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**Salahaddin University-Erbil**

**College of Languages**

**Department of English**

**The Depiction of Vampirism in Bram stoker’s Dracula**

**Graduation Research Paper**

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2024  
I, …………………………………… hereby declare that this is my work, and I have properly cited all the references used in preparing this graduation research paper.

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**Dedication**

This research paper is dedicated to:

- My parents, who has been a wonderful supporter until my research was fully finished.

- My supervisor, who helped and guided me to successfully complete this paper.

- My dearest friends and those who will get benefit from it.

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**Abstract**

This paper delves into the multifaceted realm of vampirism as depicted in literature and its psychological implications. Section One provides an overview of gothic literature, tracing the evolution of vampirism as a recurring motif. It explores its origins and prevalence in literary works, alongside its symbolic significance. Additionally, it investigates the psychological aspects of vampirism, examining its representation as a metaphor for human interactions and primal instincts. In Section Two, the focus shifts to Bram Stoker's seminal work, "Dracula." Through the lens of its characters, Section 2.1 analyzes the nuanced perspectives on vampirism within the novel. Furthermore, Section 2.2 dissects the depiction of vampirism in "Dracula," highlighting its thematic depth and cultural impact. Overall, this paper offers a comprehensive exploration of vampirism, blending literary analysis with psychological insight to unravel its enduring fascination and relevance in contemporary discourse.

**Keywords: Vampirism, Dracula, Bram stoker**

**Section one: Gothic and Vampirism:**

**1.1 Gothic literature**

The term "gothic" was coined in France about the 12th century, at first glance, the Gothic novel appears to be an anachronistic and paradoxical cultural production of its time - anachronistic because it emerged during the Enlightenment, when novels generally focused their lens on contemporary reality, and paradoxical because the term "Gothic Novel" is an oxymoron, signifying "Old New," registering a collision between the past and the present, the "ancient" and the "modern," the conventional and the original. The term "Gothic" was first used to describe a type of anti-classical architecture associated with barbarism, obscurity and excess, the term ‘Gothic’ had wide cultural currency in Britain in the eighteenth century, where it conjured up images of medievalism – of gloomy, labyrinthine castles replete with secret inquisitorial chambers and long-buried family secrets. Furthermore, Gothic texts were not ahistorical, entirely escapist fictions, but rather rich cultural products deeply rooted in various and complex material realities. Shinobu Minma says that ‘The Gothic novel has often been regarded as an escape from reality, but the reality of the day in fact propelled the terror of its fiction. More specifically, the Gothic, in particular, reflected the clash of Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment ideals, concepts, and belief systems (Davison, 1997, pp. 25-37).

In the 18th century, Gothic literature appeared as a literary genre. The earliest literary representation of pleasurable, sublime terror occurred in Gothic fiction with the publishing of The Castle of Otranto, where Walpole expressly made terror his 'principal engine'. Moreover, it is generally recognized that the gothic, defined narrowly as a narrative style expressed primarily through the novel, had a lifespan of about 56 years. It died, or was dismembered and interred, somewhere between 1818 and 1820, with the publication of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or Charles Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer, respectively (Robbins and Wolfreys, 2000, pp.11-27).

Below is a list of some of the Gothic elements:

1. The setting is in a castle. The action takes place in and around an old castle, which appears to be abandoned at times and occupied at others. Secret corridors, trap doors, secret rooms, dark or hidden stairs, and possibly damaged areas are common features of castles.

2. An atmosphere of mystery and suspense. The work is pervaded by a threatening feeling, a fear enhanced by the unknown. The plot is frequently developed around a mystery, such as unclear parentage, a disappearance, or some unexplainable incident.

4. Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events. Dramatic, amazing events happen, such as ghosts or giants walking or inanimate items (such as a suit of armor or a picture) coming to life. In some works, the events are eventually explained naturally, and in others, the events are truly supernatural.

5. High, even exaggerated emotion. The narration can be highly sentimental, and the characters are frequently overcome by rage, sorrow, surprise, and, especially, terror. Characters suffer from raw nerves and a sense of approaching catastrophe. There is a lot of crying and impassioned statements.

After all, as confront the underlying terror of times, the Gothic gives a guarantee of life even in the face of so much death. However; the pleasantly terrifying thing may be that this life, this awareness of being alive, is that it is continuously shadowed by previous and approaching shattering and dissolution. Modern life continuously tells that people are on the edge of death, or at the very least obsolescence, and that society must constantly strive to keep lives together. Paradoxically, we need the Gothic's consistent sense of death in order to appreciate and desire that life. The Gothic's basic interest in ravaging history and fragmenting the past intersects with investments now as people strive to reinvent history as a way of healing the continual loss in modern existence. People seek both life and death, and in that vacillation between wanting life and capitulating to destruction, people continue to want the Gothic to give meaning to our contradictions (Hogle, 2002, p. 274). Gothic literature is all about darkness, horror, and the supernatural, drawing readers in with its haunting atmosphere and themes of fear and isolation.

**1.2 Vampires in Literature:**

The basic dictionary description of a vampire serves as a starting point for further investigation. A vampire is a reanimated corpse who rises from the grave to suck the blood of living people and therefore maintain life. That description clearly matches Dracula, the most well-known vampire, but it is simply a starting point and quickly proves inadequate when it comes to exploring the realm of vampire folklore. While discussing vampires almost always leads to a discussion of death, not all vampires have resurrected bodies. Many vampires are undead demonic spirits. Vampires can also seem like the spirit of a dead person or a dead person's dead body. These vampires, like many people who say they see ghosts, can be thought to be living people. Similarly, in modern secular literature, vampires appear as a new species of intelligent life (perhaps from outer space or the result of genetic mutation) or as otherwise regular human beings with a strange habit (such as blood-drinking) or an abnormal power (such as the ability to drain people emotionally). These vampires come in a variety of forms, the vast majority of which are the risen dead.

As is generally understood, the characteristic shared by all of these vampire entities is their need for blood, which they get from living humans and animals. Some vampires do not consume blood; instead, they drain what is known as the life force from their victims. Because of this, the "vampire" takes on distinct characteristics in each culture, each being viewed within its original context. Despite these cultural distinctions, there are common vampire types that appear to cross cultural boundaries (Melton, 2010, pp. 30-32).

The myth of the vampire has fascinated people for ages. Superstitions and folktales about the undead date back at least to the fifteenth century, and some people still think that these creatures rise from their graves at night to suck the blood of their unsuspecting victims. Whether one believes the stories or not, the vampire is one of literature's most frequently used supernatural creatures. At the beginning of the twentieth century, interest in the supernatural began to die as writers shifted their focus to more serious and realistic subjects. However, many short stories and novels about vampires have been created in the last two decades, possibly reflecting a turn toward what some may call escapist literature. Despite the fact that tales of the undead had existed for many years, it wasn't until the nineteenth century that writers began to use the vampire in literature. Many of the major Romantic poets incorporated the vampire in their works, and the nineteenth century might be seen as the heyday of the vampire story, because the most significant works about vampires, including the most famous, Bram Stoker's Dracula, were written in that century.

As a result, the model for vampire literature became entrenched during the nineteenth century. The figure of the vampire, which most people associate with Bram Stoker, was first used by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in a poem he began writing in 1798, 100 years before Dracula was published. Romantic poets are not the only literary artists of the nineteenth century to use the vampire. Many nineteenth-century prose writers used the undead figure in their writings. Those who followed Coleridge took the basic pattern the poet had used, and each successive prose writer altered the material, influencing those who came later, most notably Stoker, considered the greatest vampire writer. The chain of influence can be traced back to Stoker, where it ends for many years (Whitehead, 1990, pp. 1-3).

We can claim that the vampire made its entry into literature from a folkloric background. From that moment forward, the image of the vampire has undergone an evolution as a result of its metaphorical connection to each new age. There were grounds for the appearance and spread of vampire epidemics in folklore. The supernatural beings were mostly used to spread fear that anyone who did not follow the rules of authority such as the Church would become such a monster himself. When the vampire first appeared in literature, the image underwent a first transformation as a result of its adaptation to this new medium and new age. As a literary motive, the vampire is constantly used to represent the historical and societal conditions that existed at the time of its creation, as a metaphor for humans' fears and desires. In addition, these literary vampires are always associated with sexuality, gender, and religion. The vampire's continuing adaptation to changes in all of these aspects contributes to its evolution and longstanding popularity. This evolution involves changes in appearance, behavior, supernatural powers, victim roles, vampires dealing with their vampire nature, and their ability to feel and sympathize (Härcher, 2015). Vampires in literature are characters who drink blood to survive. They often appear in stories of horror and fantasy, captivating readers with their mysterious and supernatural nature.

**1.3 Vampirism in psychology:**

Many cultures have created myths and legends about vampires and hematophages with various characteristics and behaviors. The duality between "life" and "death" is one of the many characteristics shared by these stories. According to some anthropological currents, these symbols do not appear out of nowhere, but rather undergo a process of transformation in which elements from actual life intersect in the cultural tissue and are modified depending on the message they are trying to convey. Vampires have several characteristics that are similar to illnesses and disorders that have largely defined human history, both psychologically and physically. The unknown is frightening. Diversity is frightening. When these two fears combine in the face of real or imagined phenomena with no obvious explanation, irrationality prevails over rationality. In any case, all of these features reflect a synthesis of the attitude toward the life/death dualism in a culturally homogeneous human group (Tiziani, 2009).

Vampires are creatures that have a strong need to take vital energy or blood. Some see this as a totally physical necessity with no metaphysical origins. Those who identify as vampires prefer to believe that they are a hundred percent human with a condition that demands energy, or blood feeding. As a result, vampires do not consider themselves to be undead immortal entities, but rather use the term to describe their desire to feed on the energy of others. For example, there are lifestyle vampires and real vampires. The latter is separated into two groups: sanguivorous and psychic vampires. Lifestyle vampires choose to live in line with their perception of vampire existence, which is heavily affected by pop-culture interpretation as well as the goth sub-culture. Real vampires identify their status as an inescapable desire. As a result, detecting and understanding the distinction between lifestyle vampires and real vampires is critical for the community. (Ripley, 2019, pp. 15-16).

(Psychological Perspectives on Vampire Mythology)

Throughout the twentieth century, the psychological component of the vampire myth caught the attention, and perhaps the fascination, of psychological researchers. Because the vampire image is so prevalent in human societies, some psychologists refer to it as an archetype—an intrapsychic psychological structure rooted in the collective unconscious. The several primary psychoanalytic interpretations help us comprehend the strong fascination with vampire mythology-based narratives and pictures.

Prior to Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis, even advanced psychologies tended to relate the realm of the undead with pre-modern demonological mythology. Freudian thinking established human fantasies of the undead as a legitimate issue for serious scientific investigation. Freud created a modern map of the unconscious, which he saw as a reservoir of denied sexual and sometimes destructively aggressive desires, impulses, and wishes. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, vampire narratives reflect in complicated form the fascination—both natural and unnatural—which the living take in death and the dead. From Freud’s point of view, “All human experiences of morbid dread signify the presence of repressed sexual and aggressive wishes, and in vampirism we see these repressed wishes becoming plainly visible. (Melton, 2010, pp. 544-562). Also Vampirism in psychology studies people who drain others emotionally or manipulate them, often seen as metaphorical vampires.

**Section Two:** **The Depiction of Vampirism in Dracula**

**2.1 Dracula through the eyes of the characters:**

In Bram Stoker's "Dracula," the eponymous character is vividly portrayed through the eyes of various protagonists, offering a nuanced understanding of the vampire's nature. Jonathan Harker's initial impression of Dracula is one of fascination mixed with unease as he observes the Count's aristocratic demeanor, noting his tall, thin frame and piercing gaze. However, Harker's perception shifts as he becomes increasingly aware of Dracula's predatory instincts, noticing the sinister glint in his eyes and the chilling aura that surrounds him. Meanwhile, Mina Murray finds herself drawn to Dracula's charisma, despite an underlying sense of apprehension. She is captivated by his hypnotic voice and commanding presence, yet discerns subtle signs of his malevolent nature, such as his sharp fingernails and the faint scent of decay that lingers in his wake. Abraham Van Helsing approaches Dracula with a keen analytical eye, recognizing the vampire's formidable intellect and cunning. Van Helsing acknowledges Dracula's ability to manipulate and deceive, while also understanding his vulnerability to certain religious symbols and rituals. Additionally, Lucy Westenra's perspective offers insight into the seductive allure of Dracula, as she succumbs to his charms and becomes ensnared in his dark embrace. Through the intertwining viewpoints of these characters, Dracula emerges as a complex and enigmatic figure, both alluring and terrifying in his aristocratic charm and predatory instincts. (Generani, G., 2018,)  
  
there are the character's opinions on Dracula  
1. Jonathan Harker: He is the young solicitor who travels to Transylvania to help Count Dracula with his real estate transactions in England. At first, Harker sees Dracula as a mysterious but hospitable host. However, as he spends more time in Dracula's castle, he begins to realize the true horror of Dracula's nature. Harker's journal entries reflect his growing fear and desperation to escape from Dracula's clutches.

2. Mina Murray (later Mina Harker): Mina is Jonathan Harker's fiancée and later becomes his wife. She is a strong and intelligent woman who becomes entangled in Dracula's plot when he targets her as his next victim. Mina's perspective offers insights into the emotional toll of Dracula's actions on his victims, as well as her determination to help defeat him.

3. Professor Abraham Van Helsing: Van Helsing is a Dutch doctor and vampire hunter who becomes the leader of the group determined to stop Dracula. He is knowledgeable about vampire lore and is one of the first characters to recognize the danger posed by Dracula. Van Helsing's perspective provides a scientific and rational approach to understanding and combating the supernatural threat posed by Dracula.

4. Lucy Westenra: Lucy is Mina's best friend and becomes one of Dracula's victims early in the novel. From Lucy's perspective, we see the seductive and manipulative nature of Dracula as he preys upon her vulnerability. Her transformation into a vampire and subsequent battle with the group of vampire hunters underscore the horrifying consequences of Dracula's actions.

5. Dr. John Seward: Seward is a doctor and the administrator of an insane asylum. He becomes involved in the fight against Dracula when one of his patients, Renfield, becomes obsessed with the vampire. Seward's perspective offers a glimpse into the psychological effects of encountering the supernatural, as well as his role in coordinating the efforts to stop Dracula.  
Shortly, "Dracula through the eyes of the characters" explores how different characters in the novel perceive and react to the menacing presence of the vampire, shedding light on their fears and motivations. It offers insight into the diverse perspectives within the story, enriching the reader's understanding of its themes and conflicts.

**2.2 The Depiction of Vampirism in Dracula:**

Victorian England ruled a powerful empire. It was the world's largest superpower, a model of Western social order, a colonizer, and the norm. England also took the executive decision to do everything in its power to keep and enforce these statuses. People in Victorian England feared the exotic outsider as a disease that would weaken the Empire. This fear inspired Bram Stoker's Dracula. England's identity was inextricably linked to its position as the most powerful nation, and the fear of losing that position fueled its drive to keep it. Bram Stoker's Dracula depicts the count's otherness as a physical, spiritual, and cultural threat to the English characters in order to demonstrate the British Empire's actual weakness. Firstly, the novel depicts Dracula as physically and psychologically different from an Englishman. Jonathan Harker comes to realize Dracula's abnormal strength from brief exchanges. When he assists Harker in moving down from the calèche (Kern, 2020, p. 13). The Englishman remarks “I could not but notice his prodigious strength. His hand actually seemed like a steel vice that could have crushed mine if he had chosen” (**Dracula**, p.28).

Dracula is a unique creation, although his origin is more ordinary than one may believe. Stoker revitalized the stock Gothic villain in Dracula by turning him into a vampire. When Jonathan Harker meets Dracula for the first time, the vampire is "a tall old man, clean-shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of color about him anywhere" P. 29. Besides his penetrating and strange eyes, Dracula has the aquiline features, massive eyebrows, and "fixed and rather cruel-looking" mouth of the Gothic villain (p. 31). Stoker's villain is unique in that he changes from an old man to a more typical and younger "dark seducer" character over the course of the novel (Gates, 1976, pp. 60-61).

*Dracula has been revived when Mina and Jonathan discover him in London. Mina sees:*

*a tall thin man, with a beaky nose and*

*black moustache and pointed beard …*

*His face was not a good face; it was*

*hard, and cruel, and sensual, and his*

*big white teeth, that looked all the*

*whiter because his lips were so red,*

*were pointed like an animal’s.* (Dracula, p. 185)

Although much of Dracula's popularity comes from an effective rediscovery of the Gothic villain, Stoker may have based his portrayal of the Count on a contemporary personality (Gates, 1976, pp. 60-61).

Harker’s first meeting with Dracula included what would become basic elements of the vampire’s image. He possessed remarkable strength. He possessed a set of fangs (extended canine teeth). His skin was pale, and he was cold to the touch. He had a terrible case of bad breath. The next day, Dracula and Harker met when Harker noticed the lack of mirrors in the castle. Dracula's long teeth were seen once again (Melton, 2010, p. 203).

But, more importantly, Harker observed:

*I had hung my shaving glass by the window, and was just beginning to shave… This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! but at that instant I saw that the cut had bled a little, and the blood was trickling over my chin. I laid down the razor, turning as I did so half-round to look for some sticking plaster. When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demonic fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away, and his hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that I could hardly believe that it was ever there* (**Dracula**, p.38).

The subtle sexuality of Dracula's vampires looms loudly. The character of the vampire, in particular, is seen as the protagonist's dark and secret side, embodying humans' suppressed sexual desire. The characters have attractive physical characteristics, and the three female vampires demonstrate classical beauty traits by being:

*[…] 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* (**Dracula**, p.50).

This scene, in particular, in which Harker meets the three female vampires, is crucial in the topic of sexual interpretation in **Dracula**. Females are described as visually appealing and attractive, but with a strong negative connotation. Stoker uses the words “mirthless”, “hard” and “soulless” to describe their laughter (p. 51). Moreover, he emphasizes “the ruby of their voluptuous lips” (p. 50). Harker has two opposite feelings at that moment: “wicked, burning desire” and “deadly fear” (p. 50). He waits for “erotic fulfillment”. Harker lies “quiet” and “in an agony of delightful anticipation” (p. 50) whereas the vampires advances him, actively participates in the seduction, and is about to penetrate him with her teeth, not the other way around. Simultaneously, the vampire women are quite hostile toward Harker. They clearly want him solely as prey to satisfy their sexual desires (Nußbaumer, 2014, p. 16).

Upon first meeting him, Jonathan Marker notices that Dracula has many animalistic features, including a strong, aquiline profile, and other facial features include massive eyebrows that meet over Dracula's nose, "bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion," a cruel-looking, mustachioed mouth "with peculiarly sharp white teeth" and pointed ears" (p.31). Jonathan also mentions Dracula's hands, which are broad, hairy, and have sharply filed nails that resemble an animal's claws rather than a man's hands. Another way in which Stoker connects Dracula to animals is through Dracula's ability to communicate with other animals. On Jonathan's first night at the castle, for example, a silence descends between him and Dracula, which is broken by the howling of wolves from outside. Then Dracula exclaims "listen to them--the children of the night. What music they make!" (p. 32). Dracula not only enjoys their music, but he also has influence over the wolves, as seen in a previous scene when Jonathan is on his way to the castle (Link, 2005, p. 13).

Furthermore, Auerbach claims that Stoker establishes the tradition of the shapeshifting vampire. While some societies have had shape-shifting vampires in mythology for generations, this is possibly the first time this mythological component of the vampire appears in literature. Stoker's use of shape-shifting is a remarkable example of Dracula's reification of Victorian de-evolutionary anxieties. Dracula may shape-shift into animals such as wolves, bats, and rats, but he can also shape-shift into non-animal forms like fog and mist. This ability, along with his other animalistic features, clearly indicates that Dracula is not just abnormal, but also, as Hurley defines it, abhuman (Link, 2005, p. 14).

Stoker first referred to Dracula's power to transform into an animal when the imprisoned Harker glanced out his window and saw Dracula crawling down the castle wall. "What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of man?" Harker wondered (p. 47). Dracula travelled to England on the Demeter, which he intentionally sank off the coast of Whitby. Dracula escaped from the wreckage in a form of a dog. Dracula made few appearances during the rest of the novel, but he was always present in the background in the form of a bat (Melton, 2010, p. 18).

Moreover, the bat is one of the creatures of the night that Dracula rules, and he can transform himself into. The bat eventually appears in the novel, hovering outside Jonathan Harker's room window at Castle Dracula. Later, Harker notices Dracula assuming batlike features as he crawls down the castle's outside wall. When the plot shifts to England, Dracula's presence is more frequently indicated by the bat than by his human form. Dracula's bat appearances are always at night, and the vampire's relationship with the bat contributed significantly to the twentieth-century idea of the vampire as a purely nocturnal being (Melton, 2010, p. 52).

In addition, vampire authority Dr. Abraham Van Helsing believed that vampires could transform into a mist, however, their ability to move very far in this form was fairly limited. Dracula took up this disguise while traveling to England on the ship Demeter. He could easily move in and out of the box in which he was resting in this form. Acknowledging this ability, Van Helsing sealed the door of the vault of the vampirized Lucy Westenra's resting place with a putty containing flakes of a eucharistic wafer, leaving no space for her to escape. In a similar manner, he later locked the gateway to Castle Dracula. Dracula's main appearances in a mist form were during his attacks on Mina Murray. In Murray’s record of the first attack, she noted that she saw a thin streak of white mist that moved across the lawn It looked to have its own awareness and vitality. The mist began to enter the room, not through the window, but through the door's joints. The mist gathered into a cloud, from which Dracula appeared. When the men eventually realized Murray was being attacked, they went to her room and discovered her drinking Dracula's blood. They approached him with crucifixes in hand, but he changed back into mist and vanished beneath the door. The vampire transforming into mist was a minor concept in folklore, but it was referenced periodically as a logical way for the vampire to depart and return from the grave without disturbing the topsoil that covered the coffin. The idea of such a transformation was often made when small holes apparently leading downward to the coffin lid appeared on the top of the grave (Melton, 2010, p. 467).

It is also worth noting that Dracula has no voice throughout the novel. It is true that there are a few instances in which he speaks; nevertheless, all conversation spoken by Dracula is filtered through one of the Englishmen. All conversations between Dracula and Jonathan Marker are recorded in Jonathan's diary. Mina hears only a few other conversations as she recounts her attack and Dr. Seward’s. No part of the story is written in Dracula's voice, with the exception of a very simple letter of greeting to Jonathan when he first arrives in Transylvania at the beginning of the novel. By performing this fundamental act, Stoker has already repressed his main character, thereby turning Dracula into an oppressed and voiceless Other (Link, 2005, p. 20).

In addition, the novel emphasizes how spiritually different Dracula is from all of the human characters. Specifically, the novel portrays Dracula as unholy in the eyes of Christian England. Shortly after “leaving the West and entering the East,” a woman cautions Harker “when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway” (p. 15, 18 ). She asks him “Do you know where you are going, and what you are going to?” offering him a crucifix to protect himself (p. 18). The woman does not say “whom” you are going to but rather “what,” the “what” being a creature dangerous enough to warrant the protection of a crucifix and inhuman enough to merit an object pronoun. So the novel spiritually others Dracula from the humans to the extent that Harker’s fellow travelers call him “Satan…hell…witch” and even “vampire” in their foreign tongues, crossing themselves continually (p. 20). Even though they have no intention of approaching Dracula, these humans perceive him to be a threat to their divine existences from afar. Similarly, the mere presence of non-Christian foreigners poses a threat to the Church of England and England's status as an empire (Kern, 2020, pp. 16-17).

Thus, Bram Stoker's **Dracula** explores the English Empire's frailty through the menace of Dracula's physical, spiritual, and cultural otherness. Dracula presents a danger to the lives of English people, threatening Harker, Mina, Lucy, and everyone who dares to resist his invasion of England. He represents the unholy, a red-eyed hunter who can only be stopped by garlic and Faith symbols (Kern, 2020, p. 20).

Besides, Bram Stoker's **Dracula** became the definitive model for later vampire novels. Even in Dracula, there are hints of ambiguity about the vampire's nature, implying that he is not a creature of pure evil. The book considers the possibility that Dracula is both a victim and a villain, that some good remains in him, or that his condition is caused by natural rather than satanic causes (Davison, 1997, p. 175).

As a result, Vampirism itself can be seen as a type of imprisonment because the soul of a vampire is trapped in limbo between life and death. According to Van Helsing, virtuous characters should feel sympathy even for Dracula because he is himself a prisoner of his state (Gates, 1976, p. 19).

*The Doctor says,*

*That poor soul who has wrought all this*

*misery is the saddest case of all. Just*

*think what will be his joy when he too is*

*destroyed in his worse part that his*

*better part may have spiritual immortality.*

*You must be pitiful to him too, though it*

*may not hold your hands from his destruction.* (**Dracula**, p.322)

Van Helsing expresses admiration for Dracula's intelligence, cunning, and persistence. He concludes, "Oh, if such an one was to come from God, and not the Devil, what a force for good might he not be in this old world of ours" (p. 334). In each of these situations, Van Helsing instantly reiterates the opposite point, that Dracula is an agent of evil; his ability for virtue, if any, remains unrealized. Jonathan Harker, a surprising source, suggests that vampires may preserve some human virtues. After Dracula attacks Mina, Jonathan resolves that "if we find out that Mina must be a vampire in the end, then she shall not go into that unknown and terrible land alone. I suppose it is thus that in old times one vampire meant many; ... the holiest love was the recruiting sergeant for their ghastly ranks" (p. 311). Jonathan doesn't seem to realize that the power to love prevents vampires from being totally evil. He also has no recollection of overhearing the Count tell his three vampire brides, "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past," during his time at Castle Dracula (p. 51). Since Stoker's vampires frequently use the word "kiss" to describe their bloodthirsty approaches, Dracula's claim to "love" is one of many ambiguous statements. With the exception of Mina Harker, no character in the story pauses to consider the idea that Dracula is not completely evil. Mina makes the only clear statement of sympathy for the villain. She objects to the anger expressed by the other heroes, particularly her husband Jonathan, and insists that the vampire's destruction must not be "a work of hate. That poor soul who has wrought all this misery is the saddest case of all. Just think what will be his joy when he, too, is destroyed in his worser part that his better part may have spiritual immortality" (p. 322). Mina believes that Dracula, like Lucy Westenra, is ultimately a victim. Mina's sympathy could be interpreted as a reflection of her saintly character rather than any true residue of virtue within the Count (Davison, 1997, pp. 176-177). "I shall be glad as long as I live that even in that moment of final dissolution, there was in the face a look of peace, such as I never could have imagined might have rested there," she says of Dracula's death (p. 388).

Hence, Dracula appears in a variety of appearances. Nothing is certain, nothing is stable, but everything is flexible in his literary character. Harker describes him as having an aristocratic appearance. Dracula, however, slips into society and appears to be an ordinary person when he encounters him in England during the day. Furthermore, he is younger than before, and his hair is no longer grey, but black. Van Helsing also portrays him as crafty and clever on the one hand, and “some faculties of mind [being] only a child” (p316) on the other. The Count is the personification of horror in this regard. He represents something mysterious and changing, one's deepest aspirations and desires; he is something that the vampire hunters cannot comprehend. However, his behavior is significantly different from that of his pursuers (Nußbaumer, 2014, p. 14).

**Conclusion**

Once gothic literature started becoming popular in the 19th century, more vampire stories were written. Gothic literature focuses on supernatural and dark elements, so vampires were naturally common gothic characters. This is exactly what Bram Stoker's **Dracula** does, which is still one of the most famous vampire stories in all literature. Stoker took inspiration from real figures to create Count Dracula. Dracula inspired even more traits that are commonly associated with vampires.

Stoker’s **Dracula** achieved the status of modern myths and became part of popular culture with various screen and theatrical adaptations. It's essentially a reenactment of the traditional Gothic plot initiated in the Castle of Otranto, in which a powerful human monster persecutes defenseless maidens.

Count Dracula was pale and had a thirst for blood. He also slept in a coffin and could change into other spooky creatures, like a bat or a wolf. He specifically targeted women, biting them in the neck and killing them. The only way to kill him is to stab him in the heart. The story also mentions that garlic can keep vampires away. This novel is still one that people think of when they think about vampires, and it had a huge impact on the gothic literature genre.

Moreover, by depicting his vampire-protagonist Count Dracula as an intellectually brilliant, well-educated, and refined master parasite, Stoker recreated the abominable undead being in folklore as a monster wearing a gentleman's mask a magnificent creature maintaining an enduring role in modern literature.

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