Exploring the Monstrous in
Edward Rutherfurd Dublin Sagas

سبر التوحش في ملحمتي دبلن للكاتب ادوارد راذرفورد

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Abstract

The present study considers exploring monstrosity in Edward Rutherfurd's sagas *The Princes of Ireland* (2004) and *The Rebels of Ireland* (2006). By drawing on J.J. Cohen seven theses on monstrosity, the study approaches two stories in the sagas which represent momentous events in the history of Ireland. First, the study identifies the characteristics of the monstrous, second, it applies them mainly to the conduct of the protagonists of these stories. The study also scrutinises the choice of these characters of their dwelling place to show whether it is randomly made or planned. The strategies of these characters, their diverse practices, and the effect of their monstrosity on others are handled. Finally, in attempting to decide whether their power is driven from internal or external forces the study offers an assessment of the social and political impact of these monstrous characters.

Keywords

Monstrosity, Catholics, Cohen, Ireland, transgression, conquest

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الملخص:

لقد كانت الوحشية دائما مصدرا للانبهار والرعب فعادة ما ينتابنا شعور بالرهبة منها والنفور من فظاعتها. والوحشية متعددة الأشكال وهي تمثل انعكاس لملامح المكان والزمان التي تحيا فيهما، كذلك فإنها نذير شؤم حيث انها تتلازم مع أوقات الشدة مما يستوجب علينا دراستها لكي نستطيع التغلب عليها. يهدف هذا البحث الى سبر التوحش في ملحمتي أمراء أيرلندا (٢٠٠٤) وثوار أيرلندا (٢٠٠٦) للكاتب الإنجليزي ادوارد راذرفورد. وقد تم اختيار قصتين فقط من الملحمتين للتحليل الأدبي الذي يطبق اراء جيفري جيروم كوهن تجاه الوحشية او كما يطلق عليها رسائل الوحشية السبع. تعرض الدراسة خصائص الوحشية وتطبقها على أداء بعض الشخصيات ويتناول البحث مدى تأثر واستفادة تلك الشخصيات من الظروف التاريخية والسياسية التي تعيشها. كذلك تقوم الدراسة بتحليل طبيعة الأساليب المتبعة ومدى تأثيرها على الأفراد والمجتمعات التي تعيش بها تلك الشخصيات. أيضا يقوم البحث بدراسة القوى التي تعتمد عليها الشخصيات المستوحشة لبيان ما إذا كانت العوامل المساعدة لها داخلية أم خارجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

التوحش، كاثوليك، كوهن، ايرلندا، التعدي، الغزو

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The present study considers exploring monstrosity in Edward Rutherfurd's Dublin Saga: *The Princes of Ireland* (2004), hereafter *Princes*, and *The Rebels of Ireland* (2006), hereafter *Rebels***.** The setting of *The Princes of Ireland* is pre-Christian Ireland, starting from the fifth century AD until the sixteenth century. The saga tells the stories of six Irish families that both witness and help in shaping the history of Ireland. *The Rebels of Ireland* begins in the sixteenth century and concludes in the early twentieth century, telling the stories of the descendants of the families of the first saga, and adding other new families of English origin. Following the fate of these families through hundreds of years, the Dublin Saga uses the history of Ireland as a background. The upheavals of this history; major political events such as the fighting of the provincial Irish kings with one another, Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, suppression of the Irish by the English, and failure of resistance, are all shown to shape   the lives of these families. For the present study, only two stories are selected from the sagas. The first story takes place in Dublin in the period that immediately precedes the Anglo-Norman conquest and the following twenty years. The protagonist of the story is Peter FitzDavid, a Welsh mercenary, who gets involved in the conflict between the provincial Irish kings. His collaboration with one of them, as will be presently shown, ultimately leads to king Henry II conquest of Ireland. The second story takes place in Dublin, in the closing years of the sixteenth century. It follows the fate of an English settler, Doctor Simeon Pincher, who moves to Ireland, partly to escape the consequences of his moral deviation, and partly to benefit from the English conquest of Ireland. He eagerly devotes his sermons to promoting Calvinism, the major branch of Protestantism, at the expense of Roman Catholicism; thus, helps the English in suppressing Catholic Irish. The reading of these two stories identifies and scrutinizes the monstrosity of Peter and Pincher in action.

The etymology of "monster" is the Latin "monstrare," to show, and "monere, to warn. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* offers a

number of definitions of the term monster "something extraordinary or unnatural; a prodigy, a marvel. An imaginary creature, usually large or of frightening appearance ... A person of inhuman and horrible cruelty; an atrocious example of evil, a vice, etc." (p.1824). The shared characteristic of these definitions is deviation from the normal, and the deviation could be imaginary, physical, or moral.

This study draws on Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (1996) "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" which provides a framework for literary reading of the monstrous. Many scholars have offered their views on monstrosity, but so far, Cohen's theses offer "[t]he most comprehensive theory of monstrosity" (Merkelbach, 2019, p. 10). In debating the nature of the monstrous, Cohen (1996) supports the view that it expresses and embodies "a certain cultural moment" (p. 4) in the history of communities. So, to understand the entity of a monster, it must be read in relation to the socio-cultural atmosphere of the place in which it dwells. In addition, monstrosity represents displacement; the monster is an outsider that comes to dwell in a certain place, especially at a time of crisis. The monster does not have one fixed shape, which remains, lives, and vanishes at one certain point. It disappears only to reappear in a different form, at a different time for it has "its propensity to shift" (p. 5), which turns it into a source of constant threat. Further, monsters are not easily categorized, they do not have one clear entity, they are hybrid. The outcome of their transformative nature and hybridity is that they defy categorization, scientific interpretation, and the laws of nature. On the other hand, difference is turned into a monster, for example, different races are conceived as inferior and uncivilized. Thus, the monster stands against the effort to explore the unknown to acquire proper knowledge, it stands as a warning against attempting epistemological approach to the unfamiliar.

Reading literature of different peoples shows how monstrosity epitomizes epistemological shifts; its different forms and conceptions correspond to different cultures and mentalities across human history. Classical mythologies contain imaginary creatures of half human, half beast bodies endowed with supernatural powers. Physical deformity and disability were also conceived as forms of monstrosity or signs of sin and

God's punishment. In the medieval period, they provoked negative feelings of fear, anxiety and disgust (Godden and Mittman, 2019, p. 4). Poor education, superstition and prejudice helped toward creating a general negative social attitude towards physical anomalies, thus, these so-called monstrosities were socially constructed (Pearman, 2019, p. v). Later, in the seventeenth century, when scientific authority began to take hold, there had been views that promoted the part played by the imagination of pregnant mothers in shaping the foetus. In the eighteenth century, another scientific view emerged which raised the possibility that deformity is "the result of physical shocks suffered by the foetus after conception" (Davies, 2016, p. 110). Toward the nineteenth century, because of the steady progress of science and its eventual clash with religion and ethics, monstrosity has come to be viewed as the outcome of this clash. The dark face of science: invention of weapons of mass destruction, global wars, gas emission, and unethical practices of genetic engineering and cloning, are all man-made monsters.

Monsters, as Cohen (1996) emphasises, "must be examined within the intricate matrix of relations (social, cultural, and literary-historical) that generate them" (p. 5). Relating the monstrous to its environment is crucial to understanding it and its functioning; these matrices of relations throw light on the reasons that lead to the making of the monster, and how/why it survives. Identifying the period in which Peter FitzDavid, the protagonist of the first story under study, lives, together with the nature of his trade, are believed to be necessary. Medieval Ireland witnessed political and military conflicts between Irish provincial kings; each wanted to strengthen his hold on his territory, and some of whom aspired to control neighbouring territories. However, these kings did not have standing armies, and so, as Arnold Blumberg (2013) describes the military situation of the period "the single most important development in warfare in Ireland was the increasing reliance on mercenaries" (p. 51). These mercenaries were well-trained fighters, and usually hired from Europe, but since they did not belong to the country for which they fought, their loyalties were often in question. Indeed, Machiavelli, being an eyewitness to a similar political situation in Italy, describes mercenaries as "... useless and dangerous ...

disorganized, ambitious, and ... disloyal ... unfearing of God, unfaithful to men ... The reason for all this is that there is no love or reason to hold them on the battlefield other than their meager pay..." (2008, p. 221). This negative view represents the monstrosity of mercenaries whose main characteristics are identified as follows: profit-motivated, ambition, and betrayal.

Peter FitzDavid is one of those mercenaries who sails to Ireland merely to build a fortune. His mother, who has funded his voyage, sees him off with her parting words "do not come back empty-handed" (*Prince*s, p. 385). Her words are so strong and effective that he thinks "Death ... would be better than that" (p.385). The mother's words and Peter's thoughts are both charged with fear, desire, and anxiety, which, as Cohen (1996) points out "The monster's body quite literally incorporates" (p. 4). On the one hand, the mother, despite her love for her son, experiences fear of poverty, inability to provide for her family, and anxiety about his prosperity and future. On the other hand, the mother's words construct a monster that immediately starts to dwell inside Peter and pushes him to have, as his ultimate desire, material gains out of the Irish political and military conflicts. It is noteworthy that Peter does not suffer any physical deformity or disability which allegedly represents a form of monstrosity, on the contrary, he is described as "pleasant-looking young man" (*Princes,* p. 384). He is also respected and trusted by others; his Irish friend eagerly invites him to visit his family, even hints more than once that he is welcome to marry his sister. So, what is under scrutiny here is what turns this pleasant young man into a monster, the nature of his monstrosity, and its impact on others.

Peter is given more than one name; he is Peter FitzDavid, Peter Walsh, and Walsh. Concerning the assumed functions of proper names and what they signify, Cohen (2006) opines that "Names bestow the appearance of long and singular history to what might in fact be a multiplex, fluid group. In the process names also tend to ossify identities, making them not only seem unchanging in the past but actually resistant to further transformation" (p. 32). Names often signify the history of individuals; if someone seeks to transform his/her life, the name informs of the past

which cannot be changed; therefore, past identities remain untransformed. As for the literary function of naming characters, Grant W. Smith (2016) aptly states "[o]ur thematic understanding of literature arises largely from the *symbolic* nature of language, including the many associations possibly evoked by names" (p. 297). Characters' names are used as a literary device to tell something about characters, to convey a message, even to predict their future action. Hence, throwing light on the background of one of the names given to Peter helps in identifying his monstrosity. As mentioned above, the young man is known as Peter Walsh, for he is often referred to as "Walsh" (*Princes,* p. 526). The name Walsh is reported to suggest ominousness**,** for according to Cohen (2006) "Walsh" is "an Old English term of a foreigner, barbarian, or slave" (p. 31). In addition, Peter comes from Wales whose people, as Medieval historian Gerald of Wales claims, are known for their "blind lust for conquest and ... a rupture of all the ties of common blood and family connection [their] good faith has disappeared, to be replaced by shameful perfidy (qtd in Cohen, 2006, p. 31). Peter Walsh is born and bred in this monstrous environment; whose people are alleged to sacrifice the common good for personal gain. It is liable that Peter has learned, if not inherited, these devastating propensities which lead to severing neighbouring as well as familial relationships. Further, since he does not belong to the army of a certain Irish kingdom, loyalty, which is essential to soldier-hood is not guaranteed here.

The monstrous mercenary trade of Peter motivates him to violate social and political conventions of the place where he dwells. His settlement in Dublin, supposedly, necessitates abiding to the social contract and obeying the law of the place. Yet, in accordance with the description of mercenaries given by Machiavelli, he merely acts for his own interest regardless of the welfare of the host country. The fatal consequences of violating social contract affect the lives of people among whom the monster dwells, and as Cohen (1996) points out, "We see the damage that the monster wreaks, the material remains" (p. 4). And personal relationship is no exception to the rule. Peter Walsh gets involved in an affair with Fionnuala, who is the only daughter of an honoured Irish priest, Gilpatrick, and the sister of his friend who

introduces him to life in Ireland. When Strongbow, an Irish war lord and "one of King Henry's magnates" (*Princes*, p. 495) asks him to get information from her that would help in defeating the Irish High King, Peter shows readiness to manipulate this affair for his anticipated personal gain. He obeys regardless of his bond with the Gilpatricks. Unaware of his spying mission, Fionnuala tells Peter about the place where the king of the besieged town of Dublin hides. Getting the required information, and as a result Peter's collaboration with Strongbow, the Irish king is ambushed and defeated. This disastrous defeat marks the beginning of the conquest of Ireland by England.

The monstrosity of Peter's treason of Ireland costs the country its independence. This damage has been massive; for instance, the death of thousands who sought the liberation of their country, families losing their estates, the emigration of Irish families to the New World seeking freedom, and, later, the suppression of Catholic Irish by their Protestant English colonisers. The monstrosity of Peter's treason goes unpunished it is well rewarded. Twenty years later we see him reaping the fruit of his mercenary career. He is now one of the English king's knights and is given an Irish estate that belongs to the family of his Irish friend Gilpatrick.

Peter's monstrosity echoes his contemporary political environment. In explaining the nature of the monster, Cohen (1996) aptly states that it "signifies something other than itself" (p. 4). The ominous conduct of monster is not irrelevant to the environment, both action and environment signify one another. Peter's criminality signifies the political upheaval of the twelfth century and the criminal conduct of the English monarch at the time. First, King Henry II inspires his knights to murder the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, second, with the blessing of Pope Adrian, he "take[s] over the island [Ireland] "to increase the Christian religion"" (*Princes,* p. 318). Being a man with colonial ambitions, the Anglo-Norman king makes this claim, as part of his of strategy to "annex those territories that dared to stand so invitingly at their borders" (Cohen, 2000, p. 86). Another justification made for taking over Ireland is that the Irish are "badly in need of humanizing imprint of anglicization" (Cohen, 2006, p. 35), which is the traditional

excuse given by conquerors. The king intentionally monsters the Irish to justify the invasion of their land. Yet, as Fionnuala's father argues, it is known to everyone that "It's the money they want" (*Princes,* p.420). King Henry's crimes of murdering the archbishop and invading his neighbouring country go without punishment. Hence, Peter's monstrosity; his negation of the law and betrayal of both Ireland and Fionnuala, "signifies" the political corruption of king Henry II.

Peter's crimes against Ireland, like king Henry's, denote despotism. According to Michele Foucault (2003), monarch's despotism and undermining the law are crucial reasons for citizens breach of the law. A citizen committing a crime means that he/she prioritizes self-interest to the welfare of the state, which denotes not only selfishness, but also a kind of abuse of power. Compared to despotic monarch who acts ruthlessly and selfishly, subjects who follow the same path are considered little despots; both monarch and subject are lawbreakers. Foucault concludes that "the more despotic the power, the more criminals there are" (p. 93). Based on this argument, kings' despotism does not deter their subjects from committing crimes, in the contrary, it helps and encourages the spread of crimes.

Apart from breaking the law and acting like despots, monsters are liable to violate the laws of nature. Cohen (1996) points out that "The too precise laws of nature as set forth by science are gleefully violated . . . A mixed category, the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy. . . demanding instead. . . resistance to integration. . . the monstrous offers an escape from its hermetic path' (pp. 6-7). By nature, monsters reject conformity; they tend to undermine justice, the rule of law, and social codes. They refuse to conceive the world in hierarchies, instead monsters create a hierarchy of their own which disrupts the normal order of things and causes damage to the communities in which they choose to dwell. Timothy Beal (2020) further points out the chaotic and distorting effect of the monstrous within order which reveals "deep insecurities in one's faith in oneself, one's society, and one's world" (p. 298).

The character whose conduct represents this non-conformist aspect of the monstrous is Fionnuala. Though she is both the daughter of "a senior churchman" (*Princes,* p. 391), and a member of one of those "ancient ecclesiastical families, greatly honoured, with ties to monasteries and churches" (p. 395), she nevertheless gets involved in an affair with Peter. What makes the impact of Fionnuala's rejection to conformity significant is that the core of the social position of her ecclesiastical family is preaching and setting good example for others. Her discretion and secret planning to meet Peter indicate that she is aware of the nature of her conduct; its violation of the norm and undermining her family's reputation. However, Fionnuala's resistance to conformity goes unnoticed by others, except her friend Una. Her transgression on moral codes and escape without punishment is predicted earlier when she steals an apple. When her friend Una rebukes her for the theft, she simply takes a bite of the fruit to make sure that it will not be returned to the fruit stall. It is ironic that when Una, to pay for the stolen apple, goes to the fruitmonger, he declines taking the money and offers them another one as a present, in a gesture of appreciation for their work at the town's hospital. Thus, Fionnuala's crime, instead of being punished, is rewarded. The girl's second transgression on social and moral codes also goes unpunished. Her affair with Peter which facilitates the invasion of Ireland, is even rewarded as she is married to an Irish prince whom she claims to have impregnated her. It is also ironic that her family and that of the Irish prince both feel honoured to have the marriage consummated as the couple are the descendants of two highly dignified Irish families.

The transgression of Peter and Fionnuala turns them into intruders to the community where they live. Though their crimes remain undiscovered almost by everyone, the fatal outcome of their moral and political choices turns them into enemies of Ireland. Their monstrosity ascribes to the view of Beal (2020) on monsters as being "in the world but not of the world. They are paradoxical personifications of *otherness within sameness*" (p. 297). Peter is not a native of Dublin, but is shown to be welcomed by its community, yet he chooses to take part in deteriorating the political situation of Ireland, which eventually deprives

it its independence. Fionnuala, unlike Peter, is Irish, and is well aware of the order of things of her community, its traditions and the social position of her ancient family. Her monstrous recklessness makes her an outsider to her own community.

The monstrosity of Peter and Fionnuala, who live in the twelfth century, vanishes only to reappear in the late sixteenth century. This time it is represented by Doctor Simeon Pincher, the protagonist of the second story under examination. Pincher, as mentioned earlier, has more than one reason for leaving England for good and settling in Ireland. His first and immediate reason is to escape the consequences of his moral transgression of having an affair with the wife of one of the gentlemen of the village where he preaches. In following the advice of the administrators of Emmanuel College, at Cambridge University, and to avoid ruining the reputation of the college, Pincher instantly accepts "a position at the new foundation of Trinity College in Dublin" (*Rebels*, p.22), and leaves to Ireland. So, in a letter which he sends to the administrators in Dublin, Pincher, ironically enough, claims that he is coming "to do God's work" (p. 22). He is also there "to preach at Christ Church Cathedral" (p. 42). The Cathedral has always been cherished by Catholic Irish as "great medieval monument," but now, after the Reformation, it has become "the home of the so-called Church of Ireland—which of course was Protestant and English. The government men from Dublin Castle and the Protestants of Trinity College went there" (p. 90). This replacement of one doctrine with another exemplifies England's manipulation of religion in Ireland. Pincher is an Englishman who acts as one of the agents of religious suppression, and who, also, aims to financially benefit from the English conquest of Ireland. The means which he follows to achieve his material goals are sheer acts of digression. Indeed, both his monstrous goals, and the means he follows, as will be presently shown, are foreshadowed when he first arrives in Dublin. A great explosion is heard when his ship has just "anchored out in the Liffey" (p. 24), which leads Martin Smith, an Irish lawyer, to feel apprehensive of Pincher's arrival and hopes he does not "mean the Irish any further harm" (p. 25). In addition, Pincher's name, like that of Peter Walsh, predicts his ominous dwelling in Ireland, but the difference

between their names is that the latter's name refers to the barbarity of his ancestry, while the former's suggests theft.

Pincher's "dwelling" in sixteenth century Ireland, which lasts for more than five decades, represents another characteristic of the monstrous elicited by Cohen (1996), it is the ability to reappear in a different form which suits "contemporary social movements or a specific, determining event" (p. 5). Monsters disappear for some time only to reappear in another age which provides them with a suitable environment in which they can act and thrive. The early stage of the English conquest of Ireland required spies and mercenaries to help in the aggressive military campaign; by being both a spy and a mercenary Peter's monstrosity suited that transformative moment in the history of the Irish people. Now that the England has invaded Ireland for about four centuries, the monster reappears, this time to cause deep division within the Irish community. Cohen (1996) points out that "[t]he monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us. In its function as dialectical Other or third-term supplement, the monster is an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond" (p.7). The monster is an outsider; does not belong to the place and its people, but it comes to stay for a certain time during which it threatens communal harmony. Othering certain groups of the community, raising awareness of differences between members of the community to cause social disharmony are examples of how monsters pursue their divisive schemes.

In pursuing his goals, Pincher applies what Cohen (1996) calls "divisive mythologies," by which he refers to "The exaggeration of cultural difference into monstrous aberration   Representing an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic" (pp. 7-8). Cultural differences of countries and communities are emphasised to promote one group and downgrade the other with the aim of uprooting the cultural aspects of the opposing group. Further, in reference to the methods used by the monster in interpreting life, Cohen (1996) points out that "the monstrous offers . . . an invitation to explore new spirals, new and interconnected methods of perceiving the world" (p.7). Provocation of issues that are controversial

and annoying is one of Pincher's strategies toward isolating and othering Catholic Irish. His sermons often prove to be controversial and threaten to widen the religious chasm in Ireland. His method is to give "divisive" sermons, some of which propagate Calvinist doctrine of Predestination which is one of the controversial issues debated by different Christian sects. He explains how Calvinists "were indeed the predestined Elect who had already been chosen to go there [heaven]" (*Rebels,* p.23). Alternately, Pincher fully believes and preaches the notion that "the mere Irish were not only an inferior people, but that God had deliberately marked them out   since the beginning of time, to be cast into eternal hellfire" (p. 22). Pincher manipulates his audience religious experience to stir feeling of awe and hopelessness. By preaching that the Irish are inferior, merely for being Irish, he echoes the view that "It is at the intersection of religious and "worldly" cultures . . . that the fearful narratives and representations of the monstrous go to work (Bivin, 2012, p. 107). Pincher's terse religious language trades in the image of eternal hell. His reference to the beginning of time is meant to deny the Irish Catholics the slightest hope of salvation, for they are doomed to hell, unless they convert. In addition to out-casting the Irish Catholics of the predestined elect, Pincher manipulates Scripture to threaten them by quoting "The tenth chapter of Matthew . . . 'I come not to send peace, but a sword'" (*Rebels,* p. 119). Since Pincher is not a soldier, his sword is his knowledge and scholarship. His profession is instrumentalised in manipulating the dogma to insinuate Catholics' heresy.

Furthermore, Pincher affronts the highest Catholic authority: the Church of Rome. He believes and preaches that the case of the Roman Church and its followers will never be remedied unless the Church's authority is eroded. One of his rhetorical devices is the metaphor of harlot and jezebel which he uses in sermon attended by mixed audience of Irish Catholics and Protestants. He describes the Church of Rome as "the painted whore, with her incense and images, her liturgies and lurries . . . the papist Eve, the harlot and the Jezebel. Turn your face from her. Strike her down!" (p. 120). Pincher intersects gender, religion, and monstrosity in his attack on the Church of Rome. He feminizes it by using the images of two Biblical characters: queen Jezebel and Eve.

Jezebel is known for her sexual misconduct, love of power, and manipulation of her husband which led to his downfall. Eve is accused of taking part in seducing Adam, which led to their Fall. These images indicate that in his attack on the Roman church, Pincher both empowers and victimises it. On the one hand, he implies that its authority and influence will eventually lead to loss of faith, on the other hand, he urges his audience to eradicate this authority. After finishing the sermon, Pincher "stalk[s] like a raven down from the pulpit" (*Rebels,* p. 122), the simile of raven is used to indicate the ominous theme of the sermon which tells the preacher's divisive intentions. The irony here is that this same sermon of which he also sports hopes of pleasing the Dublin Castle, is the very reason for throwing him in jail for some years. Since king Charles' wife, queen Mary, is a Catholic herself, he is reported to the court of insulting her by insinuating in his sermon that she is a harlot jezebel. The sermon is reported to king Charles by Mr Doyle, a protestant merchant. This envoy has been chosen by fellow Protestant and Catholic Irish to inform the king their decision to raising grant of money, in an act of supporting him in his quarrel with the parliament.

Pincher's intentions have blinded him to the fact that the Irish, either Protestant or Catholic, are a homogeneous society. He either overlooks or underestimates the fact that "Peoples intermarry; cultures blend; collective identities alter through infection, assimilation, acculturation, métissage" (Cohen, 2006, p. 12). Pincher gives his divisive sermons hoping to make a monster of different family origins and the two religious sects: Protestantism and Catholicism. He only considers the fact that the Irish people are composed of families of different origins, the natives, Celtic, Scots, Norse, English, and Welsh. He believes that these differences are cemented and that members of the community always observe them when dealing with one another. Pincher further monsters the Irish by describing them as "lower than beasts" (*Rebels,* p.70), expressing his dislike of their "barbarous names" (p. 73), writing to his sister to tell her that he finds their wakes –paying tribute to the dead – "disgusting," and that "In their grief . . . they are like savages" (p. 69). Indeed, his representation of the Irish as uncivilized can be defined as "a hoary tool of colonialism. By

representing a native population as monstrous, its dispossession becomes unproblematic" (Cohen, 2006, p.78). Monstering a race or a country is the traditional strategy followed by invaders to justify seizing foreign lands. So, regardless of whether Pincher really believes the so-called Irish barbarity, it is evident that he puts himself in the shoes of the coloniser.

Indeed, Pincher carefully plans to be bestowed a property that belongs to an Irish family. According to the English colonial practices in Ireland "native Irish estates … could be legally taken away from their customary owners, so that the English crown could either take them or release them to its friends or onto the market" (*Rebels,* pp.78-9). Thus, any property ownership is liable to be not acknowledged by the English authority in case "an Irishman … has no document of title of any kind" (p. 79). The Dublin Castle**,** the seat of English government officials in Ireland, investigates titles of Irish princes and chieftains, and in case they are not documented, which often happens for they are hereditary, the properties are confiscated. It is obvious that this law which does not accord with "the Irish law and custom" (p. 74) facilitates occupying Irish properties that belong to native families for long centuries. Pincher aims to benefit from the English law which legalises usurping the land of the rightful Irish landlords. In addition, by "dwelling" in Ireland, Pincher works towards tightening the grip of England on Ireland. One way of doing this is assigning one of his students spying missions on certain Irish men and reporting them to Dublin Castle.

Pincher's schemes of procuring Irish property succeed, but he fails in creating the chasm which he has believed to be an easy task. However, Samantha Langsdale and Elizabeth Rae Coody (2020) opine that "Monsters are figures that lurk in the margins and so by contrast help to illuminate the center; they are the embodiment of abnormality and so summon the definition of normalcy by virtue of everything they are not" (p. 3). By means of its dreadfulness, the monster helps in revealing the truth. Pincher's monstrosity: his sermons and attempt to usurp the Irish of their rightful property, serves in showing one of the fatal consequences of the monster's dwelling among us; it elicits the difference between the righteous and perverse, the normal and abnormal.

Conclusion

Monstrosity is shaped by culture; it corresponds to our mentalities, time, and place in which it dwells. Investigating monsters in Edward Rutherfurd's sagas *The Princes of Ireland* and *The Rebels of Ireland* show how they function. One shape of monstrosity feasts on the political crisis in Medieval Ireland which leads to its invasion, another helps in tightening the grip of England on Ireland.

The reading of Peter's story shows how his monstrosity takes the shape of ambition achieved by manipulating the political crisis in Ireland. The reading also proves how the monster signifies something beyond itself; Peter's negation of the law and self-interest is proven to reflect that of the monarch. His monstrosity denotes a selfishness which motivates his crimes against Ireland. Another characteristic of the monstrous is yet, non-conformity to social and moral codes. The Peter-Fionnuala affair distorts the hierarchy of their social environment, which results in a wide range of disasters in Ireland. Their transgression leads to the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, the consequent catastrophic loss of independence, and relegating the Irish to second class citizens living in their native land. Their individual transgression further reflects that of Medieval European monarchy; both parties transgress, succeed, and are rewarded rather than receive punishment.

The reading of the story of Doctor Pincher shows how the monster reappears both in different time and form. Pincher is proven to embody the monstrous characteristic of difference made flesh; his main divisive strategy is the overstatement of the difference between England and Ireland. In his chosen exile, and by the merit of being an English settler, he, like Peter, manipulates the political crisis in Ireland. He feasts on the English occupation by setting up borders between the cultures of the two nations, and "othering" the Irish. Pincher transforms the Irish Catholics into monsters by conceiving them as different race deprived of civilization, their names and traditions are relegated to those of the savages and heretics. In his effort to assert England's authority over Ireland, he supresses the common ground between the neighbouring countries, and uses other divisive methods of giving sermons meant to disturb social harmony. His oscillation between the religious, the

political, and the colonizer who aspire to usurp the colonized of their properties makes it uneasy to pinpoint him into a certain category, which is yet another characteristic of the monstrous.

Peter, Fionnuala, and Pincher are proven to be monsters. Their treason, moral deviation, selfishness are all types of monstrosities which cause real harm and inflict profound pain on others. The scheme of each of these characters might be different, but undoubtedly, they help toward tightening the grip of England on Ireland. The monster lives among us, unless we combat it, the result will be monstrous social, religious, political, and military factionalism.

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