
Bram Stoker's Proposal for the Development of a Small Nation

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Abstract. This essay aims at exploring Bram Stoker's interest in the conditions of Ireland, where he was born in 1847 and where he spent almost half of his life. He spoke and wrote about it more than once over the decades, showing not only his interest in this field but also that he foresaw a bright future for his homeland. At the same time, he repeatedly put forth his proposal for the development of a small nation, either hiding behind a fictional country of his own invention or calling it openly Ireland. The main source for this brief analysis is *The Lady of the Shroud*, one of his last novels. Reference is also made to his first novel, *The Snake's Pass*, and to two articles and an address he gave in public while still at university.

Key Words. Bram Stoker, *Lady of the Shroud*, *The Snake's Pass*, Ireland's progress.

Resumen. Este ensayo tiene por objeto examinar el interés de Bram Stoker en la situación de Irlanda, donde había nacido en 1847 y donde pasó casi la mitad de su vida. Habló y escribió sobre el tema más de una vez durante décadas, mostrando no sólo su interés en este campo, sino que también previó un futuro brillante para su tierra natal. Al mismo tiempo, en varias ocasiones hizo propuestas para el desarrollo de una pequeña nación, ya sea en forma de un país ficticio de su propia invención o llamándola explícitamente Irlanda.

La principal fuente para este breve análisis es *The Lady of the Shroud*, una de sus últimas novelas, aunque también se hace referencia a su primera novela, *The Snake's Pass*, y a dos artículos y un discurso público que hizo cuando aún estaba en la universidad.

Palabras clave. Bram Stoker, *Lady of the Shroud*, *The Snake's Pass*, progreso de Irlanda.

Bram Stoker's concern with the supernatural is well known, and his *Dracula* (1897) and its eponymous character have been studied for decades. As a by-product, this interest in his most famous novel has sometimes led to an interest in another novel featuring a vampire, *The Lady of the Shroud* (1909). This has been studied mainly as a complement to *Dracula* or as its inversion (for instance by Lörinczi 1996). However, in this essay it is analysed as one of the most important sources to understand Stoker's

interest in the development of his own country, which has certainly attracted fewer scholars than his interest in vampires. To support this analysis, reference is made also to Stoker's first novel, *The Snake's Pass* (1890), and to two articles he wrote for a special edition of *The World's Work* dedicated to Ireland in May 1907: 'The Great White Fair in Dublin' and 'The World's Greatest Shipbuilding Yard'. An Irish Protestant by birth, according to Valente (2002: 9) he cannot be qualified either as proper Anglo-Irish or as metro-

politan elite. As a young adult he detached himself from his father's conservatism and became a Liberal and a self-declared "philosophical Home-Ruler" (Stoker 1907: 263), with the adjective 'philosophical' probably used to lessen his involvement in Home Rule. He was a member of the Irish Literary Society in London, but the real extent of his involvement has not been clarified yet. According to some authors and to the official list published by the ILS on their Internet site, he was a founding member of the society, but not according to Ryan's contemporary reconstruction of its origins. He was an admirer of John Bright and William Gladstone, whose interest in the Irish situation is well known. He had friends among Irish nationalists and even among Tories, which did not conflict with his general attitude towards politics. This consisted in never letting his political ideas (nor his religious affiliation) interfere either with his personal life or with his job as Irving's theatre manager. Although his politics often came to the fore in his writings, he never had any direct involvement with any political party or movement.

The Lady of the Shroud is set in an imaginary land in the Balkans, the Land of the Blue Mountains. The protagonist, Rupert St Leger, has to go and live there following the death of his favourite uncle, who unexpectedly leaves him such a big fortune as to make him one of the richest men on earth, but only on the condition that he live there for a year. During this time, Rupert falls in love with a girl clothed in a shroud, the same girl that many think is a vampire. This impression is partly shared by Rupert, too, but later on in the novel the girl turns out to be alive. She is Teuta, the daughter of one of the most important men in the country, the Voivode Peter Vissarion, who is also the leader of its resistance to the attempts of invasion by the Turkish Empire. After he is told that Rupert has married his daughter and saved both her and him from Turkish kidnappers, in addition to buying arms for the Mountaineers, the Voivode decides to decline the Council's offer to appoint him King and lets them choose Rupert. The latter's money, his bravery and the plan he and his counsellors put in action for the development of his adopted nation make it one of the biggest

powers in the area. Rupert even manages to unite all the surrounding countries in a federation of states, thus solving the age-old Balkan problems.

The Snake's Pass is set in the west of Ireland. The protagonist, the Englishman Arthur Severn, inherits his aunt's fortune and decides to travel around Europe for a few months. During his tour, he makes some Irish friends and decides to visit them at the end of the journey. While in Ireland, he is caught by a storm and by the beauty of a local girl, so he decides to stay for a while. Eventually, he becomes the owner of most of the area, which he helps to develop, thanks to his money and the expertise of his old friend Dick Sutherland, an engineer. Together, they devise a master plan and make the place one of the most prosperous in the country. Stoker's protagonist builds protective walls, a small harbour to connect the area to the outer world, houses, offices and farm-yards. The area offers copious natural resources and these are duly exploited, for instance using water for irrigation and energy production or limestone for building. According to Paul Murray (2004: 159), one of his most recent and accurate biographers, similar ideas can be found in Robert Kane's *The Industrial Resources of Ireland* (1844), especially as regards the availability and exploitability of minerals under the Irish soil, together with the possibility to use water to produce low cost energy. All of this would have been possible once Home Rule had been granted. Kane's work informed the ideas and actions of Irish nationalists, starting with Thomas Davis, which means it influenced Stoker, given his cultural and political frequentations and his interest in Home Rule. Stoker had the chance to experience at first hand something of what was happening in Ireland as far as modernisation was concerned, since he was commissioned two articles by *The World's Work*. This happened in the period when he was working on *The Lady of the Shroud*, so several connections between the novel and the two articles can be found, as this essay aims at showing. The same can be said of the two novels, as the ideas for the development of the Land of the Blue Mountains are very similar to those found in *The Snake's Pass*, though on a larger scale.

In *The Lady of the Shroud*, the development plan starts with the purchase of weapons: Rupert buys a great number of state-of-the-art rifles for the inhabitants of his adopted country, together with bullet-proof vests. At the same time, he also buys a small but fully and effectively equipped warship, which defeats a Turkish ironclad that is unlawfully present in the waters of the Land of the Blue Mountains and is threatening to bombard a city. Rupert's ship is so modern and innovative that it includes a small, crab-like submarine that can release a mysterious magnetic field. This weapon kills all the members of the Turkish crew, without shooting a single bullet or damaging the ship, which can therefore be confiscated and become the second ship of the newborn Mountaineer navy. The Voivode Peter Vissarion says openly that "... the little warship ... represents a new era in naval armament" (Stoker 2012: 155) and Rupert orders nine more. At the same time, he also buys "... the biggest guns of the most perfect kind yet accomplished, and ... land batteries of the most up-to-date pattern" (Stoker 2012: 173). The reason why Rupert's modernisation proposal starts with the purchase of armaments is that he needs to protect the country and its independence from a probable imminent Turkish invasion. Moreover, on a longer period, this newly acquired security allows to carry out the changes to the country and its economy that Rupert and his advisors have devised. Among these advisors are both locals and people whom Rupert invites from abroad, like Sir Colin MacKelpie, an old Scottish soldier who is a relative of his. He is in charge of the newborn armed forces of the Land of the Blue Mountains and, since he has also a training as an engineer, he helps Rupert to design the fortifications they need. Once they feel secure from imminent attacks, they can put in action their development plan, which relies on the exploitation of the country's natural resources (especially wood and minerals) and of its topography. Work starts with the fortification of the Blue Mouth, a bay that is a sort of natural harbour, where all the warships are kept to defend the ongoing work until the area is deemed safe. The following stage is the building of a tunnel starting from a plateau and running through the hills down to the inner part

of the Blue Mouth. This tunnel is inclined to a grade that allows to transport materials easily and without using any source of energy. Incidentally, it is worth noting that, before work on the main tunnel starts, it is necessary to wait for a complete mapping and measurement of the place. The same happens in *The Snake's Pass* before Arthur and his friend Dick start their work to reclaim a bog. Mapping, as Benedict Anderson (2006: 170-8) reminds us, is one of the most powerful institutions of power, allowing to picture one's territories and to put them under surveillance. A second tunnel starts from the same plateau, runs through a mountain and then reaches another plateau. A railway is planned to guarantee the return connection, thus forming a sort of productive belt between the two plateaus. On this second plateau there are plenty of minerals and the trees with the hardest wood in the country, which reminds the reader of the great quality of local wood used for the buildings of the 1907 Exhibition (Siggins 2007: 31), described by Stoker in one of the two articles analysed in the second part of this essay. Not only materials are transported thanks to the incline of both tunnels, but huge water pipes are built to produce hydraulic power. The Blue Mouth is going to become an important freight port. Rupert and his counsellors think this is going to attract a lot of people who will want to settle down and work there, so a town is probably going to develop as a consequence. Radium mines and factories for explosives are situated far from the Blue Mouth for security reasons. Energy production and new and faster transport are a prerequisite for more initiatives, one of the most important being the development of heavy industry and of florid commerce with foreign countries, starting with neighbouring ones. When Rupert arrives, the Land of the Blue Mountains has neither railways nor roads, which gives the idea of how vital he and his money are in the development plan. William Hughes (1995: 20) underlines the importance of external agents to unleash Ireland's inactive potential. It is clear that this external agent is Arthur in *The Snake's Pass*, the exhibition in 'The Great White Fair in Dublin' and Rupert in *The Lady of the Shroud*. Arthur's and Rupert's interventions on the ordering of the land, on

industry and on infrastructure may be said to reflect the colonial mentality of the ruling class in Ireland, of which Stoker was not part but whose ideas permeated most of the cultural milieus he frequented.

Immediately after the development of the Land of the Blue Mountains has started, Rupert begins negotiations to create a federation of Balkan countries and ensure peace and collaboration in the region. This new supranational entity is also going to have more international relevance than its individual member countries. Not only is the Land of the Blue Mountains the proposing party, it is also the guide of the federation and a model for the other countries, given its successful modernisation process. Suffice it to say that, in less than a year, it has state-of-the-art defensive buildings, an even more modern navy and an air fleet that puts it in a unique position, since no other country in the world can boast a fleet of its own. In addition to this, the planes Rupert has bought are extremely easy to control, in a way that in real life would not be possible. This is shown by the manoeuvring he manages to carry out, for instance when he saves the Voivode Peter Vissarion from the tower where his Turkish kidnappers keep him or during the ceremony for the presentation to the world of the new federation, Balka. These planes are so easy to fly that they soon become a common means of transport and even Teuta has one of her own. In his proposal to create an air fleet for defence and offense, Stoker is almost prophetic, as Ludlam (1962: 142-3) points out:

The *Lady of the Shroud* was published in 1909. It was only in the last months of the previous year that the Wright brothers had made their most successful flights; and only as the book was published did Bleriot successfully fly the Channel. But Bram, looking far ahead, had already given his Land of the Blue Mountains a royal air force. ... His fantastic last scene of *The Lady of the Shroud*, written more than five years before the start of World War I, now reads prophetically.

Stoker makes his “prophecy” explicit at one point: “The flight of aeroplanes was a memorable sight. It helped to make history. Henceforth no nation with an eye for either defence or attack can hope for success without

the mastery of the air” (2012: 210). In addition to this, the production of airplanes and other war machines allows the Land of the Blue Mountains to become an important exporting country. Stoker’s interest in new technologies is evident in all his novels, starting with *Dracula*, where portable type-writers, phonographs, steam-powered launches and other technical resources play an important role in the defeat of the vampire. As regards airplanes in particular, his interest in this new form of transportation is confirmed by a newspaper cutting he kept for years, which can currently be found among the Stoker Family Papers at the Manuscript Collection of Trinity College Dublin (11076/15/3, item 11). In *The Lady of the Shroud*, Rupert’s idea of creating a fleet to protect the new nation partly comes from the availability of radium, which fuels the state-of-the-art engines of these airplanes.

As mentioned above, modernisation starts with the army and the navy. The purchase of Ingis-Malbron rifles is of special interest, since it allows to exploit the Blue Mountaineers’ ability as marksmen. They always take their old rifles with them, which they use as soon as and every time they feel they have even the slightest reason to: “... in this country every man carries a rifle, and knows how to use it. I do not think I have seen a single man (or married man either) without his rifle since I came here. I wonder if they take them with them to bed! ... Ordinarily, I take it, they would have fired on the instant; that is the etiquette here” (Stoker 2012: 48). Rupert’s gift to the Mountaineers can be considered as the first time “natural resources”, namely human resources, are fully exploited thanks to new technologies. It is also one of the many instances of past and future, tradition and innovation meeting in Stoker’s oeuvre, as the Land of the Blue Mountains has a long tradition in this field, while the rifles Rupert buys are the most modern on the market. The ceremonies for Rupert’s coronation and for the presentation of Balka to the world are more outstanding examples of the connection between old and new sought by Stoker. On these two occasions, the Land of the Blue Mountains shows its newly acquired organisation and efficiency to the world, giving hospitality to thousands of guests. The new

armaments are proudly shown, but at the same time the Mountaineers highlight all the important moments in the two ceremonies by drawing their most traditional weapon, the handjar. They are very good at using this weapon and they use it also to express their feelings, handling or raising it in different ways as a reaction or a physical comment to different situations, for instance to show their approval or disapproval. The same two ceremonies, especially the coronation, offer a mixture of traditional and modern elements. They even allow for the creation of new traditions, for instance the adoption of Teuta's white shroud as a national dress for official occasions and ceremonies, underlining the bravery of the women of the Blue Mountains. Stoker seems to be giving the reader an example of the invention of tradition dealt with by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). On the same occasion, local traditions and history are handed down through popular songs, to which onlookers listen eagerly.

Stoker's idea of a federation and his detailed description of the territorial changes necessary to create it (2012: 195-6) allow us to better understand his knowledge of the Balkan situation, which may attract many a scholar's interest, especially as *Dracula* and its composition are concerned. Born from defensive necessities, in Rupert's intentions Balka has also an active character, since he thinks "true defence consists in judicious attack" (Stoker 2012: 195). To create this federation, it is necessary that some States, starting with the Austrian Empire, redefine their borders, giving away some territories and acquiring new ones. The treaties ruling the federation allow its member states to remain completely independent and to be involved only for common aims, as for instance defending themselves from major powers. A few countries do not join the federation at first, so Rupert has to work hard to convince them, especially Albania. However, Stoker thinks the idea is so good that at the end of the novel he has even the oldest enemy of the Land of the Blue Mountains, Turkey, join Balka. This is not the first time Stoker proposes a union of nations to assure peace and prosperity: in his inaugural address as Auditor of the Historical Society of Trinity College Dublin (2002a: 25-6),

he anticipated Woodrow Wilson's idea of a League of Nations of more than half a century. According to Murray (2004: 56), Stoker knew the Balkan situation well, especially as regarded Montenegro, thanks to his collaboration with the *Dublin Evening Mail*, which in 1877 gave a detailed account of the war between the Ottoman Empire and the small country. Murray then proceeds to identify the Land of the Blue Mountains with Montenegro. Many other authors are under the same impression, given the small size and the name of Stoker's fictional country, but in the novel he clearly indicates that this is not so, even comparing the two countries (2012: 27 and 195), which means both exist at the same time in his fictional world. Stoker's knowledge of Montenegro and its history is confirmed by a chapter on Stefan Mali, the false Czar, in *Famous Impostors* (1910: 31-5). In this short chapter, we find several features that are shared by Montenegro and the Land of the Blue Mountains: the presence of a Vladika, the name Sava, the pride of the mountaineers, their custom of wearing their weapons at all times, the modernisation of the country, its constitutional change to monarchy, the election of a foreigner to rule it and an important personality who leaves the power to the same foreigner and dedicates the rest of his life to studying and praying. Given that *Famous Impostors* was published one year after the novel, we can reasonably assume that they were composed more or less in the same period. This is more proof of the influence his research on Montenegro had on the creation of the Land of the Blue Mountains, but the fact remains that, in the fictional world of *The Lady of the Shroud*, the two are clearly different countries, both listed as members of the Federation.

Besides the similarities in the development plans discussed in the two novels, more connections between the Land of the Blue Mountains and Ireland are to be found in Rupert's Irish background. Like the protagonist of *Kim*, he is half Irish, since his father was Irish. According to what his cousin Ernest says, Rupert's character was mainly influenced by his father's, more than by his mother's, which is confirmed by the adventures he lives around the world. His

mother, whom he loved very much, was English, but she asked a Scottish aunt to help her raise her child. After her early death (when Rupert was only twelve), it was this aunt who acted in loco parentis for Rupert, giving him an even stronger Gaelic character. The presence of an aunt who takes care of the protagonist in his childhood and teenage years is a further connection with *The Snake's Pass*, since its protagonist, Arthur Severn, lived the same experience. However, in Stoker's view the Irish-Gaelic character should not lead Ireland away from the union with Great Britain. This is why the protagonist of *The Snake's Pass* is a perfect representative of England, bearing the first name of the mythological English King and as a surname the name of its longest river. His marriage to a perfect representative of the Irish countryside and of Irish character serves the purpose of making the union between England and Ireland even stronger. Valente (2002: 12), too, highlights the reconciliation of two peoples and two lands through the marriage of the stereotypical characters of *The Snake's Pass*. For the same reason, the Gaelic Rupert St Leger has to remain a British citizen, as stated in his uncle's will and repeatedly through the novel. As regards the choice of Rupert's surname, it gives him an even stronger connection with Ireland. Bruce Stewart (1998: 37) thinks a possible source for this name is Sir Anthony St Leger, Lord Deputy of Ireland under Henry VIII and Mary I. It was him who suggested that Henry VIII change his title in Ireland from Lord to King in order to convince noblemen and the rest of the population to become more loyal to the Crown and to follow English laws. However, since we now know that Stoker's inspiration for this constitutional change probably came from his knowledge of the history of Montenegro (as shown above), the main evidence supporting Stewart's idea is evidently lacking. Moreover, this St Leger is often described as unpopular, bad-tempered and quarrelsome, hardly Rupert's character. He even had to face an accusation of keeping false accounts. If we turn to Stoker's biography, however, we will find another St Leger, the Irish-born Major-General Anthony St Leger (1732-86), soldier, politician and founder of the still surviving St Leger Stakes horse race. He is buried in St Ann's

Church on Dawson Street, where Stoker celebrated his wedding and very close to Trinity College Dublin and to where he spent most of his adult life in Dublin. Given that St Leger's corpse has always been buried in St Ann's crypt and that he is one of its most famous residents, it is highly probable that Stoker, always curious and active, knew about him. Moreover, he made Rupert's deceased father a valiant soldier, like this second Anthony St Leger.

In the first of the two articles supporting this reading of *The Lady of the Shroud*, 'The Great White Fair in Dublin', Stoker highlights the changes that have occurred in his country. He firmly believes these changes have been so many that the exhibition is to be considered as an occasion to introduce the Irish to their new identity. In the same way as in the two novels, the fact that the place where modernisation is happening is a place usually linked with the past allows Stoker to put present and past together, with an eye to the future. It is important to preserve the past, which lays the foundation for development both in *The Snake's Pass* and in *The Lady of the Shroud*, with inheritances, history and legends that give the protagonists the means to carry out their plans. In the case of the 1907 International Exhibition, the place where past and present meet is the area between Donnybrook and Ballsbridge, where the notorious Donnybrook Fair used to take place. The juxtaposition between past and present is clear even in the long subtitle: "How there has arisen on the site of the old Donnybrook Fair a great exhibition as typical of the new Ireland as the former festival was of the Ireland of the past". If we consider to what extent the old Donnybrook Fair, which ran from the Middle Ages to the middle of the nineteenth century, was characterised by an almost carnival-like disregard of rules, by a licentiousness that would not have been normally tolerated and by frequent fights (which sometimes resulted in a death), it is easier to understand the stark contrast observed by Stoker. The old fair was considered the quintessential example of how low Irish pastimes were. Stoker himself reminds his readers that it made the area in which it took place "ill-famed throughout the world" (2002b: 145) to the point of being "a

synonym of misconduct” (2002b: 147) and of causing the appearance of a common saying: “The Devil would be in Hell only for Donnybrook” (2002b: 147). The current fair, on the other hand, is so modern and so representative of the new Ireland that Stoker thinks it is going to be “a revelation to British eyes” (2002b: 145). Even the Irish may not have noticed that their country has changed and that there are initiatives everywhere, which Stoker describes with enthusiastic words. His enthusiasm comes from the fact that such initiatives put Ireland on its road to industrial progress, in the same way proposed in his two novels. For Stoker, modernisation has to rely on tradition, with the past and the future walking together towards a common end. More than this: modernisation is not possible without tradition, which is the basis on which modernisation rests. Hughes thinks Stoker’s position regarding the present is different from the usual Victorian position, typically expressed in exhibitions like London 1851, which highlighted public satisfaction with the present. In Stoker’s article, the present is “... a brief moment of acknowledgement, a prelude to the future, rather than an end in itself” (Hughes 1997b: 14). A visual and metaphorical representation of the meeting of past, present and future is given when Rupert is lifted and carried by the Mountaineers after he saves Teuta from the Turks. The future of the country (Rupert) rests on its past (the other men who lift him), which takes him higher and higher. Stoker highlights this aspect: “It was as though the old Vikings of whom we have heard, and whose blood flows in Rupert’s veins, were choosing a chief in old fashion” (Stoker 2012: 131). Carol Senf (2010: 131-2) thinks Stoker is critical with those who live in the past, like Rupert’s cousin Ernest, since the modern world cannot include people like him. According to Hughes (1997b: 11), Stoker completely refuses the past in ‘The Great White Fair in Dublin’. However, these views can be dismissed after reading all his novels, since he constantly and repeatedly considers the past in the same way as he does in *The Snake’s Pass* and in *The Lady of the Shroud*, that is, as the solid ground on which the future rests. Modernisation always starts thanks to something coming from the past (e.g. money,

legends, etc.) and takes its place, but the past survives in personal, collective and national identity and it must not be forgotten. This is why he is happy to notice that the innovative architectural concept of the Great White Fair is supported by references to Irish traditions, like the ceilings in the shape of shamrocks.

The modernity of the 1907 Exhibition is highlighted through a comparison with the others that took place in the British Isles, especially London 1851. This was usually considered as the ultimate example and commonly taken as a model, but Stoker thinks the one he describes surpasses them all. He also thinks London has already been surpassed abroad and this is the first time it happens in the British Isles. He praises the architecture of Dublin Exhibition, which boasts several buildings in the Italian Renaissance style. The decision to give all the buildings a common style results in a shift from the unity within a single building, which designers usually chose, to a larger unity involving the whole area where the Fair takes place. In this way, “... an outlook which for brilliancy and beauty has never before been equalled in these isles” (Stoker 2002b: 145) is made possible. Stoker’s article, as Hughes points out (1997b: 13), deals more with buildings than with the objects they contain, contrary to what usually happened in descriptions of this kind. This is only natural, given the importance the new conception of exhibition spaces had for the organisers. Not only do buildings give the fair a sense of unity, but empty spaces between buildings have been given names (like Royal Avenue or Colonial Avenue), too, which gives visitors the idea of moving within a single space, like in a town or a village. Spaces are important in the two novels, too, as they influence people’s behaviour and are the repositories of old legends, customs and local identity. As already pointed out, buildings and construction works are central to the development of the west of Ireland in *The Snake’s Pass* and of the Land of the Blue Mountains in *The Lady of the Shroud*. In the article, architecture and successful industry offer a new picture of the possibilities of Ireland, which can rely on the strenuous and industrious spirit that has replaced the more joyous but less efficient spirit of old Donnybrook days. Ireland can also rely on

natural resources that have not been fully exploited yet, like fertile arable land, seas full of fish, minerals and huge bog areas that Stoker thinks can by themselves assure the nation's wealth. He believes so firmly in the possibilities his country offers that he invites captains of industry to go there and invest their money. In order to convince them, he mentions the fact that Ireland hosts some of the largest and most important industrial businesses in the world (and in the second article he describes his visit to Harland and Wolff's shipbuilding yards). The new spirit has replaced that of the stage Irishman and of the clash between landlords and tenants, which was typical of the period of the Land League (Stoker 2002b: 145). Hughes reminds us that "National and international exhibitions ... are discursive crisis points, moments at which cultural identities may be constructed or fragmented, tense spaces in which old identities may be eclipsed by new impositions" (1997b: 10). Stoker is aware of this and in his article he makes this process explicit and, at the same time, gives his contribution to it. Hughes also introduces some interesting parallelism between Norah Joyce from *The Snake's Pass* and Ireland: the female protagonist of Stoker's first novel has to be re-educated and given a new appearance in order to be more adaptable to the social milieu in which she will have to live after marrying Arthur; in the same way, the ideas people have about Ireland must be rewritten in order to correspond more closely to the new Ireland that is exhibited in 1907, a country that can perfectly face the challenges of the new century.

In addition to the proposed development model, there are more features in common between *The Lady of the Shroud* and this article. The story starts in 1907, the same year in which the article was published and the exhibition took place. The layout of the area in which the pavilions for the countries that have joined Balka are built follows the same principles Stoker noticed at the Great White Fair (incidentally, it seems it was him who gave it this name – Siggins 2007: 33). The buildings for the Exhibition have been completed in a very short time ("almost in a night" – Stoker 2002b: 145) and the royal palace for the "Western King" is built in a few

weeks before his visit to the Land of the Blue Mountains for the second ceremony. The Blue Mouth is reminiscent of Dublin and its favourable position, in an estuary surrounded by mountains. The wonders that the visitors to the Great White Fair (in the end, there were almost three million – Siggins 2007: 10) will have the opportunity to see at the exhibition (and around Ireland, if they decide to follow Stoker's advice) are similar to the wonders visitors to the Land of the Blue Mountains (mainly journalists and statesmen invited to the two ceremonies) report as being rapidly carried out under Rupert's enlightened rule. Stoker identifies a centripetal force in such a huge fair, which he thinks gives a whole country the possibility to meet in a single place and to get to know itself, with positive consequences on the education of the masses and on the creation of a national spirit. This force is similar to the effect Rupert has on his new fellow-countrymen, who unite around him and learn how to be successful in their military and economic activities. Since he wrote his article some time before the inauguration of the exhibition, Stoker could not write about the card the king sent in May (when the exhibition opened) and about his visit in July. However, he duly included the two episodes in the novel, with the Western King sending a message through diplomatic channels when he accepts to be the referee to the formation of Balka and then taking part in the ceremony.

In the second article, Stoker highlights the efficiency, organisation and quality of Belfast shipbuilding yards. These were not supported by natural resources or favourable conditions of any kind, so they were only based on individual entrepreneurship. This is why Stephen A. Royle (2011: 57) thinks the greatest loss for Harland and Wolff when the *Titanic* was sunk was the death of their chief designer Thomas Andrews, who was on board the ship. Stoker's visit to Harland and Wolff's probably had a direct influence on *The Lady of the Shroud*, as it allowed him to observe how ships are built and to learn more about their characteristics. Stoker had already had the opportunity to travel in one of Harland and Wolff's ships (the *S. S. Minneapolis*) during his last American tour with the Lyceum in 1903 (<http://www.atlantictransportline.us/content/30>

Minneapolis.htm, retrieved 29/11/2015). This knowledge was duly employed in the novel, where the warship Rupert buys is described in detail. There is also an interesting connection with Teuta's boat (and, of course, with the ship in *Dracula* that takes the vampire to England), since Harland and Wolff's ships were sometimes called "coffin ships" because of their shape (Royle 2011: 55), not to be confused with the more notorious "coffin ships" that took Irish emigrants to America. Stoker's admiration for Harland and Wolff's business can be summarised in one sentence: "Perhaps the most remarkable of many remarkable things is the perfection of the establishment's organisation" (2002c: 151). He also lingers on the final product, which is as impressive as the facilities they had to build in order to reach such a product (when Stoker wrote his article, Harland and Wolff were building the biggest ships in the world):

The very yard itself is an instance, and no mean one, of human endeavour. Originally a slab formed by the embouchment of a river on a tidal shore, it had in itself but little stability, and was not used for any work of magnitude. ... it had to be banked and built up on every side. Embedded in its depths are thousands and thousands of piles, representing an enormous sum of money and an incredible bulk of material (Stoker 2002c: 152).

This is nothing more than Stoker's dream in *The Snake's Pass* and *The Lady of the Shroud*: the investment of capital to modify and exploit the land for its development and the production of wealth.

This short analysis has sought to show that there is a clear project behind Stoker's dealing with the subject of the development of a small nation and that he supported this project through time, as the dates of the two novels and of the two articles attest. Even before the beginning of his career as a writer, the same ideas can be found in the already mentioned address to the Historical Society of Trinity College Dublin. On this occasion, his main topic was political honesty, but he dedicated a long section to Ireland and its possibilities for the future. In this section, Stoker told his audience that the Emerald Isle had a bright future, thanks to its strong identity and traditions on the one hand and to its natural and human resources on the other hand. There are several similarities between his ideas as a young man and the ideas found in the two novels and in the two articles. This furtherly supports the identification between Ireland and the Land of the Blue Mountains proposed in this essay and shows that Stoker's interest in the Irish question was so strong and constant that he supported his ideas publicly since his early adulthood.

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