The Welter of Fiction and Nonfiction in Bram Stoker's Dracula

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the interconnection between reality and fiction in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and the way the novel symbolically reflects the reality of its time. It shall start with the examination of the historical and geographical inspirations that Stoker used while writing the story, as well as the real places and events that are directly mentioned in the novel. Then, in the second section, Stoker's literary influences will be explored – the myth of the Vampire, as well as the Western fiction that popularized the said myth in the United Kingdom. This will conclude the portion of the paper that focuses on the literal nonfictional elements present in the novel. Before moving on to the allegorical interpretation of the novel, I shall briefly introduce the social and political circumstance in the latter half of the Victorian era. This will place the novel in a historical context necessary for the following sections, the first of which will focus on how the narrative of *Dracula* reflects the late-Victorian anxieties about the advancement of science and technology. The following section will discuss how the Victorian fears of degeneration and collapse of their society due to foreign invaders are represented in the novel. These allegories are connected because they are both rooted in prejudice and the fear of the unknown.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Bram Stoker's iconic horror novel was first published in 1897. Although it was not immediately successful when first released, it defined the vampire myth in modern popular culture, and has had an everlasting impact on the horror genre. *Dracula* does not thrive only as a symbol of popular culture and entertainment, but also as a subject of numerous academic discussions. Over the last few decades, scholars have interpreted the novel from various cultural, sociological, historical and psychological perspectives, and done an extensive research into the origins of the book. Stoker's novel is the result of seven years of planning, research, and crafting a story that carefully intertwines reality and fiction to make it seem authentic. It was recognized amongst Victorian readers for its modernity and the number of aspects of contemporary culture it incorporated. Nowadays, it is an important piece of literature that can be considered a cultural document. It is not a coincidence that *Dracula* awakens such strong interest in academics, especially those passionate about Victorian culture. Stoker, whether subconsciously or deliberately, demonstrates the attitudes of Victorian society in his novel, particularly its fears and anxieties. These fears will be explored in what I believe are the two most prominent features of the novel: its representation of nineteenth century views on science and advancement, and the Victorian society's perception of foreigners.

1. Nonfictional sources

Although a work of fiction, Stoker's novel contains a number of thorough descriptions of real places and historical events. In preparation for writing the novel, Stoker has made at least a hundred and twenty pages of handwritten notes. The notes, now dubbed "The Philadelphia notes", because they are kept at the Rosenbach Foundation Library in Philadelphia, prove that Stoker did at least six years of painstaking research before writing his magnum opus[1]. They are dated between 1890 and 1896. Stoker kept record of various books and articles that he used to make his story as authentic as possible; for example, one note mentions Emily Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest*, which has a detailed geographical, social and political description of Transylvania. This explains why Stoker was so precise in his writing of Jonathan Harker's trip, despite never having visited Transylvania himself.

Stoker did not need to use guidebooks for writing the parts of the novel that take place in London. He was very well acquainted with Whitby – a seaside town situated on England's North-East coast – as he used to spend his summers there. In fact, his descriptions are so authentic that Radu Florescu and Raymond T. McNally managed to pinpoint the exact whereabouts of Mina Harker during her search for Lucy in their book *In Search of Dracula*. The London Zoo, from which a wolf escapes in chapter eleven, and Jack's Straw's castle, in which Van Helsing and Seward stop to dine in chapter fifteen are both London vistas. Even the shipwreck of the *Demeter* is based on a real event. In the Philadelphia notes, there is a *Whitby Gazette* article about a shipwreck of a Russian cruiser called *Dimitri* in Collier's Hope, Whitby. In 1885, the ship arrived

[1] Unless otherwise stated, all the information from the Philadelphia notes is sourced from either Florescu and McNally's *Dracula, Prince of Many Faces* or Clive Leatherdale's *Dracula: The Novel and the Legend*. Both books contain extensive, detailed research into the origins of Stoker's novel.

into harbour safely, but became a complete wreck the following day due to the rise of the tide and stormy sea.

The Vampire legend itself was also partly inspired by real-life events. Stoker's notes contain a clipping from a 1896 *New York World* article titled *The New England Vampire Scare*. The article itself discusses how tuberculosis outbreaks, which resulted in seemingly mysterious, widespread deaths, were explained by supernatural forces – such as the presence of a vampire. Charles Darwin's encounter with vampire bats in South America is also mentioned in the article; the novel's protagonist Quincey Morris recalls a very similar encounter of his own. Stoker was also influenced by the stories told by his mother while he was bedridden with an unexplained illness in his youth. As she survived a cholera epidemic in the north-west of Ireland, she would often tell him terrible tales of mass graves and the living being accidentally buried along with the dead.[2]

As for creating the title character himself, Stoker was also heavily influenced by a historical person. According to Florescu and McNally, Stoker became acquainted with Romanian history through William Wilkinson's *Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia: With Political Observations Relative to Them*. From the book, he learned about the Wallachian ruler Vlad III, also known by his patronym: Dracula, and later his nickname, "Vlad the Impaler". Vlad III was born in 1428 and reigned on and off as the Voivode of Wallachia (historical region of Romania) between 1448 and his death in 1477. As Wilkinson adopted the "largely negative German interpretation popularized in academic circles by Munster's *Cosmographia*" (Florescu and McNally, 229), which could almost be described as a folkloric version of a historical person, it is

[2] Information uncovered by Stoker's great grand-nephew Dacre Stoker. For further reading, see: Stoker, Dacre: *5 fascinating and unknown facts uncovered from Bram Stoker's vaults*, Penguin, 2018

unclear how accurate his knowledge of Vlad III was. However, Vlad III is agreed by most historians to have been a cruel leader. In the novel itself, the character Van Helsing remarks that Count Dracula must indeed have been the historical Voivode Dracula. Stoker also might have based the Count's physical appearance on Vlad III. Here is a comparison between the only known physical description of Vlad the Impaler:

> "He was not very tall but very stocky and strong with a cold and terrible appearance, a strong and aquiline nose, swollen nostrils, a thin and reddish face, in which the very long eyelashes framed large wide-open green eyes; the bushy black eyebrows made them appear threatening. His face and chin were shaven, but for a moustache. The swollen temples increased the bulk of his head. A bull's neck connected his head (to the body) from which black curly locks hung on his wide shouldered person." (Florescu and Mcnally, 229)

and the description of Count Dracula as provided by Jonathan Harker in Chapter 2:

> "His face was strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, but almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion." (Stoker, 16)

Stoker did deliberately manufacture some information about the historic figure of Dracula, because his ultimate goal was not to write a history book but a compelling novel. The combination of vampire mythology with a historical person is what made the character stand out from the rest of the literary vampire characters of that time, as it was never done before. Stoker managed to create an interesting and mysterious original character by intertwining history with mythology.

2. Fictional inspirations

Vampire mythology has been present in most cultures around the world for thousands of years. In European folklore, vampire traits usually include consumption of human blood, sharp teeth, aversion to sunlight, and the state of being undead – vampires are creatures who are no longer alive, but behave as if they were.

Vampires became extremely popular in English and French theatres when John Polidori released the first vampire story in the English language, *The Vampyre*, in 1819. During the 1840s, vampire novels serialized in the form of *penny dreadfuls* were popular, the most famous one being *Varney the Vampire* by Thomas Peckett Prest. Although Stoker never specifically stated in any of his notes to be inspired by any fictional works, it is safe to assume that he did borrow some ideas from other authors while writing his own novel. The most obvious inspiration can be found in fellow Irish author Joseph Sheridan LeFanu's *Carmilla*, published in 1871. Stoker became familiar with the novella when he worked as an unpaid Dublin theater critic and *Carmilla* appeared in the *Dublin University Magazine*. The story is set in Styria (now Austria), and centers around a young girl being preyed upon by a mysterious female vampire, Carmilla. According to his notes, Stoker initially wanted to set his own novel in Styria, but rethought his decision after discovering the works of Emily Gerard. It is also worth noting that later in the novel the character of Carmilla is revealed to be the Countess of Karnstein, sharing her title with Stoker's Count Dracula. Another inspiration might have come from Stoker's friendship with Sir Richard Burton, a well-known orientalist who translated *One Thousand and One Nights* into English. This collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian folk stories includes a tale about a Hindu vampire.

Stoker read about Transylvanian vampire folklore in Emily Gerard's *Transylvanian Superstitions*. His vampire diverges from the traditional one in several ways. Firstly, Dracula is

capable of walking in the sunlight, unlike the traditional vampires who are hurt by it. Secondly, Dracula has to rest in consecrated earth to regain his power.

Perceptions of Vampires vary throughout the centuries. In the nineteenth century, the Vampire was a human-like creature with unhuman powers. Terrifying but also fascinating, the Vampire represented the fears of disease, sexual promiscuity and depravity. This changed in contemporary times, where Vampires are portrayed in a more sympathetic light.

3. The Victorian era

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was written and published at the very end of the Victorian period, which lasted from 1837 to 1901. The plot of the novel takes place in the same period, although no year is specified. The Victorian era was a time ridden with changes. The first industrial revolution resulted in new technological inventions and scientific progress. The typewriter, the telephone, and the Kodak box camera, all of which are mentioned in the novel, are, among many others, the inventions of the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1859, Charles Darwin published his controversial work, *On the Origin of Species*, which introduced the theory of evolution, and was the cause of a metaphysical crisis in many people because it questioned established religious beliefs. There was also a notable fascination with psychology and exploration of the darker parts of the human psyche. Despite the scientific progress, the Victorians were also captivated by the supernatural; "mesmerism, clairvoyance, electro-biology, crystal-gazing, thought-reading, and above all, Spiritualism" (Diniejko, *Victorian Spiritualism*). People frequently claimed that they have had encounters with ghosts, and a number of popular authors such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and H.G. Wells wrote ghost stories. It can be said that the fascination with the scientific was interwoven with the interest in the supernatural.

During the Victorian era, class and gender indicated a person's role in society. The gender ideology was operating on the principle of the separate spheres. However, the concept of "The New Woman" was becoming more and more prominent in the late Victorian period. Although the Victorian society is stereotypically described as prudish and sexually constrained, pornography and prostitution were widespread, the latter of which was particularly common among the working-class women because of social and economic issues. Other than that, criminal activity was higher than ever before, especially in the slum areas of large cities. The blame was often

placed on immigrants. The most infamous example of crime in the Victorian era are the Whitechapel murders of 1888, ascribed to the notorious Jack the Ripper. Because of the high crime rates, detective fiction was highly acclaimed among the Victorian readers, the most famous example being Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* stories. *Dracula* itself is sometimes said to be of the detective story genre. The Victorians became increasingly aware of how demoralized their society had become.

At the turn of the century, the United States and Germany were threatening to dethrone the British Empire from the position of being the most powerful nation in the world. This caused the Victorian society's anxieties about the so called "reverse colonization" – fears that the colonialist expansion of the British Empire would have consequences for the Empire itself. Consequently, rose the popularity of Invasion literature – a genre that was influential in shaping the nation's perception of foreigners. One of the most popular examples of Victorian invasion novels is H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* (1898), which depicts mankind being invaded by an extraterrestrial race. As *Dracula*'s plot also revolves around England being invaded by the Count's supernatural forces, it is often considered to fit into the invasion novel genre.[3]

[3] For more about the Victorian era see: 1. Steinbach, Susie: Victorian Era, Britannica, 2. Evans, Eric: Overview: Victorian Britain, 1837 – 1901, BBC

4. Science and knowledge

One of the central topics of *Dracula* that symbolically illustrates some of the views of the late-nineteenth century Victorians is science. *Dracula* has attracted a number of academics and critics who have noticed that the novel is significantly influenced by the late-Victorian "intellectual and political tensions" (Jann, 237), and can be considered as a highly valuable cultural document for that age. With dozens of different interpretations, the message of the novel regarding scientific advancements has been thoroughly discussed over the recent years.

As a story of the gothic horror genre, the supernatural plays a large part in the novel. However, the amount of inexplicable phenomena occurring and unnatural powers harnessed by the villain is contrasted by perhaps an even greater focus on the importance of science, which is mainly used and appreciated by the novel's heroic characters, the advocates of Light and righteousness. As already mentioned, the late-nineteenth century was a time of transition and experimentation; the people were becoming increasingly fascinated with new technologies, they had new theories which changed their previous "archaic" understanding of the world and of themselves. It was impossible to tell what the future holds, and that was a valid cause for anxiety.

Upon a more careful reading, it is easy to point out that *Dracula* contains contradictions regarding its message about the use of science. The first one is the prediction of the effect that the sudden scientific advancement will have on society. Although mostly viewed as positive, the sudden increase in new inventions and theories caused anxieties of their mishandling – corrupt misuse of science was connected to the overall fear of the moral degeneration of the Victorian society. The theme of the monstrous consequences of using science for the wrong purposes was fairly common within the Gothic novel genre – Mary Shelley initiated the trope of the mad, morally uninhibited scientist with her acclaimed novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818).

Likewise, one of H.G. Wells' best-known science fiction novels, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), centers around a scientist who conducts unethical experiments under the guise of scientific progress and betterment of society. Another contradiction, as pointed out by Rosemary Jann in her essay *Saved by science, The Mixed Messages of Stoker's Dracula* is the relationship between science and superstition, or, facts and belief. Throughout the novel, most of the characters are faced with a dilemma whether they should only consider the provable truth or whether there is more to the world than it meets the eye. This dilemma can be directly paralleled with the rise of scientific positivism contrasted with the rise of spiritualism in the late-nineteenth century.

Scientific views are perhaps best explored through the characters. Each of the vampire hunters, famously entitled "The Crew of Light", although ideologically different from one another, represents the good sides of science. All of them work towards the same goal – the selfless mission of defeating the evil Dracula. They are also modern, technologically-advanced campaigners, always searching for a proper scientific explanation for everything that happens to them. The protagonists are opposed by the Count, who lives in an archaic castle and hails from Transylvania, a region whose denizens are described as exceedingly superstitious in the novel. He is a student of the Scholomance, taught by no other than the Devil, and well versed in alchemy which was equated with magic at the close of the nineteenth century. While the Crew of Light could represent the modern, enlightened times, the Count might be a symbol for the superstitious dark ages.

The vampire hunters themselves contrast each other in certain ways. As Carol A. Senf points out in *Science and Social Science in Bram Stoker's Fiction*, Jonathan Harker is someone who is rational and views life as a set of rules. His journey in the novel starts with him being completely certain about the truths that he has believed in his entire life; however, throughout the story his views completely change, almost making him lose his mind in the process. His wife Mina

is, as many critics point out, the representation of the Victorian "new woman". Although her male colleagues initially undermine her because she is a woman, they soon find out that they cannot succeed in their quest without her. She demonstrates determination and systematic thinking, and is perhaps the character that best symbolizes deductive reasoning; she collects pieces of evidence and draws up a bigger picture from the said evidence. Rationalism and positivism are reflected in the character of dr. John Seward. As someone who trusts only in the provable truth, Seward struggles to accept that Dracula is a vampire. His views are challenged by his mentor, Abraham Van Helsing. Van Helsing comes from a scientific background, but also has great interest in the occult. He introduces the crew to the idea that the Count is a vampire and urges them on their quest. He opposes Seward's views by saying:

> "You are a clever man, friend John; you reason well, and your wit is bold; but you are too prejudiced... Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. But yet we see around us every day the growth of new beliefs, which think themselves new; and which are yet but the old, which pretend to be young". (Stoker, 158)

4.1. Faith versus proof

As pointed out by Jann, Van Helsing positions himself as the bridge between the two sides of the argument that questions: where does the scientific end and the supernatural begin? Afterwards, Van Helsing points out: "In this enlightened age, when men believe not even what they see, the doubting of wise men would be his (Dracula's) greatest strength". (Stoker, 267) Indeed, although science is something of a crutch for these characters while trying to defeat Dracula, their prejudices often slow them down. Only when they are able to open their minds to the possibility of an existence of something unprovable, are they able to use science to their

advantage. Van Helsing is the one who helps the rest realize this. When Seward asks his mentor for guidance, Van Helsing tells him that he wants him to have more faith, which he defines as "that faculty which enables us to believe things which we know to be untrue" (Stoker, 159). He consistently points out the importance of faith and imagination, because without them, no scientific discoveries would ever be made at all. Rosemary Jann connects this to the contrast between the materialist views in the late-nineteenth century and the reactions against it. During that time, it was a common belief that all the life phenomena could be explained in the terms of matter and that the consciousness of a person is a result of atoms and molecules interacting. This is represented by the sceptical characters – most notably Seward – who depend solely on science to understand the world around them. Scientific materialism was popularized by the prominent late-Victorian scientists such as Thomas Henry Huxley and John Tyndall, who claimed that explanations for causes that could not be observed are not valid. Directly opposed to them is the rise of occultism in the Victorian era. Even though the late-nineteenth century witnessed great scientific advancements, the interest in the spiritual life was rising. Empirical proof for the existence of souls and the afterlife was sought. As a character, Van Helsing unites these two tendencies. He tells Seward that the fact that he cannot explain some scientific phenomena makes them seem supernatural – just like the people of old would deem nineteenth-century scientific achievements as witchcraft. He is asking for open-mindedness towards the unexplainable. Despite this, Van Helsing remains a man of science, and all of his delving into the supernatural requires careful observation, theorizing and testing his theories in order to give good results.

Relating to the contrast between fact and fiction, Scott Rogers interprets the novel as a representation of the Victorian epistemological crisis. The novel constantly questions the way in which the truth is determined – the characters are meticulous in keeping records because they

believe that writing down their experiences would make the said experiences truer, which would help them preserve their sanity. The novel ends with Jonathan Harker saying that "in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document, nothing but a mass of typewriting, except the later notebooks of Mina and Seward and [Jonathan]" (Stoker, 315). In *Mass Production and the Spread of Information in Dracula*, Leah Richards argues that this aspect of the novel expresses "anxieties and the proliferation of information in the late nineteenth century" (Richards, 455). According to Richards, as a tale presented through multiple manuscripts derived from various sources that have all been reproduced and distributed, with the original version of the same recollections now lost, Dracula embodies the newspaper, or the periodical, of the late 1880s and 1890s. Scientific discoveries in the late-nineteenth century became available to the masses through these periodicals.

4.2. Consequences of the scientific advancement

It is also important to note that great significance is placed on the purpose for which the characters are using the potentialities of science. The heroic characters are consistently using their discoveries selflessly, not just to help one another but to prevent the Vampire from overtaking the entire Western civilization. Unlike them, Dracula uses his supernatural powers for his own gain – he either hurts people to ensure his own survival or turns them to his side. He represents the perversion of science. His servant, Renfield, is also doing experiments in order to gain immortal life, something considered immoral and unnatural. There is also a contrast in how Dracula and Van Helsing use blood – Dracula steals other people's blood to gain more power, while Van Helsing is doing the opposite; donating blood to help save Lucy's life. The novel clearly reflects the Victorian culture anxieties about the negative aspects of modernity and the misuse of

technology. While society was entering the obscure world of the future, the new branches of science such as evolutionism and mental psychology, and the awareness of sexual identity, struck fear into some people. Therefore, the Count does not only symbolize the past. Along with the metaphor of darkness that accompanies him, Dracula might represent the society's fear of the unknown, and the consequences of misusing scientific advancements.

There is plenty of evidence in the novel that shows Stoker's fascination with science. He demonstrates knowledge of Charcot, a French neurologist best known for using hypnosis. In Chapter eight, the chemical formula for chloral hydrate, a popular synthetic drug used to cure insomnia in the nineteenth century, is mentioned. For the scenes describing medical procedures such as blood transfusion and trephining, Stoker received help from his brain surgeon brother, Sir William Thornley Stoker. His emphasis on science in *Dracula* has drawn numerous discussions about the novel's message concerning science, with each scholar having their own reading[4]. In an interview with the *British Weekly's* Jane Stoddard in 1897, when asked about the moral message in Dracula, Stoker replied: "I suppose that every book of the kind must contain some lesson […] but I prefer that readers should find it out for themselves." (Stoker, *British Weekly*) Therefore, the moral point of it is up to interpretation, but the novel does embody some of the anxieties of the late-Victorian society.

[4] For further reading see: Blinderman, S. Charles: *Vampurella*: *Darwin and Count Dracula*, and Frost, Robert James: *A Race of Devils: "Frankenstein, Dracula and Science Fiction"*

5. Politics

Aside from science, the themes of sexuality, gender and race in the novel have also been widely used to interpret the political anxieties of late-nineteenth century Victorians. In this section I will focus on the cultural and political context regarding the novel – specifically its representation of the British civilization's view of foreigners and how it relates to the British fear of reverse colonization.

Dracula is a novel written from the Western point of view, intended for the Western audience. Four of the six protagonists – Jonathan and Mina Harker, Seward, and Holmwood – are English. In their group, there are two outsiders: Van Helsing, who is Dutch, and Quincey Morris, an American. Although they are foreigners, they are both members of the Western civilization, and their goal is in favour of protecting the British nation from Dracula's threat (although some theorize that this may not apply to Quincey, a point which I will discuss later). The villain, Dracula, hails from the East of the Danube, which was considered to be the border between the Western and the Eastern world in the nineteenth century. As an antagonist, he is not portrayed in a favourable light, and the cultural differences between him and the rest of the characters are visible. The first two chapters of the novel are centered around Jonathan Harker's visit to Transylvania. One of the first comments Harker makes upon crossing the Danube is that the further East someone goes, the more unpunctual the trains are. Furthermore, he is shown to have prejudices against Eastern Europeans. Harker says that he read that "every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians" (Stoker, 4), which makes him discard the local people's warnings about Dracula as superstitious fear. He describes Transylvania as "the wildest and least known portions of Europe" (Stoker, 1). In *The Occidental Tourist: "Dracula" and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization*, Stephen D. Arata compares the chapters of Harker's Journey with the travel

narrative, a popular late-Victorian literary genre. Because the British public heavily relied on the highly unreliable travel journals to build their image of the Eastern Europeans, they thought of them as savage, uncultured and inferior. Victorian readers would also probably associate Eastern Europe with the political turbulence and strife between the races, and relate it to the "Eastern Question", a diplomatic problem involving the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, which heavily concerned Britain in the late-nineteenth century.

When we finally meet the count, his foreignness is foregrounded. Firstly, despite being fluent in English, he himself notices that his accent would make him distinguishable as a foreigner if he were in London. Secondly, he makes a point to emphasize how culturally different he and Jonathan are by saying "We are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things" (Stoker, 19). As the novel progresses, Dracula becomes more threatening as his otherness from the rest of the characters is gradually revealed, first in his culture, then in his behavior, and finally in his very essence.

For this reason, Count Dracula is often viewed as the reflection of the late-Victorian society's anxieties about the degeneration of their society, and the subsequent foreign invasion and assimilation of the same. In the nineteenth century, the British Empire was at the peak of its power. Its colonization of the entire globe resulted in the colonized countries losing not only their independence and freedom but also their culture, as the British were trying to forcibly assimilate them. When the British power started waning in the late-nineteenth century due to the growing influence of the United States and other Western European countries such as Germany and France, there was a growing anxiety among the British that their colonies might try to invade them back, just as the British once invaded them. This was the fear of the so-called Reverse Colonization. Stephen Arata interprets Dracula as a corrupted mirror of the Western civilization, symbolized in

the scenes when Dracula easily impersonates Jonathan to wreak havoc on the town. Dracula's goal is to invade the Western society, starting with London which he considers the heart of civilization. As he turns his victims into Vampires, he deprives them of their individuality and reverts them to his ways. Van Helsing describes Dracula's quest as an intent to be "the father or furtherer of a new order of beings" (Stoker, 251). In this way, Dracula mirrors British imperialism.

Directly connected with this fear of reverse colonization is the fear of degeneration of society which was highly present among the late-nineteenth century Victorians. During those times, the people feared that not only their power and influence in the world were waning, but that Victorian values were also in decline. The highly influential degeneration theory that claimed that biological heredity directly influences immoral behavior was used to promote scientific racism, and resulted in groups of people that were not purely British being ostracized. Stoker himself was influenced by theories about racial degeneration. In the novel, he uses the terminology of Cesare Lombroso, who famously claimed that criminal traits are inherited and identifiable by someone's appearance. When describing the vampire, Mina says "The Count is a criminal and of the criminal type, Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him" (Stoker, 285). His physical description is also similar to how Lombroso would portray a criminal man: aquiline nose, bushy eyebrows, pointed ears. When Dracula turns Lucy Westenra into a vampire, she becomes more sexualized, just like the Count's three brides in Transylvania. Lucy's transformation deeply disturbs the men of the group, and is directly linked to the Victorian society's repression of female sexuality. In this way, Dracula corrupts her morally, and poses a threat to the established traditions. When he tries to do the same with Mina, she and the rest of the vampire hunters are doing everything in their power to prevent her transformation and preserve her purity, thus symbolically preventing the collapse of the Victorian traditions and values at the hands of "the Other".

Patrick Brantlinger links Victorian imperialism to the already mentioned rise of occultism in that era. The literature that he defines as "Imperial Gothic" combines the "seemingly scientific, progressive, often Darwinian ideology of imperialism with the antithetical interest in the occult" (Brantlinger, 227). He states regression of going native and invasion of civilization by barbaric or demonic forces as the principal themes of imperial Gothic. Both of these are present in *Dracula* – the Count, who is not only an invader and a conqueror but also a student of the literal Devil, sets foot in England to create "a new and ever widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless" (Stoker, 45). Brantlinger reads this as a "parody of the "conquering race rhetoric in much of imperialist writing, a premonition of fascism." (Brantlinger, 227)

Aside from the Dracula, it is worth paying attention to the other foreign characters, particularly the American Quincey Morris. Probably the most mysterious character in the novel, Morris stands out from the rest of the group for being from the "New World". An American Texan, Morris is constantly shocking his European friends with his slang, and is generally quicker to use a gun than the other characters. In a way, he is a stereotypical American. He works in favour of the British characters, however, in some brief moments he seems to have hidden agendas. During Van Helsing's group lecture about vampires, Morris unexpectedly leaves the room and is soon heard shooting a gun, which he later explains he did because he saw a bat. Afterwards, when the group is looking for Dracula, Morris seemingly loses track of him and convinces the other characters to call off the pursuit. He is also the first character in the novel to ever utter the word: "Vampire". What lies behind the ambiguous delineation of the character of Quincey Morris? In his famous Marxist interpretation of *Dracula*, Franco Moretti views Morris as an embodiment of American capitalism. During the late-nineteenth century, the East was not the only threat to the power of the British Empire – there was also its former colony, the United States, which was

growing to soon become the world's leading economy. Thus, Morris represents the British anxieties about the rise of America, and is symbolically the only other character besides Dracula that dies in the end.

Themes of imperialism and colonization, particularly decline of the British Empire, are present in much of Stoker's fiction[5], so it is safe to say that Dracula also allegorically embodies these themes, at least on a subconscious level. Although he spent a large amount of his life among the English, it is important to note that Stoker was Irish and raised a Protestant. He was a supporter of the Irish Home Rule movement which advocated for Ireland's self-government, and he also supported British monarchy and considered that Ireland should be part of the Empire. There were great tensions between Ireland and Great Britain in the late-nineteenth century, as Ireland was brutally subjugated by the Empire. The Irish were also treated in a similar way as the Eastern Europeans. In a way, Stoker, too, can be considered "the Other".

[5] Arata divides Stoker's works into two categories based on his handling of imperial themes. The first category fits those works in which colonization and invasion are not central to the plot but still disrupt the main story. The second category is reserved for works that fit Brantlinger's principles of Imperial gothic.

CONCLUSION

The character of Count Dracula is an embodiment of fear – both the fears of an individual and the collective fears of an entire society. As a monstrous supernatural being who uses his powers for corrupt purposes, he represents the fear of the Victorian society's regression to superstition, but also the consequences of unethical experimentation with science. As a foreign invader who morally corrupts his victims and plans to transform everyone in England to resemble him, he represents the Victorian fears of degeneration and reverse colonization. This demonstrates the Victorian society's xenophobia. The advancement and popularization of science, particularly biological sciences such as Darwinism, was used to justify racist rhetoric. By placing Dracula's home in Eastern European Transylvania, Stoker immediately marks him as the foreign "Other". The character of Dracula would invoke different connotations for contemporary Victorian readers if he stemmed from the originally intended Styria. Aside from the allegory, Stoker also links his fiction to reality by grounding it in historical events. Association with a historical figure famous for his cruelty adds another dimension to Dracula's character, and makes him even more convincing. The epistolary form of the novel, accurate detailed descriptions of real places, and an ambiguous ending are designed to leave the reader questioning whether he was reading a piece of fiction or a recollection of authentic events, thus amplifying the horror of *Dracula*.

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