a catalyst to aggravate their already existing maliciousness. Nevertheless, since these texts still employ the insistence on representative human vulnerability, it was argued that one can still speak of a (highly modified) continuation of this hybrid mode.

After surveying the historical development of the Gothic-pastoral mode, its basic constituents shall now be summarised. Against the background of the three conventionalised features and the one attitude the Gothic and the pastoral have in common, a definition can be formulated with regard to the way these four elements are expressed when both modes co-occur.

The first conventional feature of this mixed form is the employment of the pastoral categories of city and country in order to express the Gothic tension between civilisation and savagery. The Gothic-pastoral mode establishes but at the same time blurs the boundaries between the evils of a more savage nature and the values associated with the supposedly civilised world of the city. By using a Gothicised version of the nature-nurture opposition, this mode questions the foundations that western civilisation is based upon in an extreme way; after all, it often suggests that this culture is merely a construct, based on the suppression of its more instinctual parts as represented by the monstrous beings found within the Gothic country. In other words, it unveils the silent truth that the civilised world, despite its achievements in terms of science, technology and social values, is nevertheless not as distant from its more natural, Gothic origins as it would like to be.

The second conventional element is the dichotomy between pastoral/idyllic and anti-pastoral/Gothic traits. In most of the texts under discussion, an opposition of the pastoral ideal and a Gothic counterforce can be observed. The latter can either be represented by the

real, monstrous nature of the place, which is hidden behind the deceptive façade of the pastoral ideal, e.g. in texts that use a Gothic version of the *locus conclusus* (cf. *The Time Machine*, *She*); or the idyllic state of nature is threatened by a Gothic invasion from outside (cf. "The Colour out of Space"). In both cases, the discrepancy arising from the combination of these antithetical elements is used to shock the reader by the sudden change from one extreme to the other.

The third feature within the conventionalised repertoire is the employment of the retreat-return movement in order to negotiate anxieties and uncertainties regarding current dominant discourses. The Gothic-pastoral mode transgresses the boundaries of its culture's norms and values in order to explore their fragility and pseudo-quality. This is one reason why the motif of the *locus conclusus* so frequently occurs within the manifestations of this form: It literally enacts the movement to a place that contains a monster representing the forbidden aspects and fears of a certain society. The result of this Gothicised retreat-return movement is a state of tension. Although a return to the dominant order of the respective socio-cultural context usually takes place, the subversion of this order and the exploration of its dark undercurrent which took place in the rural retreat cannot be undone anymore. In other words, Gothic-pastoral texts paradoxically confirm *and* subvert the hegemonic ideas of their time without resolving the resulting ambivalence in the end. This is a particularly convenient device in times when ideological pressure does not allow the author to openly utter his views about the current system; by using this method, he can carefully 'veil' his own voice.

The fourth feature refers to the attitude of Gothic-pastoral writings. It means the employment of the insistence on representative human vulnerability for the purpose of dealing with fundamental fears typical of a certain time. Usually, the protagonist finds himself in a context where he suddenly appears absolutely powerless in his attempts to deal with a monstrous counterforce threatening him. Since this feebleness can be regarded to be representative of the culture he comes from, it typifies specific anxieties concerning the latter's weakness. In the past, this has been a useful means to undermine the western belief in cultural or racial superiority, particularly at times when it was based on ideological premises. By employing this feature, the Gothic-pastoral mode is an important vehicle by which western culture can self-critically reflect on the preconditions its self-perception is based on.

As has become obvious in the course of the study, the Gothic-pastoral mode underwent an extreme transformation in postmodern times. Whereas the three aforementioned conventionalised features, i.e. the contrast between idyllic/pastoral and Gothic/anti-pastoral

elements, the opposition of civilisation and barbarism and the tension between containment and subversion, were all given up, the attitude, i.e. the insistence on representative vulnerability, was preserved. From this distinction between elements which are subject to historical change and those that remain stable, conclusions for the more abstract term *mode* can be drawn.

In fact, it can be concluded that a mode consists of two components. The first one is the *conventional* component, which means that a mode always relies on a certain repertoire of features which can be taken up and customised. The extreme modifications of these features can indeed lead to manifestations where it becomes doubtful if this is still the classic form of this mode or whether it has developed into something new. However, in order to judge this, one must also consider a second aspect, which can be called the *attitudinal* component. It refers to the fact that a mode also expresses a certain view of human strength in relation to the world, which is seen as representative of the reader's possibilities in his own world. Unless this second component, which is much more persistent than its conventional counterpart, also changes, it does not make sense to posit the obsolescence of a certain mode.

As has been demonstrated in this analysis, the definition of the term *mode* as consisting of a binary structure, which contains a flexible conventional and a stable attitudinal component, is particularly useful to account for the continuation of the Gothic-pastoral mode into postmodern times. In a wider context, it can also be employed to explain the general persistence of the Gothic and the pastoral respectively. After all, it contradicts the arguments found in contemporary criticism which either state that they have developed into "post-pastoral" or "post-Gothic" forms or even proclaim their death.

In the case of the pastoral, Barrell and Bull argue for an obsolescence, which they account for with the breaking down of the distinction between city and country in the postmodern era:

> The separation of life in the town and in the country that the Pastoral demands is now almost devoid of any meaning. It is difficult to pretend that the English countryside is now anything more than an extension of the town; that the industrial and technological processes of urban production differ at all significantly from those of the 'Factory Farm'; that the function of the modern farm-manager is essentially any different from that of his urban counterpart; that the Pastoral has not become in fact just another trip, another Sunday afternoon drive.[448]

Although Terry Gifford does not speak of the death of the pastoral mode, he states that in most cases, there has been such an extreme transformation of its features that it has developed

[448] Barrell and Bull, *Pastoral Verse*, 432.

into something that does not have much to do with the original tradition anymore. For him, the term *pastoral* has, due to its idealised imagery of happy people living in accord with an untouched nature, become increasingly suspect in modern times; he considers this to be the result of its misuse to veil the hardships of people in the countryside for ideological purposes in the eighteenth century. He therefore suggests that in order to explain the continuity of the tradition based on the pastoral, it makes sense to speak of a "post-pastoral" mode. In his opinion, this new form "has avoided the traps of idealisation in seeking to find a discourse that can both celebrate *and* take some responsibility for nature without false consciousness".[449] Although for Brian Loughrey, the pastoral is anything but obsolete, he still regards this continuation with a high degree of pessimism. According to him, *pastoral* is a "contested term" nowadays, which is due to the fact that critics have used this label to refer to a "bewildering variety of works"; as a consequence, it is often applied to any text dealing with rural life.[450]

Whether declaring the obsolescence of this form, its transformation into a "post-pastoral" mode or its diffusion into a "bewildering variety", these critics all have one thing in common: They have a very narrow view of *pastoral*, which they define merely by its portrayal of the pastoral ideal. Loughrey, for instance, argues that before its development into a "contested" form, the term had a "fairly limited and stable sense"; in his view, this stable meaning was provided by the definition of the *OED* mentioned at the very beginning of this analysis, which characterises *pastoral* as a form that portrays an idealised countryside with happy shepherds in it.[451] If they use the term *anti-pastoral* at all, these critics do not include it within their definition of this mode but treat it as a tradition in itself, which is opposed to the 'pure' pastoral form as established by Theocritus and Virgil. Gifford, for example, devotes a whole chapter to what he perceives as an anti-pastoral tradition, which developed from the eighteenth century on and revealed doubts concerning the false image of life in the country as portrayed in the classical pastoral;[452] although he admits that anti-pastoral elements can be already found in antiquity, these are exceptional for him.[453]

As has become obvious in this analysis, the pastoral does not merely concentrate on a sentimental portrayal of a pastoral idyll; instead, there has been an oscillation between

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449 Gifford, *Pastoral*, 148.

450 Loughrey, *Pastoral Mode*, 8.

451 Ibid.; cf. Simpson, *OED*, s.v. "Pastoral".

452 Cf. Gifford, *Pastoral*, 116-145.

453 Cf. Ibid., 120.

idealised and anti-pastoral features from its beginnings. This aspect shows the enormous flexibility of this form, which can even include Gothic elements. Accordingly, Gifford is right in stating that the anti-pastoral traits result from doubts concerning the idealisation associated with the bucolic context. However, far from being exceptional when they first occurred in antiquity, they have always played an important role in this tradition. Hence, their existence does not argue for an obsolescence of this mode but even underlines its continuity.

And yet, in postmodern occurrences like King's texts, there is a tendency of foregrounding the anti-pastoral elements at the expense of the pastoral/idyllic features. Moreover, a breaking down of the city-country dichotomy can be observed, which corresponds to Barrell and Bull's main argument for the death of pastoral writing. However, since traits like the dichotomy between idealised imagery and anti-pastoral counterforce as well as the urban-rural opposition belong to the conventional component of the pastoral mode, their disappearance still does not argue for its extinction. As has been demonstrated, the attitudinal component, i.e. the insistence on representative vulnerability, has been preserved in all the texts under consideration. This reveals that this mode lives on in an extremely modified way.

As far as the Gothic is concerned, no one has hitherto declared its obsolescence. On the contrary, due to its immense proliferation in the postmodern era, critics frequently use the metaphor of an "undead" form that will, as the ghosts it deals with, never die:

> Even at the moment when it appears to have given up the ghost, the gothic keeps on returning, even as it dies, or appears to be decaying. It starts to be celebrated, or perhaps fed upon, by the spectre of criticism, for example, or else it feeds upon itself.[454]

Indeed, when looking at the occurrence of elements traditionally assigned to the Gothic in contemporary culture, a tremendous spread can be observed, ranging from novels, comics and films up to video games, fashion or even youth culture. From a marginal cultural phenomenon, the Gothic has hence become a central one. Angela Carter summed this up in her famous statement that "we live in Gothic times".[455] This proliferation of forms that are deemed Gothic nowadays can also be observed within Gothic criticism. As Andrea Warwick notes, many scholars employ the label *Gothic* for a wide range of texts which would not have been classified this way before, e.g. science fiction, feminist or Victorian literature.[456]

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454 Julian Wolfreys. "Preface: 'I Could a Tale Unfold' or, the Promise of Gothic", in *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Ruth Robins and Julian Wolfreys. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000, xii.

455 Angela Carter. *Burning your Boats: Collected Short Stories*. London: Penguin, 1995, 460.

456 Cf. Warwick, "Feeling Gothicky?", 6.

Similarly to Loughrey, who criticises the application of the term *pastoral* to any text dealing with rural themes, she complains that there is an over-use of the term *Gothic* for any form negotiating anxieties of a respective culture without a previous consideration on what definition it is based.[457]

Besides this spread of the Gothic in contemporary culture and crticism, Warwick argues that a significant shift can be observed from the mid-twentieth century on. Whereas previous texts were characterised by their dealing with those areas of a respective culture that are linked to taboo, trauma and prohibition, postmodern Gothic celebrates and puts these aspects into focus; it is "a staging of the desire *for* trauma, the desire to be haunted, because we do not feel complete without it".[458]

This extreme insistence on issues which were once marginalised has even led some critics to conclude that this mode faces exhaustion. Botting's term "Candygothic" is what he regards as a post-Gothic form, which is derived from but does not have the same function as the 'classic' mode anymore.[459] It refers to the fact that contemporary texts, due to their foregrounding and continual repetition of horrid thrills, use a version of Gothic which has been thinned out:

> 'Candygothic' signifies an attempt to reassess the function of horror in a (western) culture in which transgressions, taboos, prohibitions no longer mark an absolute limit in unbearable excess and thus no longer contain the intensity of a desire for something that satisfyingly disturbs and defines social and moral boundaries. Though numerous figures of horror are thrown up by contemporary fiction and film – Krugers, Chuckies, Pinheads, Lecters, their shelf-life seems limited in the face of a demand for more thrilling horrors, their terror index-linked to the novelties provided by special effects, visual techniques and stylized killing.[460]

In his view, the mode merely works as a sweetshop of cheap thrills which are used again and again but which ultimately do not, as was previously the case, transgress and reconstitute the boundaries of its own culture; reflecting mainly a society's fascination with what is central to it anyway, the Gothic's function remains at best an entertaining one. This, however, means that it loses its former intensity, i.e. its ability to negotiate the anxieties of its respective socio-cultural context:

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457 Cf. Ibid.

458 Ibid., 12.

459 Cf. Botting, "Candygothic"; cf. also ---. "Aftergothic: Consumption, Machines, and Black Holes", in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

460 Botting, "Candygothic", 134.

> A matter of style, life-choice, even personal taste, Gothic currently exists in domains of fashion and entertainment as one genre among many: normalized and commodified, it has a whiff of delicatessen in its taste for blood, its macabre topics lightly spiced by camp and kitsch.[461]

There is surely no negating that with the spread of the Gothic in current culture and the occurrence of its stock features in so many literary texts, indeed a loss of its intensity has in some cases taken place. In Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005-2008), for instance, where the vampire has changed from a formerly fearful abject figure to a sympathetic and romantic lover, there is no exploration of fundamental cultural fears with the help of Gothic elements anymore; on the contrary, these features are, in Botting's sense, mainly used as a matter of style to underline the teenage romance plot at the heart of this story.

Returning to the aforementioned redefinition of *mode*, it could be argued that in such 'trivialised' cases of the Gothic, there has been a split of the conventional and the attitudinal component. Whereas before, this form was defined by a certain repertoire of stock features which were simultaneously used to explore current anxieties as represented by the protagonist's weakness, in many postmodern texts only the conventional elements survive without their attitudinal counterpart. As a result, these features have become independent of the original tradition and can be used in the most superficial occurrences. The encapsulation of the conventional traits from the underlying attitude has actually occurred since the beginnings of the Gothic, resulting, for instance, in several parodies.[462] In postmodern times, however, there is an immense proliferation of these texts, which is why it makes sense to assume a more wide-ranging split of a former binary structure here.

This does not mean, however, that the Gothic in general has come to complete exhaustion and is merely confined to a loose continuation of superficial features. Instead, as has been demonstrated in this analysis, there are still occurrences in which the opposite situation is the case: Although the conventional traits have been tremendously reduced, the attitudinal component of this mode is still employed. Stephen King' texts, for instance, modify typical Gothic stock features to an extent where at times it becomes doubtful whether one can still assign them to the 'classic' Gothic repertoire; at the attitudinal level, however, they preserve the focus on representative human vulnerability. This demonstrates that the Gothic, like the pastoral, in some cases still lives on by using this basic mechanism, which has been a constant feature of this mode since its inception. Moreover, it reveals that one cannot label

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461 Botting, "Aftergothic", 287.

462 Cf., for instance, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817).

any literary form dealing with cultural fears as *Gothic*; rather, one should always check whether a certain text fulfils this fundamental criterion.

Admittedly, the argument for a postmodern continuity of the pastoral and the Gothic due to the preservation of a stable attitudinal component and the use of a highly commodified or reduced conventional component raises the problem of delineation. In other words, if the insistence on human vulnerability, which is an identical feature of both modes, is the means by which they live on in postmodern times, the question arises what difference between both remains after all. And indeed, it could be argued that in King's texts, there is hardly any way anymore to distinguish these forms from each other. Nevertheless, even in these instances, a few conventional traits typical of *either* the pastoral *or* the Gothic have been preserved; while in the former case, it is the concentration on a small, rural community or the investigation of the general interrelatedness of man and his environment, in the latter case, there are elements like giant monsters or villain figures the author frequently makes use of.

In a wider context, one should not assume a general confluence of both forms in postmodern times, as there are several instances of Gothic and pastoral which insist on the common feature of man's weakness but still make use of certain conventionalised elements that can only be assigned to either mode. For the Gothic, Alan Moore's famous graphic novel *Watchmen* (1986-1987) is a prominent example. On the one hand, it depicts an extremely negative, urban world of Gothic horrors, where the protagonists themselves are extremely flawed; on the other hand, despite their attempts at averting the impending doom, i.e. the destruction of Manhattan, they are on the whole absolutely powerless and therefore unable to prevent it. For the pastoral, John Montague's collection of poetry *The Rough Field* (1989) can be named. Here, it is particularly in the epilogue that the author bemoans the loss of a kind of a Golden Age opposed to the harshness and atrocities associated with the contemporary problems in Northern Ireland; at the same time, he expresses a pessimistic view concerning man's ability to oppose these troubles or at least to escape them.[463]

The preservation of a particular attitude while at the same time deploying an extremely transformed conventional repertoire is hence only one of many ways in which the Gothic and the pastoral have survived. Nervertheless, it shows that at times one can actually account for the means by which these forms persist instead of either capitulating to the immense diversity

[463] Cf. John Montague. "Epilogue", in *The Rough Field* [1961-1971]. 5th ed. Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1990, 81-83.

of their respective postmodern manifestations or declaring that they have developed into something else. Critics like Spooner may be right to some extent by stating that "ultimately, perhaps, the resurgence of the Gothic in so many areas of contemporary culture arises from different, localized needs rather than one over-arching one";[464] however, the results of this study have demonstrated that at least in some cases, its existence can be explained by means of a specific feature, i.e. the insistence on representative human vulnerability. The importance of this element for the persistence of the Gothic and the pastoral from the late twentieth century on becomes also obvious when we take a look at further cases of intersection between both modes which have not been treated within this analysis.

A major field in this respect is that of dystopian fiction. Here, the retreat into an unspoiled nature is used to establish a contrast to a technologically highly advanced but also declining urban existence; in such cases, emphasis is frequently placed on the inescapable doom of the protagonist and his weakness in relation to the larger forces threatening him. In George Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* (1949), for instance, Winston Smith's temporary freedom he can enjoy in the idyllic country with his lover Julia turns out to be highly deceptive; after all, he cannot escape the extreme vigilance and violence of the contemporary system in the long run. Likewise, in Edward Bond's *Lear* (1971), the king, after his expulsion from power, seeks refuge in a rural enclave, where he is received by a humble family and which is contrasted with an extremely inhuman courtly society; in the end, however, the bucolic idyll is destroyed by soldiers and Lear, after becoming a humble figure typical of the pastoral, is killed.

The Gothic-pastoral mode also finds several twenty-first-century continuations. Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road* (2006), for instance, features the journey of a father and his son through the barren landscape of a postapocalyptic world, where due to an unknown ecological catastrophe all vegetation has died. In its depiction of an anti-pastoral setting, which is at times interspersed with Gothic images of decaying houses, whose inhabitants have turned to cannibalism, the novel shows how the social order has broken down due to the loss of man's connection to a sustaining environment. This emphasises not only his vulnerability towards but also his dependence on a functioning ecological system.

Besides the TV series *Lost* (2004-2010), in which an idyllic south sea island turns out to be a *locus conclusus* with an unknown threat at its centre, recent examples of Gothic-pastoral films are M. Night Shyamalan's *The Village* (2004) and Michael Haneke's *Das weiße Band* ('The White Ribbon', 2009). In Shyamalan's movie, a village is said to be surrounded by

[464] Spooner, *Contemporary Gothic*, 156.

nameless creatures in the woods, which threaten the inhabitants and must be pacified by sacrifices. Eventually, however, these monsters turn out to be only a lie told by the village elders, who retired from the corruption and violence of the larger world into the peacefulness of a rural existence and who wanted to prevent the inhabitants from ever leaving the rural enclave. Their attempts, however, have been unsuccessful: After all, the depravity of the world outside can also be found within the hamlet, one of whose members tries to murder another. Haneke's film, which is set shortly before World War I, features a seemingly harmless community in Northern Germany; due to the rigidity and violence used by the authorities to punish and educate their children, the latter finally turn hostile against the adults and commit several atrocious deeds. The image of a rural society which renders its own children evil is representative of larger issues: By showing a village that is defined by an atmosphere of oppression, humiliation and suffering, Haneke uses 'weak' figures to explore the general origins of radicalism and fascism in human societies.[465]

This is certainly only a small selection of cases where a continuation of the Gothic-pastoral mode and hence also of each mode as such can be perceived. The complexity and variety of this tradition in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century shows that it is indeed difficult to trace, in Spooner's terms, an "over-arching" reason why these forms have survived. However, as has become obvious in the aforementioned examples, at least with regard to their underlying attitude, one can observe a central function the Gothic and the pastoral in some cases still perform. After all, a recurring theme in these texts is that of man's inability to cope with forces larger than himself – be they represented by a restrictive political system, a dying ecological environment or even his own capacity for evil. This clearly links these instances to the classic tradition of the two modes, which have from their beginnings served to emphasise this aspect. Portraying their protagonist's and - by implication - mankind's weakness in manifold ways, the Gothic and the pastoral are still an important means for their respective audience to critically evaluate the limited possibilities it has within its own socio-cultural context. In this respect, they live on as cultural constants.

[465] Cf. Michael Omasta and Michael Pekler. "'In jedem meiner Filme muss ich laut lachen'. Interview mit Michael Haneke". *Falter* 38 (2009): 24.

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