# Fear and Anxiety in Bram Stoker's Dracula

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Završni rad

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## Abstract

Bram Stoker's most known and most analyzed novel *Dracula*, written in 1897, has truly revolutionized the image of the vampire: from a monstrous blood-sucking demon to the charming and tantalizing nobleman – Count Dracula. The novel was not just written to change the image of the vampire but to use it as a symbol of the fears and anxieties of the Victorian era: the fear of the New Woman, overt sexuality and homosexuality as well as the anxiety of colonization of the British ideal of homogeneity. The aim of the paper is to reflect on the afore-mentioned Victorian fears and anxieties through the analysis of the concepts of the New Woman, vampirism, and the figure of Count Dracula as the ever-threating Other. The New Woman was a relatively new concept at the time, attempting to change the Victorian gender roles and give women more independence. The characters such as Mina Harker, Lucy Westenra, and the three vampire women each represent a different aspect of the New Woman. The Victorian fear of the taboo topics of sexuality and its representation is presented through vampirism as the cause of the characters', both male and female, sexual awakening. Finally, the issue of British collapse and reverse colonialization is depicted through the character of Count Dracula as the representation of the Other, wishing to destroy British society and colonialize it.

**Key words**: fear, anxiety, Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, the New Woman, sexuality, the other

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# Introduction

In 1897, Bram Stoker wrote his most lauded novel *Dracula* and no other work, perhaps in the entire history of literature, has managed to leave such a profound impact on the modern image of vampires. Before Bram Stoker and his *Dracula*, vampires were mostly relegated to word of mouth horror stories about undead creatures of rural Slavic and Balkan villages and appearing rarely in literary fiction. Stoker, inspired by English writer John Polidori and his short story "The Vampyre," created the quintessential vampire story, which solidified their image in media forevermore. Count Dracula is no mere blood-sucking monster of European myths; he is suave, aristocratic, and gentlemanly while still representing the most terrifying fears of the Victorian era. The novel did not merely satisfy the ever-present allure of the supernatural, but also served as a symbolic representation of the fears of the time, such as the fear of the ever-growing uncertainty regarding the power of the British Empire, national identity and homogeneity, sexuality, and womanhood. In particular, *Dracula* addresses the concept of the New Woman, a feminist archetype that challenged traditional gender roles and questioned the Victorian ideals of female domesticity and purity. The novel juxtaposes this emerging figure against the revolting, sexually awoken vampire, creating a narrative steeped in dread and moral panic. In Stoker's novel, the threat posed by vampires represents the perceived dangers of women breaking free from societal chains and embracing independence and sexual freedom. These anxieties about gender intersect with the fear of foreign invasion, as Dracula himself, a foreign invader from Romania, serves as a metaphor for the threats to power and homogeneity of the British Empire. This paper will aim to discuss the Victorian society's greatest fears – those of the New Woman, sexuality, and the Other – in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The first chapter will offer an insight into the broader history regarding the vampire and its symbolism and its significance for the novel. The second chapter will reflect on the then contemporary topic of the New Woman and evolving gender roles and how those concepts are represented and perceived in the novel. The third chapter will tackle the topic of sexuality and how certain characters in the novel exhibit or repress their sexuality. The fourth and final chapter will discuss the national fear of the fall of the imperial rule of Britain and how the Other and the Foreign are placed within the novel. By examining the characters of Mina Harker, Lucy Westenra, and the three vampire women in the context of the New Woman and sexuality, the homoerotic tensions between the Count and Jonathan Harker, the symbolism of blood and blood transfusions, and the British fear that the Other, in the body of the Count Dracula and vampirism, is on its way to denigrate the British homogeneous society and bring irreparable

damage and ruin to the once great British Empire, this paper will aim to prove how Bram Stoker undeniably has capitalized on the fears and anxieties of the Victorian era and presented them in a symbolic and artistic manner.

## 1. The History and the Symbolism of the Vampire

Since time immemorial, people have been fascinated with creatures of the night, ghouls, and monsters, which are now known as vampires. The idea of the vampire has existed in popular culture for centuries and there is no greater culprit for the popularization of vampires than Bram Stoker and his gothic novel *Dracula*. While *Dracula* is not solely to blame for the emergence of vampires in popular culture, Bram Stoker is widely credited for bringing this Slavic and Eastern European myth into the Western limelight (Miller 3), fueling and even perhaps creating the modern image of the vampire. In the modern day, the word vampire brings forth an image of a seductive, aristocratic, and charming man who drinks blood, prays on young women, and has an ability to transform into a bat, all of which is true for the Count in Bram Stoker's novel. Yet, the vampire is as old as the world itself (Beresford 8). As asserted by Matthew Beresford in his *From Demons to Dracula: The Creation of the Modern Vampire Myth,* the word vampire first appeared in the English language in 1732 from a German translation of a documented vampire case, yet the word itself has gone through multiple translations from Turkish and Slavic languages. The term vampire is not even the sole name for the creature, but merely an English variant included among the Romanian "strigoi," Greek "vrykolakas," Serbian "dhampir," and Croatian "pijavica" (Beresford 8). While the creature and its names seem to be endless and the evidence for the vampire's existence is seemingly overwhelming, enough so that the so-called "Age of Reason" deemed the vampire believable, most people agree that the vampire is a myth perpetuated with a certain purpose. That myth's purpose seems to be fear:

> Fear is an important factor in the survival of the vampire because, although the vampire has taken various forms in history, it is difficult to pinpoint one dominant form; fear is the main unifying feature, and therefore can be said to provide the key to the vampire's existence. One might say that fear of the vampire's existence is more important than its actual existence. (Beresford 10-11)

It can be concluded that the vampire's main purpose is to settle into the minds of people a certain kind of fear, which the vampire keeps alive. That fear can vary, but one thing stays true: the vampire serves to keep people afraid. Bram Stoker was certainly no stranger to this notion, which is why he chose a vampire, Count Dracula, to be the villain of his most known novel. *Dracula* portrays what the Victorians feared the most: the awakening of the New Woman, unrestricted and open sexuality, and the Other. The Count in the novel is not, at first, even slightly frightening, he even soothes Jonathan's fears when he first arrived at the Castle and just met him: "The light and

warmth and the Count's courteous welcome seemed to have dissipated all my doubts and fears" (Stoker 16). Bram Stoker definitely expected such a reaction from the reader because he presented the Count to seem cordial but in reality he would sneak into English society and bring true all of the fears that dreaded them the most.

## 2. The New Woman

To begin with, one of the fears of the Victorian society that the novel emphasizes is the contemporary concept of the New Woman. The Victorian era was characterized by the steady growth of the economy and the world-wide recognition of the British Empire as the most powerful nation on the planet. Yet, the rigid, prudent, and traditional societal values were another factor that also defined the Victorian era. The Victorian society was built on the belief that men and women did not belong to the same sphere:

> Victorian gender ideology was premised on the "doctrine of separate spheres." This stated that men and women were different and meant for different things. Men were physically strong, while women were weak. For men sex was central, and for women reproduction was central. Men were independent, while women were dependent. Men belonged in the public sphere, while women belonged in the private sphere. Men were meant to participate in politics and in paid work, while women were meant to run households and raise families. (Steinbach)

Whereas this ideology created women who were locked out of certain opportunities and were only meant to lead a certain lifestyle, it gave men the opportunity to behave in any way they please. The oppression of women helped create a new movement that sought to eradicate those gender boundaries and to give women the opportunity to decide for themselves. This New Woman, as she was called, challenged every Victorian ideal enforced on women and lived her life based on her own needs: "She was very real, and she challenged traditional views on almost every front. This New Woman was a direct and largely effective response to women's needs at the end of the century" (MacPike 372). The New Woman challenged the Victorian society and truly terrified it because the existence of this New Woman, freed from the shackles of tradition and no longer behooved to need men, would bring upon the downfall of the Victorian society. The Victorians were terrified that the New Women would find men obsolete and when given a choice between a life with or without men they "would no longer choose men," leading to the decrease of births, which would mean the extinction of society (MacPike 372). The fear of the New Woman in the Victorian era was so real that Bram Stoker, through Mina Harker, Lucy Westenra, and vampirism, addressed what was meant to cause fear and uncertainty in the Victorian society.

In *Dracula*, Mina Harker represents both the embodiment of the New Woman and the rejection of the New Woman's values. Mina Harker is, at beginning of the novel, Jonathan Harker's fiancée and, after Jonathan's escape from the Castle and admission into the hospital in

Budapest, she becomes his wife. She is educated, shown as independent, proficient in shorthand, and as a schoolmistress fully employed in the Victorian era (Stoker 53). Mina Harker's position in the novel has been a part of a long academic debate, with differing views considering her social position, from the feminist point-of-view (as a New Woman) to the anti-feminist point-of-view (as a damsel in distress who needs to be liberated from the threat of the New Woman) (Senf 33-34). For some, she is smart, well-read, and helpful but at the same time she is conventional in her beliefs about sexuality, learns only to know how to assist Jonathan, and pokes fun at the notion of the New Woman (Gelder 76-79). For others, as argued by Lisa Nystrom in her essay about the female narrative in *Dracula* and its movie adaptation, Mina is far from the New Woman as Stoker allows women to evolve from traditional female gender roles in the traditional Victorian society only "on the condition that she uphold all patriarchal ideals of feminine purity and gentility," thus saving Mina from "succumbing to the temptation of an independent life" (67).

Furthermore, in the character of Lucy Westenra, Stoker exemplifies the New Woman's awakened and liberated sexuality. Lucy Westenra is first introduced in the novel through a series of letters between her and Mina Harker where she shares with Mina a secret desire of hers: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it" (Stoker 59). With the wish not to be burdened with choosing a partner but instead accepting polyamory, Lucy attempts to break the Victorian rigid marital norms. Even though she wanted to marry all three of her suiters, she eventually agreed to Arthur Holmwood's proposal but still stayed on good terms with Dr. John Seward and Quincey Morris. Lucy struggles between what is socially acceptable, as she is "dull and acquiescent" and "conscious and conforming," and what is socially not acceptable, as she is "unhappy with her social role" and acting on her "latent sensuality, which connects her to the New Woman;" Lucy "is torn between the need to conform and the desire to rebel" (Senf 42-43). After the Count's docking in England from the ship Demeter, Lucy, after sleepwalking, falls victim to Dracula and is slowly turning into a vampire. Her nightly dalliances with Dracula are symbolic of her awakening sexuality the New Woman prophesizes and when she fully transforms, when she fully accepts her New Womanhood, she is portrayed as an oversexualized monster, one who is "a devilish mockery of Lucy's sweet purity" (Drawmer 23).

Lastly, vampirism and the vampire women in the novel serve to exemplify the New Woman ideology in the sense that Dracula's transmitting of vampirism serves as a warning of the spread of the ideas of the New Woman. As Craft concludes, vampirism in the novel operates as a representation of a distorted sexuality and is intended to threaten Victorian sexual understanding

(107-110). Vampirism is represented as a foreign disease, which, much like the idea of the New Woman, attempts to corrupt and conquer Victorian England. The three vampire women, or Dracula's brides as they are sometimes known, are the apparent examples of overt and free sexuality because one of the primary aspects of the New Woman was her new-found control over sex and sexual initiation: "When it came to sex the New Woman was more frank and open than her predecessors. She felt free to initiate sexual relationships, to explore alternatives to marriage and motherhood, and to discuss sexual matters such as contraception and venereal disease" (Senf 35). The vampire women are free to use their sexuality and to initiate and take more of an active role in sexual relations despite the Victorian belief that women must be passive in regards to sex. A scene in which the vampire women are seen as the active participants and initiators of sexual relations and a man as a passive object occurs when they confront Jonathan Harker after he goes exploring the Castle:

> The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me . . . Then the skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer—nearer. I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited—waited with beating heart. (Stoker 37-38)

The passage shows the fair vampire woman asserting herself as the dominant force, with Jonathan left at her mercy playing his new role as the submissive. The image of women asserting themselves sexually and men enjoying and languishing in their passivity during sex was unheard of and it surely terrified the rigid Victorian society. In the same scene, one can see Jonathan's conflicting stance toward his new-found role as he regards the vampire woman both attractive and repellent: "The fair girl went on her knees and bent over me, fairly gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive" (Stoker 38). The fair vampire woman is gloating, cementing her power over Jonathan in that moment. Jonathan finds the woman both "thrilling" and "repulsive" as he has never experienced such sensation with a woman, yet his Victorian sensibilities reject this temporary power disbalance. Their forwardness as well as their sexual, aggressive, and dominant manner repulse Jonathan's Victorian upbringing: "I am alone in the castle with those awful women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is naught in common. They are devils of the Pit!" (Stoker 53). After the brief excitement of being penetrated by the vampire women, Jonathan eventually grows to hate them as their behavior does not correspond to the Victorian female gender role.

## 3. The Representation of Sexuality

Bram Stoker found inspiration for the novel in the Victorian fear of overt sexuality, subversive gender roles, and its inability to speak about these subjects. Even though Victorians were not as afraid of the subject as modern-day people are led to believe, most Victorians were ignorant on the subject: "Some few educated Victorians did write a lot about sex . . . Most others never talked about sex; respectable middle-class women in particular were proud of how little they knew about their own bodies and childbirth" (Steinbach). Given all this, it is easily understandable why Bram Stoker chose sexuality, i.e. homosexuality, overt sexuality of characters turned to vampirism, and blood and blood transfusions, as one of the central topics of his novel, exposing it to the degree that would terrify the Victorian society.

One of the issues that was forbidden from being discussed and even criminalized in the Victorian society was homosexuality. A vampire sucking someone's blood and penetrating them with his teeth is deemed as an apparent act of homosexuality and as most characters in the novel would be white men, this would show homosexuality as too discomforting to most Victorian readers (Winnubst 10). While Jonathan is not penetrated by Count Dracula, the Count saves him from the vampire women, angrily admonishing them by stating that Jonathan is his and his alone:

> But the Count! Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even in the demons of the pit. His eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as if the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them . . . "How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you'll have to deal with me." (Stoker 38-39)

Craft asserts that this particular scene is filled with homoerotic symbolism and that even the vampire women were merely a proxy for the Count's desires of penetrating Jonathan (109-110).

Additionally, overt representation of sexuality as well as sexually active and provocative characters would have terrified the Victorian public. Sexuality and basic sexual desires were repressed in the Victorian society, which was hypocritically open in areas where those ideologies and beliefs were not prominent, for example prostitution (Steinbach). The novel mainly portrays overt sexuality through vampirism and vampiric characters, which invade and terrify Victorian society and must therefore be eradicated. Count Dracula is the only male vampire in the novel and he exclusively chooses women to turn into vampires, as evidenced by Lucy Westenra, Mina Harker, and the three vampire women. While Mina Harker's transformation is not complete, the

four other female characters transform and become “aggressive, inhuman, wildly erotic, and motivated only by an insatiable thirst for blood” (Senf 34). Lucy is the only character where the full effect of the vampiric, erotic, aggressive, and sexual transformation can be seen. Lucy experiences her symbolic nightly dalliances with Dracula, succumbs to vampirism, and finally lives to her full and free sexuality before she is destroyed by her fiancée Arthur Holmwood. She is described as both extremely seductive, beautiful, and alluring but still disgusting, vile, and something that must be destroyed. Once she accepts her sexuality, she is deemed corrupted: “The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness” (Stoker 211-12). To Arthur and her other suitors, Lucy’s “purity” was her most important feature and once it turns to “voluptuous wantonness” she is no longer deemed worthy of their love and her life. Yet, once she is purged, killed, and turned to a normal corpse, which could not exhibit sexuality, she is, in the eyes of the Victorian men, returned to her rightful state, pure and prudent rather than sexual: “There in the coffin lay no longer the foul Thing that we had so dreaded and grown to hate that the work of her destruction was yielded as a privilege to the one best entitled to it, but Lucy as we had seen her in her life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity” (Stoker 216-17).

Like female characters who become fully erotic and sexualized once they transform, Dracula also exhibits both homosexual and heterosexual desires. With his exchange of blood with Lucy, Dracula has seduced and symbolically committed sexual acts with her; similarly, his feeding of blood to Mina Harker can also be interpreted as seduction because “Mina's position here is more active than Lucy's”; the same act connotes another terrifying aspect to the Victorian public: a traditionally sexually passive woman can also fall prey to sexuality as “Dracula has tainted Mina's purity” (Kuzmanović 421).

A different aspect of symbolic sexuality, which would have terrified the Victorian public, is the symbolic sexual act of blood transfusions. As aforementioned, the act of vampirism is seen as a sexual act and there is, therefore, something inherently sexual about blood and drinking thereof. The sexual symbolism of blood, as argued by many, is twofold: the first lies in the fact that blood is a source of life for vampires and the source of their reproduction, mimicking the role of semen; the second is contained in the very act of blood when a vampire needs to penetrate his victim with his teeth and then exchange fluids either for pleasure or for procreation, mimicking the role of sex (Picart and Greek 38). In the novel, blood therefore symbolically represents sex and sexual fluids. Yet, Dracula and other vampires are not the only ones who partake in the exchange of blood. After Dracula lands in England and starts drinking Lucy’s blood, Abraham Van Helsing

notices that Lucy is short on blood and commences regular blood transfusions. The Crew of Light, a term used by *Dracula* critics for the group of vampire hunters consisting of Arthur Holmwood, Dr. John Seward, Quincey Morris, Abraham Van Helsing, and later, Jonathan Harker, are willingly giving their blood to an unconscious Lucy in order to save her and revitalize her. The Crew of Light is aware of the concept and symbolism of the transfusion of blood, so much so that Arthur Holmwood, Lucy's fiancée, realizes that the transfusion of his blood to Lucy is symbolic of their wedding night and feels more connected to Lucy because of it. Abraham Van Helsing, on the other hand, jokingly remarks to Dr. John Seward that if that were true, then all of the Crew of Light would have had sex with Lucy:

> "Just so. Said he not that the transfusion of his blood to her veins had made her truly his bride?" "Yes, and it was a sweet and comforting idea for him." "Quite so. But there was a difficulty, friend John. If so that, then what about the others? Ho, ho! Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist, and me, with my poor wife dead to me, but alive by Church's law, though no wits, all gone—even I, who am faithful husband to this now-no-wife, am bigamist." "I don't see where the joke comes in there either!" I said; and I did not feel particularly pleased with him for saying such things. (Stoker 176)

Van Helsing realizes that through the act of transferring blood the whole of the Crew of Light have engaged in a symbolic sexual act, the idea that displeases Seward because in his Victorian worldview he would have contributed to Lucy's polyamory, which would not only be illegal but also extremely immoral in the Victorian society. Furthermore, the blood transfusions would be even more troublesome to the Victorian society, and modern day society for that matter if the transfusion of blood from the Crew of Light into the unconscious and unwilling body of Lucy are interpreted as gang rape (Craft 128). Yet, the Crew of Light finds the rape necessary in order to provide Lucy with "a brave man's blood" because it is "the best thing on this earth when a woman is in trouble," their blood being superior to the foreign blood Dracula would provide (Stoker 149).

## 4. The Fear of the Other

The Victorian and British fear of the Other is one of the most prominent aspects of the novel. The Victorian era is, among other things, renowned for the amount of power the British Empire held at the time. The British Empire, at the start of the Victorian era, had cemented itself as the undisputed most powerful empire in the world with the Empire's boarders covering almost a quarter of the whole globe. The rapid expansion of the Empire led to brand new colonies, new people, new goods for trade, and new jobs shaping the Empire and its colonies (Steinbach). The British enjoyed an era where they were the undisputed most powerful nation on the planet and this led to a belief that the Empire is endless and invincible. Yet, near the end of the nineteenth century, the British Empire began to struggle as it oversaw a growing number of colonies wishing independence and better living conditions, the rise of new political powers, and questioning of morality of the largest empire known in history. Those struggles (and fears) are reflected in *Dracula* as well:

> In the case of *Dracula*, the context includes the decline of Britain as a world power at the close of the nineteenth century . . . The decay of British global influence, the loss of overseas markets for British goods, the economic and political rise of Germany and the United States, the increasing unrest in British colonies and possessions, the growing domestic uneasiness over the morality of imperialism – all combined to erode Victorian confidence in the inevitability of British progress and hegemony. (Arata 622)

Understanding the context surrounding Bram Stoker's novel is crucial in order to understand why the fear of the Other was so prevalent. The Other refers to the "disavowing" of something that is foreign and unfamiliar, something that is not "we:" "Otherness is that disavowed but constitutive necessity for the possibility of subject formation. Otherness is that which 'we' (that is, we white, rational, upstanding subjects) depend on and simultaneously disavow" (Winnubst 3). According to Shannon Winnubst, the Other is something we fear and disavow, yet necessary to form our identity, something foreign and unfamiliar that we discard to form the familiar and local in order to contrast it with the Other (3-4). In the context of the novel, Dracula is the feared Other who is contrasted with the British and through Jonathan Harker's opening entries the Other is extended to the "strange" and "foreign" land of Dracula (Stoker 1-20).

The first fear of the British Empire that Stoker portrays is the fear of losing homogeneity.

The Victorian Britons were fond of their homogeneity and through their conquests they found themselves superior to others. Yet, with the expansion of their land, they came into contact with more and more people of different nationalities, races, and backgrounds. The Victorian man would not have concerned himself with other races until they started to be a part of the same empire as them and their existence posed a threat because they would ruin the pure and homogeneous Empire Victorian believed they possessed. The area of Eastern Europe, which the first part of the novel takes place in, is especially heterogeneous, with Transylvania being described as "the whirlpool of European races" inhabited by "Saxons," "Wallachs," "Magyars," and "Szekelys" (Stoker 2-28). This insistence on heterogeneity and the inclusion of the myriad of races, nations, and backgrounds would have terrified the average Victorian. Arata furthermore claims that not only the Victorians would find heterogeneity uncomfortable but that the British press was widely reporting on the numerous conflicts in that area, which would condition the Victorian reader to believe that with heterogeneity would come racial intolerance, inevitably leading to barbaric violence (629).

Furthermore, the fear of the Jewish community is symbolically depicted through the character of Count Dracula. While most critics focus on the Count as a symbolic spreader of awakened sexuality and heterogeneity, the Count could potentially symbolize the rising anti-Semitism in the Victorian era. The Count's appearance aligns itself too close with stereotypical and anti-Semitic depictions of Jews for it to be a coincidence and also, as Jimmie Cain puts it in his essay "Racism and the Vampire: The Anti-Slavic Premise of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)," the Count was spreading the disease of vampirism just as Jews were believed to spread a number of different afflictions (127). Moreover, Dracula takes up "residence at Carfax . . . near the Whitechapel district, the epicenter of the London immigrant community" (Cain 128). Marchbank argues that the anti-Semitism in the novel is "missed by many" as the novel exhibits many stereotypical anti-Semitic features: "Dracula's distinctive physique, his parasitical desires, his 'blood-sucking,' his aversion to the crucifix and Christianity, and his rapacious relation to money, parallel stereotypical anti-Semitic nineteenth-century representations of the Jew" (31).

Lastly, the novel depiction of reverse colonialization, which parallels racism and anti-Semitism in the novel, was the crowning fear of the Victorian society. Count Dracula threatens not only British homogeneity but also attempts to conquer England and make it one of his colonies just as the British Empire had done to numerous others. Dracula is very learned on English matters and very keen to learn the ways of the British in order to blend into the English society, so that he could carry on his plans of colonialization without anyone noticing the stranger doing it:

> Well I know that, did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger. That is not enough for me. Here I am noble; I am boyar; the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not – and to know not is to care not for. I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he sees me, or pause in his speaking if he hear my words, to say, "Ha, ha! a stranger!" I have been so long master that I would be master still – or at least that none other should be master of me. (Stoker 20)

Dracula's wish to assimilate into the English culture and society, not to be recognized as a stranger but as a master of others as he is in his homeland, is very close to the process of colonialization. Dracula's arrival across the sea to conquer England by turning everyone into his vampires and thus diluting English blood with his foreign blood, definitely denotes colonialization: "Vampirisation is colonisation – or rather, from the British perspective, reverse colonization . . . even the most apparently stable, imperialist nations can evoke horror fantasies in which self-identities are invaded by and absorbed into the Other" (Gelder 12). In Gelder's and Arata's views, Bram Stoker exploited Victorian insecurities and fears, immortalizing them within his novel.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Bram Stoker's most famous work *Dracula* is not merely just another Gothic horror story about the supernatural, it is rather a masterful blend of Eastern European, Slavic, and Balkan myths interwoven with the Victorian era sensibilities, fears, and anxieties, which creates a truly unique novel. Bram Stoker purposefully illustrated the deepest and most dreaded fears and anxieties of the Victorian society, which resulted in the success of his novel and immortalization of those fears. Firstly, Bram Stoker chose the vampire for his villain because he undoubtedly knew the symbolism behind it. At the time, the vampire was a foreign concept to most British people, but it survived countless centuries in the stories of European people. The vampire in the novel spreads foreign and dangerous notions such as the New Woman and awakening of female independence and sexuality, the explicit portrayals of sexuality and homosexuality, and the fear of the Other.

Secondly, Bram Stoker chose to depict his women characters through the lens of the New Woman because he knew that a portrayal of all women characters exhibiting some sort of independence and awakening sexuality would terrify the Victorian society. Thirdly, the representation of sexuality, homosexuality, and blood were all taboo topics of the Victorian era. Vampirism is seen as a symbolic depiction of wanton sexuality and with the Count exhibiting both straight and gay sexuality he would seem as a particular threat to the Victorian era and would bring fears of denigration to their preferred order. Lastly, the Count Dracula serves as a reminder of a constant Victorian threat of reverse colonialization and the fear that the Other would slip into their pure and homogeneous British society and bring upon ruin to their ideals. Ultimately, the novel *Dracula* is not just a horror story, nor just a commentary on the fears of the Victorian era; it is a timeless work that addresses society's deepest and darkest fears, lurking in the shadows. The novel's lasting legacy lies in its ability to encapsulate these fears while simultaneously evolving the vampire myth into something that survives even today. In doing so, Stoker has ensured that *Dracula* continues to resonate with the readers, not just as a horror story, but as a reflection of the societal anxieties that continue to evolve to this day.

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