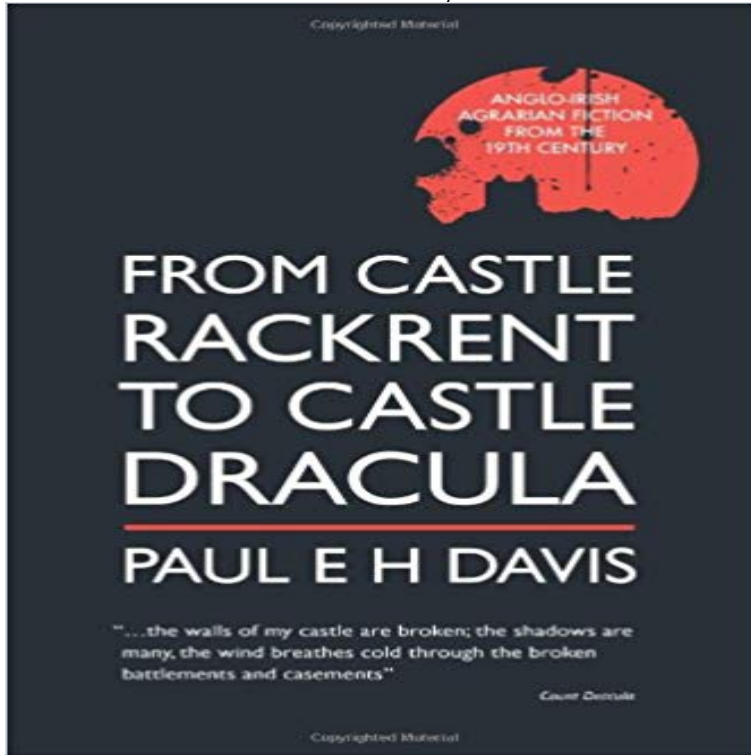


## From Castle Rackrent to Castle Dracula: Anglo-Irish Agrarian Fiction in the Nineteenth Century



It is impossible to study literature in Ireland in the nineteenth century without also considering history, social issues, politics and religion. In particular absentee landlords appointed agents and/or middlemen - most of whom were corrupt - who persecuted tenants and squeezed every last penny from them (often entirely legally), so fueling the resentment felt by often dispossessed tenants who had already suffered under the Penal Laws. This excessive and often corrupt behaviour by landowners, agents, middlemen and the Law, the book identifies as institutional violence; equally, it identifies the inevitable violent response by the tenants as agrarian violence. The book's structure is unconventional: it is divided into three parts. The first part looks at the novels up to the Famine: Edgeworth (the upper class, Protestant view), Griffin (the upper middle class, Catholic view), and the Banims (the middle class, Catholic view) - all of whom believed the solution to what was to become known as the Irish Land Question lay in Ireland. In the second part, the problem essentially emigrates: Kickham saw the solution as lying with America, while Trollope saw it as lying with England - both arguments are discredited. In part three, the solution no longer lies in reality but beyond reality, in short, in fantasy. I argue that, although Edgeworth's agenda is the dominant one, it could all have been very different. While Moore's book predates all the authors apart from Edgeworth, the unique, fantasy quality of his *Memoirs of Captain Rock* (1824), separates him from the more or less rational worlds of Edgeworth and of those who, like her, at least glimpsed a solution. It is with Moore that we discover the origins of the only other work in the canon that challenges or even surpasses Edgeworth's pre-eminence - Stoker's *Dracula*. Superficially, Stoker merely transplants exploration of the Land

Question from Ireland to Transylvania, but the novel also deals with issues ignored by other writers. Dracula not only looks to the past but also to the future and forms a bridge between the conventional agrarian novel and the innovative, urbanized, literary forms later pioneered by James Joyce. The University of Buckingham Press The University of Buckingham is the only independent university in the UK and our publishing program reflects the tenets of the university and the principles of its founding fathers: -Liberty -Freedom of the individual -Freedom from state intervention The University of Buckingham Press provides a forum for the exchange of views and a vehicle for rigorous academic research to disseminate the values which underpin the university in the subject areas at which the university excels: -Law -Education -Business -Education

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