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Bram Stoker's *Dracula* -
A Foreign Threat to the British Empire

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1. Introduction

A symbol is “a TROPE in which a word, phrase, or image represents something literal and concrete and yet maintains a complex set of abstract ideas and values that are usually interpreted according to the surrounding context” (“Symbol”). In his novel *Dracula*, published in 1897, the Irish author Bram Stoker illustrates late-Victorian anxieties associated with an impending collapse of the British Empire. Set in contemporary Transylvania and England, with a focus on London as the heart of the Empire, the novel uses Dracula himself as the central symbol for external and internal threats regarding British society and imperialism.

According to Dennison, Dracula is “more a great amorphous power than a character” (84). He is thus complex and multileveled. Both an obvious threat to every human being on earth and simultaneously a menace to the public and society, Dracula endangers human civilization. His ability to exceed time and outlive cultures reflects his non-human and unnatural character.

As the scientist and specialist of the occult Professor Van Helsing explains, their enemy Dracula can be identified as a vampire, a being that is neither alive nor dead (cf. Stoker 209-211). Thus, unable to die, the vampire survives century after century, feeding “on the blood of the living” (Stoker 211), and “preying on the bodies and souls” of any man (Stoker 209). Thereby strengthened, he is stronger “as twenty men”, able to “direct the elements”, and “command all the meaner things”, animals such as rats, bats, and wolves, considered to be connected with the evil (Stoker 209). Moreover, a vampire may transform himself into one of those evil creatures, grow smaller, taller, or even younger, hence disguising himself from the public (cf. Stoker 211). Finally, he is able to use these powers in order to recruit decent human beings as his followers, turning them into “foul things of the night like him” (Stoker 209). He is like a “coming of a sudden storm” (Stoker 75), conveying chaos and disorder. “[F]or all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead, and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever widening” (Stoker 190).

Hence, the vampire Dracula functions as a symbol of late-Victorian anxieties equipped with the ability to destabilize British society and civilization, possibly resulting in a collapse of the British Empire.

2. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – A Foreign Threat to the British Empire

The foreign intruder Dracula mirrors certain late-Victorian anxieties of degeneration, sexuality, and invasion leading to a general fear of a possible collapse of the British Empire and society. These anxieties were symptomatic for the late-Victorian culture, which is also often called a “culture of crisis” (Spencer 206). Since the Victorian Age had been an era concerned with imperialism and the extension of the English sphere and influence all over the globe, stabilized by Queen Victoria as a constant factor, these anxieties were directly connected to the effects of British colonization.

As the 19th century, the period of supposed hope and glory connected to the British expansion policy, was heading to an end, the notion of the *fin-de-siècle*, the end of the century and simultaneously the end of Victorian culture, was omnipresent. According to Max Nordau, the *fin-de-siècle*, a movement spread from Paris all over Europe, “mean[t] the end of an established order” (5). Moreover, the public had been convinced “that the century [was] a kind of living being . . . passing through all the stages of existence, gradually ageing and declining” (Nordau 1).

On the one hand, this notion had been connected to Queen Victoria’s possible and also probably upcoming death. Since all hopes and ambitions regarding imperialism and the extension of the British sphere had been centered on the Queen, her passing away would terminate the former Golden Age of colonization characterized by imperial prosperity and cultural growth. As Victoria had already been a stabilizing factor of the British Empire for sixty years, the Empire as well as British society and all its characteristics were inextricably linked with her reign. However, the 19th century as well as the Victorian Age were coming to an end.

On the other hand, imperial competition rose as the amount of blank spaces on the map of the world decreased. As Great Britain had been an Empire stretched around the world, possessing colonies on every continent, as well as a cultural stronghold, it was also target to external threats, possible attacks, and even invasions. Nations, such as Germany, demanded their share and hoped for their own place in the sun, hence threatening British supremacy and imperial hegemony on a global perspective. Additionally, Charles Darwin’s presentation of the evolution of living beings connected to the idea of natural selection had

generated a public anxiety of possible cultural and social degeneration. “If ‘natives’ could be educated out of their savagery and into modernity, so too could the civilized revert back to their savage origins” (Forman 104). In other words, “if humans could evolve, it was thought they could also *devolve* or degenerate, both as nations and as individuals” (Spencer 204). So, just as humans evolved according to the “survival of the fittest”, nations and empires did (cf. Brantlinger 228). Therefore, even the British Empire was not immune to external threats.

As people were anxious about “the ease with which civilization can revert to barbarism or savagery” (Brantlinger 229), they also feared for their values and social order. Society was highly concerned with purity and the preservation of social boundaries (cf. Spencer 203), especially regarding gender and class roles. The rise of the *New Woman*, who longs to be not only legally independent, reaching for equality, political participation, and proper education, but also desires to become sexually independent challenged the social order of British society, thus destabilizing the Empire from within. Since women had to be the perfect wife and mother, obedient to their husbands and caring for their children, they were supposed to ensure the survival of the nation and the British culture. Own desires, especially sexual, had to be contained in favor of the common good. However, this concept was being threatened by arising political and social demands of self-confident and aspiring women.

This corruption of society and the individual is personified by Dracula; he embodies Victorian anxieties of a collapse of the Empire. As Brantlinger explains, “Dracula threatens to create a demonic empire of the dead from the living British Empire” (234), therefore, endangering the British “racial stock” (230) and civilization by a possible pollution via foreign invaders (cf. Spencer 207). Mc Kee further elaborates

two possibilities of racial degeneration of concern to late Victorians: that the Englishman abroad will be absorbed into an alien and primitive culture because of his own internal weaknesses; or that a stronger, more primitive race will invade from without and assimilate the English. (45)

As former warrior and proud leader of a “conquering race” (Stoker 34), Dracula poses as a danger to every nation on earth. Thus, as Arata explains, “his vampirism is interwoven with his status as a conquerer and invader” (463).

Hence, Stoker not only illustrates the public anxieties by concentrating them in the character of Dracula but also provides society with a possible solution to prevent a collapse of the Empire. According to Seed

Dracula's opponents represent key areas of the Victorian establishment: Seward and Harker are members of the medical and legal professions; Lord Arthur Godalming is the liberal aristocrat; Quincey Morris . . . is a man of action and a protector of frontiers. Their collective action thus represents society, even civilization itself, turning to the defensive. (72)

So, just as the characters in the novel fight against the foreign intruder, society has to struggle against their own anxieties in order to save their civilization from an upcoming collapse.

2.1 Knowledge and Language

In the library I found, to my great delight, a vast number of English books, whole shelves full of them, and bound volumes of magazines and newspapers. A table in the centre was littered with English magazines and newspapers, though none of them were of very recent date. The books were of the most varied kind – history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, law – all relating to England and English life and customs and manners. (Stoker 25)

Thus describes Jonathan Harker, a young solicitor sent to Transylvania in order to help Count Dracula in legal matters regarding the purchase of real estate in London, his host's collection of knowledge, focused on English culture and language. Dracula must have been collecting and studying various different aspects of English culture and science for quite a long time since, according to Harker, the dates were not very recent. Dracula also refers to the books as his “good friends . . . for some years past, ever since [he] had the idea of going to London” (Stoker 26). They provided him with a fundamental insight into the culture of his targeted country. He further explains to Harker: “Through them I have come to know your great England; and to know her is to love her” (Stoker 26). Thus, already in the beginning, he justifies his obsession with information about England and the English language. As Craft states, Dracula does not care for Jonathan's blood but intends to “pump him for his knowledge of English law, custom, and language” (447).

In regard to the mentioned topics however, it seems as if Dracula does not focus on just one aspect of English life but intends to become a fully skilled scholar, able to understand and discuss every facet of English civilization. By studying the English history, politics, political economy, and law, Dracula is able to explore and understand the British culture in all its different aspects. He gets a vital insight into the background and basis of civilization and culture by researching its history, thereby also comprehending its “customs and manners” (Stoker 25). Jonathan also notices “an atlas, which [he] found opened naturally at England, as if that map had been much used” (Stoker 29). In it, Dracula had circled several positions in England, some near London where he wants to purchase a mansion. Additionally, he asks Jonathan to “tell [him] of London” (Stoker 27), desiring to know everything about his future neighborhood and the town itself. He accordingly aspires to become himself acquainted with the city, maybe to be able to blend into the public and act as a natural member of it.

Furthermore, Dracula studies politics, economy, and law, crucial topics for a member of the upper class, which the nobleman Dracula obviously is and will be once he is in London. Thus, these aspects are essential for his desire to blend into English society. Harker also notices Dracula’s broad knowledge, explaining that “[f]or a man who was never in the country, and who did not evidently do much in the way of business, his knowledge and acumen were wonderful” (Stoker 37). Likewise, Van Helsing makes the assumption that Dracula has long prepared himself for his invasion before coming to London.

With the childbrain that was to him he have long since conceive the idea of coming to a great city. What does he do? He find out the place of all the world most of promise for him. Then he deliberately set himself down to prepare for the task. He find in patience just how is this strength, and what are his powers. He study new tongues. He learn new social life; new environment of old ways, the politic, the law, the finance, the science, the habit of a new land and a new people who have come to be since he was. (Stoker 279)

Additionally, Dracula is simultaneously able to learn and master the English language in all its different aspects; a side effect of his studies. As he himself explains to Harker, “[a]s yet I only know your tongue through books” (Stoker 26). Thus he asks his guest to correct his speech and thereby practice and improve his language capacity. However, Jonathan does not comprehend this desire since the Count already “know[s] and speak[s] English thoroughly!” (Stoker 26). Furthermore, Dracula is also able to speak “excellent German”

(Stoker 18) when disguised as Jonathan's driver. As he already presents a vast knowledge of the German language, one might suppose that Germany had already been under his attack and influence. Hence, Dracula may have the desire to conquer and invade languages just as he does with cultures.

As Ferguson states, Dracula is primarily not interested in Jonathan's blood but in his knowledge and language (cf. 238). By practicing the English language he is given the possibility to enlarge his linguistic corpora and become just as skilled in the use of English as a native speaker. Thus again, Dracula prepares himself to "assimilate with and eventually dominate British citizens" (Ferguson 238). So his invasion of the British Empire already starts in Transylvania. As English has become a world language, spoken in colonies all over the globe, it has likewise become one of the major features of the Empire. Thus, by mastering the English language Dracula made the first step in attacking the Empire from within (cf. Ferguson 238). The outsider has become an insider, able to pose as a member of British society.

Thus, by combination of his vast knowledge and native-like speech he may assume the position of an insider of British society. As Arata explains, "before Dracula successfully invades the spaces of his victims' bodies or land, he first invades the spaces of their knowledge" (470). Thus, Dracula is not only a physical threat to humans but also "cognitively threatening" (Caroll 56).

2.2 London

I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that makes it what it is. (Stoker 26)

For Dracula, London seems to be not only the heart of the British Empire but also the heart of human civilization. He desires to be in the center of the human race, at the heart of the British Empire, and also at the source of its imperial power. As May states, "London, with its 'teeming millions,' is the logical place for Dracula" (20). The capital of the British Empire, "the largest, richest, and busiest metropolis in the world" (Dennison 85), is not only geographically the perfect location to start an invasion, providing Dracula with the opportunity to invade the heart of Western culture, but also offers a large number of possible

followers and victims to him, in order to become “the father or furtherer of a new order of beings” (Stoker 263). Thus, it is this position, in London, where he can succeed fully in attacking human civilization and establishing “a nation of vampires” (Dennison 113). Ultimately, invading London in order to spread his own race all over the British Empire might consequently allow Dracula to conquer humans all over the globe.

Although Dracula enters the Empire via Whitby, his final goal is London. There, he not only purchased one house, but several, one in Piccadilly (Stoker 231), and several others all over London. Jonathan remarks that the Count’s properties must be distributed all over London in a “systematic manner” (Stoker 229). He consequently doubts that Dracula could have restrained himself to one district but instead would have spread all over the area in an effort to fulfill his “diabolical scheme” (Stoker 229). Just like a spider spinning a deathly web, Dracula unfolds his own death trap all over London. Thus, after Dracula’s first attack on British soil in Whitby, causing Lucy Westenra’s death and transformation into a vampire, Mina, Jonathan Harker’s wife and also future victim of Dracula, fears the Count’s invasion of London. Aware of his power and the danger that he poses to London and its citizens, she remarks “what an awful thing if that man, that monster, be really in London” (Stoker 167). Likewise, Jonathan regrets his employment for Dracula after finding out the Count’s real intentions.

This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad. A terrible desire came upon me to rid the world of such a monster. (Stoker 53-54)

Thus, if Dracula succeeds in invading London and its society the city “would . . . become a city blighted by vampirism” (Dennison 103), the heart of a new race and world order.

However, Dracula seems to underestimate or even ignore that his opponents, especially Jonathan Harker, Dr. John Seward, the head of a mental asylum, and Arthur Holmwood, later Lord Godalming, are more familiar with British society and London than himself. As British citizens and decent members of society, they are able to identify the signs and trace the vampire. One vital indicator of Dracula’s intentions is of course Renfield, one of Dr. Seward’s patients, a zoophagous who believes to absorb the strength of every living crea-

ture he ingests (Stoker 71). Under Dracula's influence he consequently also reacts to the movements of his "Lord and Master" (Stoker 245), changing his moods from violence to restlessness or happiness. As Seward notices, his "outbreaks were in some way linked with the proximity of the Count" (Stoker 200). Additionally, he also tries to escape from the lunatic asylum to Dracula's estate right next to it thus leading the men to one of the Count's refugees (Stoker 102-103, 199). Finally, Dr. Seward reveals this connection as he notices that "it is a human life" that Renfield longs for (Stoker 239). Furthermore, the men are able to trace Dracula's house in Piccadilly by bribing one of the men who delivered some of Dracula's boxes to the house (Stoker 229-231). Moreover, they may enter it in plain sight by relying on Lord Godalming's title and thus influence in British society (Stoker 261). This title literally opens doors without causing any suspicion or investigation.

Dracula's ignorance might be due to his small intellect that Mina appoints to him (cf. Stoker 297). According to her, "his action is based on selfishness," hence limiting him to just one purpose (Stoker 297). He is "careless" (Stoker 297), unable to become aware of his persecutors plans. As Van Helsing states, they may use the "power of combination" (Stoker 210), an ability resulting from their "man-brains" in contrast to Dracula's "child-brain . . . that do only work selfish and therefore small" (Stoker 294). However, Dracula is aware of their brotherhood and preparations to hunt him down. Transformed into a bat he infiltrates their meeting (cf. Stoker 213) thus becoming informed of their knowledge. As he reveals to Mina

And so you, like the others, would play your brains against mine. You would help these men to hunt me and frustrate me in my designs! . . . Whilst they played wits against me – against me who commanded nations, and intrigued for them, and fought for them, hundreds of years before they were born – I was countermiming them. (Stoker 251-252)

Additionally, he destroys their ordered records, manuscripts, and phonograph recordings, thus eliminating proof of his existence and desires (cf. Stoker 249). But still, there is one copy left as well as other reports, thus proving that Dracula was not entirely successful and also not impeccable.

Finally, London as the setting for Dracula's enterprise also evokes a "sense of immediacy. Instead of taking place in a remote Transylvanian castle or a timeless and dreamlike 'anywhere,' most of the action occurs in nineteenth-century London" (Roth 422). Thus, Dracula not only threatens the characters in the novel, but also contemporary society by invading their own Empire, their capital, their home. In mirroring "British imperial activities abroad" (Arata 469) Dracula threatens British society itself, thus illustrating a possible risk from the inside. As a result, society becomes aware of internal problems and dangers resulting in a possible downfall of the Empire caused by internal threats.

Hence, London as the heart of human civilization seems to be the perfect target for Dracula's enterprise to create a new vampire race in an attack on the British Empire. He consequently not only threatens the characters of the novel but also contemporary society itself as an example of internal risks.

2.3 Degeneration

The *nosferatu* do not die like the bee when he sting once. He is only stronger; and being stronger, have yet more power to work evil. This vampire which is amongst us is of himself so strong in person as twenty men; he is of cunning more than mortal, for his cunning be the growth of ages. (Stoker 209)

Van Helsing thus identifies Dracula as a vampire, an "Un-Dead" (Stoker 190), unable to die and thus forced to survive through the ages of man. Arriving at Castle Dracula, Jonathan also describes the Count's hand as "more like the hand of a dead than a living man" (Stoker 22). However, as Dracula is feeding on humans he gains their strength and vitality, hence becoming stronger and more vigorous. Jonathan Harker already noticed this while he was imprisoned in Dracula's castle. After breaking into the Count's private chambers he found him lying in a wooden box.

There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood. . . . It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood. (Stoker 53)

Thus, Jonathan drove mad with anger noticing that “[t]his was the being [he] was helping to transfer to London” (Stoker 53) where he would feed on Jonathan’s neighbors and fellow British citizens. Additionally, Jonathan already noticed the blood’s renewing effects in the Count. He had become younger, “his youth half-renewed” (Stoker 53), and thus looked more like a human being than the monster that he was. Before, he had been “a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache . . . without a single speck of colour about him anywhere” (Stoker 21). This effect is again noticed in London. Harker identifies Dracula in Piccadilly realizing that the Count had become “a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard” (Stoker 155). However, he seems not to believe his eyes as he addresses his wife, declaring ‘I believe it is the Count, but he has grown young’ (Stoker 155). Hence, by changing his appearance, Dracula is able to hide himself in plain sight without easily being recognized and detected.

Moreover, the Count not only grows younger, thus extremely changing his appearance, but also depicts animal-like features and is finally able to transform himself into animals associated with evil powers. Still in Transylvania, Jonathan notices Dracula’s “quiet smile, with the sharp, canine teeth lying over the red under-lip” (Stoker 37). Right from the beginning, his host’s teeth give occasion to suspicion. Their pointed and sharp character does not fit to any human set of teeth. Additionally, Jonathan is quite disturbed when he observes Dracula crawling down the walls of his castle.

What I saw was the Count’s head coming out from the window. . . . I was at first interested and somewhat amused. . . . But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall . . . just as a lizard moves along a wall. What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the resemblance of a man? (Stoker 39)

As a result, Jonathan starts questioning not only his own sanity but also decides to turn to his diary for comfort while trapped in his foreign prison reigned by an unnatural and inhuman creature (cf. Stoker 41).

Furthermore, Dracula may also transform himself into wild animals. Arriving in England, he enters the British Empire in the shape of “an immense dog” (Stoker 78), even attacking and feeding on another “large dog . . . [whose] throat was torn away, and [whose] belly was slit open as if with a savage claw” (Stoker 80). Additionally, Lucy, Dracula’s first human victim in the British

Empire, was at night harassed by the howling and attacks of “a great, gaunt grey wolf” (Stoker 131) trying to invade her home. Moreover, Dracula is also able to transform himself into a bat, which is “going in great, whirling circles” (Stoker 90) outside of Lucy’s and Mina’s window. Thus, Van Helsing’s identification of Dracula as a vampire, a being who is able to “transform himself to wolf” or “can be as a bat” (Stoker 211), is accurate; likewise is Mina’s assumption describing Dracula as “not human – not even beast” (Stoker 202).

In addition, Van Helsing remarks that the vampire “can command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat – the moth, and the fox, and the wolf” (Stoker 209). This power is also evident at the beginning of the novel. As Jonathan is surrounded by wolves on his way to Castle Dracula the driver of his carriage, who is Dracula in disguise, is able to order the wolves from attacking and eventually commands them to withdraw from Jonathan and the carriage (cf. Stoker 20). This special relationship is further emphasized when Dracula refers to the wolves as “children of the night. What music they make!” (Stoker 24). Also, and certainly not a coincidence, once Dracula is in London, a wolf escapes from the Zoological Gardens, setting out to terrorize the city and its inhabitants (cf. Stoker 125-129). Finally, “[t]he wicked wolf that for half a day had paralysed London and set children in the town shivering in their shoes” (Stoker 129) was caught and, ironically, acted as though he was a pet animal.

Dracula’s special relationship to animals is also illustrated by his own appearance. As Jonathan Harker notices, the Count’s “physical features are feral-like” (Dennison 93). His hands showed “hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point” and his ears were “extremely pointed” at the tops (Stoker 24). As Dennison states, these “animal features indicate a ‘residuum’ of degeneracy” (93). Jonathan thus further describes Dracula in detail, paying a lot of attention to his physiognomy.

His face was a strong - very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty doomed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (Stoker 23-24)

As Kline explains, this “close examination of Dracula’s physical features shows that Stoker viewed the figure as a ‘born criminal’”, a theory articulated in *The Criminal Man* by Cesare Lombroso in 1876 (cf. 51). According to Lombroso, “the criminal did not just resemble an animal but was, in fact, a beast in the semblance of man” (Kline 36). Thus, the high amount of facial hair in combination to Dracula’s sharp teeth, resemble an animal, maybe even a predator. Hence, “deformity without had always signaled deformity within” (Greenslade 90). Likewise, Mina is able to identify Dracula as “a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him” (Stoker 296). In accordance to Lombroso, Max Nordau’s theory on degeneration, published in 1898, characterizes the degenerate as a being depicting physiognomic “stigmata” such as “deformities, . . . then imperfection in the development of the external ear, . . . irregularities in the form and position of the teeth” (17), characteristics which may also be attributed to Dracula. Relying on Lombroso’s and Nordau’s descriptions Van Helsing and Mina make assumptions regarding the Count’s character and identity.

The criminal always work at one crime – that is the true criminal who seems to predestinate to crime, and who will of none other. This criminal has not full man-brain. He is clever and cunning and resourceful; but he be not of man-stature as to brain. . . he continue to do the same again every time, just as he have done before! . . . as he is criminal he is selfish; and as his intellect is small and his action is based on selfishness, he confines himself to one purpose. . . he is intent on being safe, careless of all. (Stoker 296-297)

These assumptions correspond to Nordau’s explanation that most degenerates “lack . . . the sense of morality and of right and wrong. For them there exists no law, no decency, no modesty” (Nordau 18). Dracula’s selfishness and focus on crime is thus associated with his state of degeneration. Thus, Van Helsing also stresses Dracula’s “child-brain” (Stoker 294) which is connected to Lombroso’s assumption that children are “closer in temperament to the prostitute and criminal” (Kaye 56-57). Dracula’s physical as well as medical features are hence inseparably connected to his mental capacities. Also, Dracula fits Lombroso’s description of „the criminal ,other‘[who] is the degenerate foreigner“ (Greenslade 89) invading society from the outside, hence threatening the Empire by displaying his own “asocial behavior” (Greenslade 94) towards British citizens and culture.

Another, rather obvious, aspect of Dracula's degeneration and its effect on society is represented by Renfield, a lunatic who is being treated and researched by Dr. Seward. The psychiatrist describes Renfield as a patient of "sanguine temperament" connected to "great physical strength", thus "possibly dangerous" (Stoker 62). As a result to his special behavior and mental disease, Seward creates "a new classification," calling him "zoophagous (life-eating) maniac" (Stoker 71). He further describes Renfield as a "homicidal maniac of peculiar kind . . . desir[ing] to absorb as many lives as he can", hence feeding flies to spiders, these spiders to birds, and finally consumes the birds himself (Stoker 71). Consequently, Seward speculates about "how many lives he values a man" (Stoker 71). In his mental rage, Renfield even attacks his psychiatrist thereby cutting his wrist and "licking up, like a dog, the blood which had fallen from [the doctor's] wounded wrist" (Stoker 129). Thus, Renfield not only displays the desire to consume the strength and vitality of animals but even turns to human blood, however avoiding the reference of drinking blood in conversations with his physician (cf. Stoker 238). This form of cannibalism is of course connected to Dracula's influence on this former decent man and member of British society. As Nordau explains, a degenerate is thought to "transmit[] to its offspring, in a continuously increasing degree, its peculiarities, these being morbid deviations from the normal form – gaps in development, malformations and infirmities" (16). Thus, Dracula's power over Renfield not only turned him into a slave but additionally passed some of his own features onto his follower.

As Renfield himself explains, Dracula had promised him "things - not in words but by doing them" – in order to be granted entrance into the asylum (Stoker 244). He had guaranteed Renfield a high amount of lives, referring to rats and dogs he had first presented to him, "through countless ages, if [he] will fall down and worship [him]" (Stoker 245). Thereby, Renfield, a fallen member of society, opens the path for the intruder Dracula, who may not only enter the asylum but is even granted the possibility to attack at the heart of the European society as he turns towards Mina.

As a consequence, Dracula's resemblance to a predator, the ability to transform into an animal, connected to evil powers, as well as his authority to command his "children of the night" (Stoker 24) illustrate Dracula's threat to society. As a degenerate and a predator he endangers human civilization. Additionally, identified as a "born criminal" able to corrupt other human beings

and pass these features onto next generations, Dracula poses a threat to British social values and thus society. Likewise, Mc Kee explains that Dracula's "empire expands through the circulation of blood" (50). Hence, as Van Helsing demands,

we must either capture or kill this monster in his lair; or we must, so to speak, sterilize the earth, so that no more he can seek safety in it. Thus in the end we may find him in his form of man between the hours of noon and sunset, and so engage with him when he is at his most weak. (Stoker 213)

2.4 Sexuality

In the room opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. . . . Two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes, that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great, wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. . . . All three had brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. (Stoker 41-42)

Thus describes Jonathan Harker his encounter with Dracula's three vampire companions living in his Transylvanian castle. After having fallen asleep in a forbidden part of his prison, Jonathan awakes in the presence of three female vampires reminding him of "some dreamy fear" he cannot grasp nor classify (Stoker 42). Both attracted but at the same time repelled by their aura, "a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive" (Stoker 42), he awaits their further actions. Thus, as the blonde vampire bride approaches Harker, licking "her lips like an animal", he is fascinated and caught in "a languorous ecstasy" waiting for her to kiss him "with beating heart" (Stoker 42). As Dennison states, in this scene Harker witnesses the vampires "progress from Mina-like respecters of ladylike properties to sensual women or girls to sexual animals to feral predators" (96).

It is their transformation and the connected fascination that endangers Harker's integrity. His actions are no longer based on rationality but ruled by desire. His "reason is falling apart . . . decentering in voluptuousness" (Dennison 97). He is passively waiting for the vampire's kiss, waiting for a penetration that is however interrupted by the Count's arrival thus never fulfilled

(cf. Stoker 43). As he describes, he “could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of [his] throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there” (Stoker 43). It is this sexual longing, this desire that represents the “dark secret drives that men most fear in themselves” (Spencer 213), that threatens the stability of British society, governed by rigid gender rules. This enchantment evokes one major anxiety of Victorian culture hence breaking the barriers between sexuality and gender (cf. Craft 444). As the male is supposed to be active, able to present sexual desires, and the female limited to passivity, to “suffer and be still” (Craft 444-445), Harker’s obedience reverses these gender roles. The women suddenly become active agents, *femmes fatales*, and seductresses of decent Victorian men and seizing their own sexuality.

But it is not only Harker that is attracted by the vampire ladies. Even Van Helsing, propagator of the classic gender rules thus constantly expressing his adoration for Mina, the “good woman” (Stoker 166), admits his attraction facing the vampire brides (cf. Stoker 319). “The beautiful eyes of the fair woman open and look love, and the voluptuous mouth present to a kiss – and man is weak” (Stoker 319). Thus his only option in order to defend his own integrity and honor is to kill the vampires (cf. Stoker 320-321). It is their presence that endangers the brotherhood’s sexual identity thus they must be destroyed to restore the natural order of society.

Likewise, once turning into a vampire, Lucy becomes more sexualized. In the beginning, she seems to be a naive girl focused only on men and her wish to become a wife. As she tells her friend Mina, she will already be twenty in a few months but still “never had a proposal till today, not a real proposal and today I have had three. Just fancy! THREE proposals in one day!” (Stoker 57) it becomes evident that marriage plays a major role in her life. Thus, the prospect of settling down excites her although she wonders “why can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her” (Stoker 60). However, this idea already threatens society as Lucy “will not limit herself to one man” (Spencer 210) thereby foreshadowing her coming doom. For Kline, this utterance indicates an “inherited criminal energy” breaking free once Lucy falls prey to Dracula’s advances (145). This energy also becomes apparent in Lucy’s sleepwalking adventures. As she at night escapes to meet Dracula in the churchyard and is detected by her friend Mina, her savior is honestly worried

“for her reputation in case the story would get wind” (Stoker 89). Still, while asleep, Lucy is repeatedly able to get in contact with the Count, thus growing weaker and weaker due to her loss of blood (cf. 112). According to Senf, while awake Lucy represents “a model of sweetness and conformity” but “becoming sexually aggressive and demanding during her sleepwalking periods” (424).

Thus, as she turns paler, losing her strength to speak and exhibiting breathing problems, due to her repeated intercourse with Dracula, Van Helsing expresses the necessity for blood transfusions (cf. Stoker 112-113). It is then her fiancé Arthur Holmwood, later Godalming, who agrees to give his blood in order to save her life (cf. Stoker 113-114). As a result, “something like life seemed to come back to poor Lucy’s cheeks” but only “partially restored her” (Stoker 114). Additionally, Arthur feels “as if the two had been really married, and that she was his wife in the sight of God” (Stoker 158). Unfortunately, Lucy is still dying, thus needing more blood transfusions. Hence, Seward, Van Helsing, and Morris likewise agree to donate their blood in order to restore Lucy’s health (cf. Stoker 118, 124, 136). However following Arthur’s logic, she is thereby not only married to him but to all her saviors, thus turning into a “pol-yandrist” (Stoker 158) just as she wished she could. Still, despite all their efforts, Lucy undergoes a change as she was already dying thereby exhibiting “longer and sharper [teeth] than ever” (Stoker 146). Only in her death did she then retain “her beauty . . . as if the blood, no longer needed for the working of the heart, had gone to make the harshness of death as little rude as might be” (Stoker 147) thus reestablishing the “image of purity, sweetness, and beauty” and returning as “the angel she had been in life” (Spencer 211).

However, her life on earth is not entirely over as she returns from the dead by turning into an Un-Dead. It is in this state that she fully unfolds her sexual potential. As Seward reports, she turned into “a dark-haired woman” (Stoker 187) often associated with a *femme fatale*, a beautiful seductress who enchants men and finally destroys them (cf. Kline 87). Moreover, her “sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness” (Stoker 187). In death, Lucy becomes sexualized and threatening, resembling Dracula’s three vampire ladies. The former “pure Victorian female is metamorphosed into a . . . man-devouring monster” (May 19). Thus, only as “a vampire is she allowed to be ‘voluptuous’” (Roth 414). Again, it is this open display of sexuality that threatens society’s stability.

However, the reestablishment of the sexual order through Lucy's final death is also not free from sexual allusions. Arthur's staking of Lucy's body clearly exemplifies a sexual penetration (cf. Roth 413). As he struck the wooden stake into her heart her "body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions" until "[f]inally it lay still" allowing her "sweetness and purity" to resurface (Stoker 192). As Craft explains, "[a] woman is better still than mobile, better dead than sexual" (455). Thus, Lucy's final killing reestablishes the lost sexual order through the men's own hands (cf. Kaye 59). Ultimately, Lucy and the three vampire brides represent the *New Woman*, women concerned with their own sexual desires, and are as a result killed in order to reestablish the natural and traditional order of British society (cf. Kline 143). The solution thus "lay in privileging society over sex . . . in order to preserve the nation" (Spencer 219).

However, the vampires not only threaten the men's sexual identity by reversing traditional gender codes but also jeopardize the future of civilization by feeding primarily on children. Thus, after Dracula hinders the vampire ladies from attacking Jonathan he offers them a child to feed on and thereby satisfy their desires (cf. Stoker 43-44). Likewise, once turned into a vampire, Lucy starts feeding on children. Referred to as the "bloofer lady", she enchants little children into sleepwalking just as she had been doing under Dracula's influence (Stoker 159). They are later found displaying little wounds "in the throat" and explain their absence due to a stay with the 'bloofer lady' (Stoker 160). This preying on children however perverts the "Victorian ideal" of the loving mother (Dennison 100) inverting the "maternal function" (Craft 453). Instead of nurturing their children, the vampires as well as Lucy feed on children to nurture themselves. As Van Helsing explains, "[t]hose children whose blood she suck are not as yet so much the worse; but if she live on, Un-Dead, more and more they lose their blood, and by her power over them they come to her; and so she draw their blood with that so wicked mouth" (Stoker 191) thus endangering the future of those children. Thus, the traditional woman as mother and wife turns into the *New Woman*, concerned with her own sexual desires and her own needs. Hence, Kline poses the question "what would become of the Empire itself if children, the future citizens and defenders of the country, the future procreators of the race, were to lose their guardians and moral educators" (86)?

Furthermore, Craft states that “Dracula’s mission in England is the creation of a race of monstrous women” (448). This prospect becomes evident in his chosen victims. His first victim inside of the British Empire is Lucy. She is also the first to be turned into a vampire, thus following Dracula’s footsteps and feeding on children. Additionally, his second victim is Mina Harker, a decent British woman and devoted wife (she wants to be “useful” to her future husband Jonathan (cf. Stoker 55)). She is at several times referred to as a “good woman” (Stoker 166) and “one of God’s women . . . [s]o true, so sweet, so noble, so little an egoist” (Stoker 168). Thus, Dracula’s attack on Mina is far more threatening than his attack on Lucy. By attacking “innocent and pure married woman” (Kline 145) he simultaneously invades the heart of British society, the loving and caring wife. It is thus noteworthy, that Dracula “propagates his race solely through the bodies of women” (Arata 468). As he himself explains: “Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall be mine – my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed (Stoker 267). According to Blidnerman, this step is only logically since “women . . . make better victims than men do because they are more angelic, lovely, noble, and majestic, thus more suitable for sadistic violation” (413). However, Mina would rather kill herself than become one of Dracula’s brides, hence asking her husband to promise to her “that, should the time come, [he] will kill [her]” (Stoker 287). Thus, Mina renders the life of others, the rescue of civilization, and the preservation of the British Empire, more valuable than her own life.

3. Conclusion

Dracula, the foreign invader of the British Empire, endangers not only society and the British culture but also the individual itself. As a symbol of late-Victorian anxieties concerning the stability of the Empire he may be identified as a foreign threat intending to destabilize the British world order. His ultimate target is thus the collapse of British and maybe even human civilization.

Therefore, his intrusion into the British sphere already starts in Transylvania, as Dracula invades the field of knowledge and language. His desire to cover all facets of English knowledge and simultaneously acquire a native-like language corpora enable the foreign threat to perfectly blend into British society. The stranger thus becomes a member, the outsider an insider, of British society and civilization.

Furthermore, he targets not any part of the British Empire but aims for the heart, namely London. There, he unfolds a deathly net spun all over the city in order to be able to attack the largest number of possible victims. The “father or furtherer of a new order of beings” (Stoker 263) hence not only threatens society but the individual itself. It is London, the capital of the British Empire, he intends to transform into the capital of his own vampire empire.

Consequently, Dracula’s means to fulfill his desires also reflect late-Victorian anxieties. On the one hand, Dracula is a degenerate and a criminal, able to transform himself into a predator, and thus more animal than human. He even feeds on humans, thereby absorbing their power and vitality. This cannibalism is also connected to his lacking sense of right and wrong, of morality, and law. The degenerate furthermore transmits his own defects onto the next generation, in Dracula’s case Renfield, thus presumably targeting decent British gentleman and turning them into degenerates.

On the other hand, Dracula is a vampire, an Un-Dead, targeting pure and decent Victorian women in order to turn them into his own vampire brides. Thereby, he inverts the Victorian gender code, as the former passive woman becomes an active agent, voluptuous and sexually demanding, whereas the male becomes sexually attracted by those women thus turning into a passive agent waiting to be seduced. Additionally, those women turn from loving mothers to heartless child abusers, as they start feeding on their own children, thereby endangering the future of their civilization.

Finally however, the natural order is restored by “privileging society over sex” (Spencer 219). Lucy, the vampire brides, as well as Dracula, thus all the characters that embodied individual and sexual desires, are eventually destroyed in order to preserve the British Empire (cf. Senf 430). As the majority turned against the individual, as the brotherhood, symbolically embodying civilization, turned against the vampire Dracula, order was restored and the foreign threat eliminated.

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