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Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*: the fear of reverse colonisation, love, sexuality and traumatic memory

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Abstract

Dracula è un romanzo epistolare, il più noto dell'autore irlandese Bram Stoker. Scritto nel 1897, si snoda tra la Romania e l'Inghilterra: le vicende vengono raccontate dai personaggi stessi attraverso diversi mezzi (lettere, trascrizioni fonografiche, diari, ecc.).

Nel romanzo la cui idea, per ammissione dello stesso autore, è nata dopo un'indigestione di gamberi, vengono trattati diversi temi. Oltre a costituire una delle prime storie di vampiri del panorama letterario inglese, che ha influenzato la concezione di vampiro che abbiamo ancora oggi (la sensibilità di quei mostri alla luce del sole, all'aglio e la loro vulnerabilità ai paletti di legno infilati nel cuore), affronta alcune tematiche importanti per la società del tempo.

Il personaggio di Dracula prende probabilmente ispirazione dal sovrano sanguinario Vlad III, principe di Valacchia e soprannominato *l'impalatore*. In un incunabolo dell'epoca viene raffigurato a un banchetto circondato da uomini impalati, il pavimento cosparso di sangue, arti e teste. *Dracul* significa in romeno "il diavolo" ed era il soprannome del padre di Vlad III.

In primo luogo, in questa tesi di laurea viene analizzato quel fenomeno dilagante avvenuto verso la fine del diciannovesimo secolo che è stato definito come la paura della "reverse colonisation". Una situazione apparentemente perfetta spesso nasconde una crisi imminente. L'alba del nuovo millennio ha rivelato la dura realtà che le apparenze possono essere ingannevoli. Il mondo è in uno stato di caos, e l'idea di una sovversione della vita stessa non è inverosimile. Il romanzo, originariamente intitolato "The Dead Undead", esplora questo tema. Suggerisce che anche la morte non è come sembra, poiché i defunti consumano sangue umano.

Il secondo capitolo è dedicato a un'analisi della concezione dell'amore e della sessualità nell'età Vittoriana, con l'ausilio del film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* di Francis Ford Coppola. Qui sono state prese in considerazione diverse tematiche che risultano essere molto all'avanguardia per l'epoca, come per esempio la poligamia, rappresentata in *Dracula* attraverso il personaggio di Lucy, che nel romanzo, scrivendo una lettera alla cara amica Mina le confessa il desiderio di poter sposare tutti e tre i suoi spasimanti,

talmente è legata a ognuno di loro. Parzialmente, anche il ruolo delle tre donne nel Castello del Conte rappresenta un legame con questo tema, anche se il loro ruolo all'interno della vicenda non è chiaro, dal momento che non è noto se sono le mogli o le figlie di Dracula o quale sia il loro legame di parentela col vampiro. L'importanza della femminilità e della sensualità, in generale, è una delle chiavi del romanzo, incarnata in particolare nel personaggio di Mina.

Per concludere, nel terzo capitolo viene trattato il tema del trauma e come i vari personaggi del romanzo vi fanno fronte ed elaborano la situazione drammatica in cui si trovano, a partire da Harker, il più fragile del gruppo, che cade preda di una violenta febbre cerebrale una volta riuscito a scappare dal Castello di Dracula, per passare a Mina, alla quale vengono spesso affidati i compiti più importanti come quello di trascrivere i vari diari e resoconti raccolti dagli altri personaggi per riuscire ad avere una raccolta completa di informazioni per poter uccidere il vampiro.

Il tema della salute mentale in *Dracula* è indice dell'inattendibilità dei narratori. Sono stati individuati legami tra i comportamenti dei personaggi e quelli che sono stati definiti i "sei stadi della paranoia".

Lo stesso Renfield, lo zoofago internato nel manicomio in cui lavora il dottor Seward e servo di Dracula, che si serve di lui come contatto con il gruppo capeggiato dal dottor Abram Van Helsing, rappresenta la forma più "comune" della pazzia. Secondo Carol A. Senf, Lucy Westenra soffre di schizofrenia, mostrandosi come una donna remissiva e dolce quando è sveglia ma tramutandosi in voluttuosa alla ricerca del piacere allorché cade vittima del sonnambulismo. Il dottor Seward è il più incline all'introspezione e all'autocritica, domandandosi più volte fino a che punto la missione che lui e gli altri protagonisti si sono preposti sia da considerarsi assennata.

La follia è comunemente vista come una minaccia per la mascolinità a causa del suo potenziale di ridurre l'autonomia. Il pazzo è tipicamente visto come un oggetto di studio e un problema da risolvere, piuttosto che come un individuo sofferente che ha bisogno di cure. Nell'isolamento della sua follia, diventa vulnerabile all'invasione psichica, proprio come una società frammentata, debole e confusa è incline all'influenza dannosa di forze esterne malevole. La difesa più efficace contro tale invasione è la cooperazione disinteressata tra i membri della società.

Leggere questo romanzo e applicare la teoria del trauma culturale in modo non ortodosso permette di esaminare i modi in cui, secondo la scrittura di Paul Fussell, il passaggio della storia moderna doma il fantastico e rende accettabile l'indicibile. I vampiri del romanzo possono essere un prodotto della creatività letteraria, ma l'Olocausto, per quanto inimmaginabile, rimane, nelle parole di Omer Bartov, un prodotto dell'immaginazione umana. Bartov trova sconcertante rappresentare eventi orribili che sembrano resistere alla comprensione umana. Sebbene nessuna finzionalizzazione possa cogliere pienamente la realtà dell'Olocausto, quella realtà inimmaginabile è emersa dal profondo dell'immaginazione europea. È interessante notare che Bartov impiega la fantastica figura del Golem per simboleggiare queste entità completamente nuove e indescrivibili che hanno superato i limiti della capacità e della creatività dell'immaginazione umana, costantemente in agguato appena sotto la superficie, di tanto in tanto con tutta l'intensità delle passioni represse e non trattate e delle ansie. Se i critici credono che sia il momento di sminuire gli ovvi orrori di Dracula, leggere il testo vampirico canonico di Stoker contro il linguaggio della teoria del trauma promette di evidenziare dilemmi metafisici ed etici che continuano a tormentare la vita moderna in un mondo post-atrocità.

Introduction

The rise of vampires appears to be a growing trend. A teenage vampire clan was recently discovered in Murray, Kentucky, near the National Boy Scout Museum. The clan met at an abandoned hilltop house, dubbed "The Vampire Hotel" by the press, to engage in role-playing games that involved drinking each other's blood and harming puppies at a local animal shelter. This local clan gained national attention when four of its members traveled to Florida to help a friend murder her parents, after which they stole the parents' car and headed to New Orleans, Anne Rice's residence. Their horrific actions inspired a three-part newscast series in Nashville called "Vampires: Games of Death" that aimed to expose the secret sub-culture of teenage vampires in the city. The report urged parents to check their children's rooms for satanic books and their bodies for signs of self-mutilation after investigating the darker side of Nashville. The series concluded that parents need to pay more attention to their teens and give them less freedom, relying on a minister as an expert witness. Fittingly, the same station aired a special report on "the soul" shortly after. In the Bible Belt, the teenage vampire serves as a disturbing image of family values gone awry - the child as a soulless killer, akin to a home-grown horror. The connection between morality and monstrosity in the Bible Belt vampire is also highlighted in a public service announcement at the Nashville International Airport, which, like all transportation hubs, acts as a bridge between locality and mobility. Upon passing through the metal detectors, the sight of a bat soaring through an open window with a full moon in the backdrop serves as a cautionary message for potential travellers: ”Beware of Fly-By-Night Relationships. AIDS. See the Light”.

Upon arriving in Nashville, the traveler is initially greeted with images of wholesome country music and Opryland U.S.A. However, upon departure, they are confronted with the image of the vampire as a romantic horror and the lover as a serial killer. This depiction of the vampire serves as a cautionary tale against the dangers of cultural globalisation and mobility, as well as the fears of illicit sexuality and the terrors of tourism. These vampire sightings, which reflect the reactionary effects of fin de siècle gothicism, suggest several things. First, the conventional tropes of gothic horror continue to hold relevance and appeal. The New York Times reported on October 23, 1996, that Halloween has become the second largest commercial holiday after Christmas, further solidifying its position as a marketable and culturally significant category. As Mark Edmundson notes, "terror has probably never been so hot, surely never so lucrative" (50). From films like The Silence of the Lambs and Stephen King novels to the real-life cases of Jeffrey Dahmer and Timothy McVeigh, the gothic has permeated our cultural imagination and is frequently front-page news and a ratings-grabber. The academic community has also contributed to the recent proliferation of texts examining the gothic and horror, including the books under review here.

The mobility of the vampire figures in the gothic genre serves as a reminder of the genre's own mobility. The fear of the vampire's potential to move from Kentucky to Tennessee or travel through flight without a coffin is what triggers these sightings and their accompanying regulatory effects. The vampire's ability to reproduce itself through a single bite makes it a sign of contagion, while its ability to transform into different forms, such as fog, bat, and human, is similar to the gothic's generic mutation. Furthermore, the vampire's mobility across diverse geographical spaces, from Transylvania to England and Florida to New Orleans, mirrors the gothic's movement across different genres. The gothic genre, as a mode of excess, cannibalises other genres and transgresses their domains, constantly transforming its own shape and focus, as Fred Botting argues. Thus, both the gothic and its vampires should be studied through their particular locales as well as their traveling transformations.

Bram Stoker's Dracula serves as a representation of collective dreams that reflect Victorian sexual roles and repression. However, this novel contains an aspect that has not been previously noticed: Stoker's supposed "feminism" and how it affects the novel's bipartite structure. The novel's sexual repression and Stoker's perception of women are interconnected in a harmonious way. In a similar manner to many contemporary depictions of "liberated" women, Stoker's heroine Mina is most feminine when exhibiting masculine pseudo-rationality and eighteenth-century gentlemanly stoicism, but she is typically Victorian in her sexual repression. Although Stoker's feminist attempt in this novel is overt, the other appeals of this bestseller are subtle.

Before moving to the analysis of the novel, a brief summary of its straightforward yet fragmented plot will be provided. The story is conveyed through various characters' journals, diaries, clinical reports, and ship logs. Jonathan Harker travels to Count Dracula's castle in Transylvania, witnesses the child-devouring vampire women, almost becomes their victim, and later returns to London while being pursued by Dracula. Dracula begins attacking Lucy Westernra, who is engaged to one man but is also being courted by others: Quincey P. Morris (a crass and ultimately irrelevant American), Van Helsing (an exceptional scientist and vampire expert with connections to the Vatican, and thus, a symbol of the two most significant patriarchal and dominant institutions in Western culture), and Dr. Seward, who is caring for a madman named Renfield. Despite numerous blood transfusions from her suitors, crosses, garlic chains, and her mother's constant supervision, Dracula manages to transform Lucy into a vampire.

The latter portion of the book focuses on Mina, who exhibits strength by resisting Dracula's attacks and providing information about his whereabouts through telepathic trances. Alongside Van Helsing, she tracks Dracula back to his castle, where he is ultimately defeated. Throughout the story, Mina consistently confronts Dracula's advances but is always saved by Van Helsing or her own resilience. In the end, Quincey, Renfield, and all the vampires perish, and the novel concludes with an epilogue depicting Mina surrounded by her loved ones, including a newborn baby named Quincey on her lap. The narrative can be clearly divided into two parts, each highlighting a distinct type of woman.

During the late 19th century, which is known as the Victorian fin-de-siècle period, scientific naturalism emerged as a prominent force, alongside the development of modern psychology as a science that aimed to comprehend the human mind. However, this era also witnessed the rise of interest in Spiritualism and other occult practices among educated individuals, as well as a fascination with folklore, which led to the production of an extensive body of fantasy literature. This thesis examines Bram Stoker's Dracula as an illustration of the discourse that linked science, literature, and the study of the supernatural in Victorian England. The novel, as a product of the scientific period at the end of the 19th century, can be seen as a deliberate exploration of the workings of the mind, particularly the origins of paranoid behaviour. Hence, Stoker's text serves as a testament to the mental disorder known as folie à deux or shared madness.

Chapter 1: The fear of Reverse Colonisation in late-Victorian Era. Bram Stoker's early life and literary production.

1.1. The fear of reverse colonisation

The years from 1870s to World War I have seen the development of a form of militantly expansionist New Imperialism. In particular, the British Empire, expanded, even though States like Russia and France represented a stronger threat to Britain Imperialism, but it is worth mentioning the Bulgarian Crisis of 1876 and the second Afghan War of 1878-80: those two events intensified those threats. Furthermore, the matter became more serious after the 1873 "Great Depression", and the question of Irish Home Rule (a political movement asking for self government for Ireland).

There is much written material on the British Empire during the 19th century. There are many arguments about the reasons behind the empire's expansion, which mostly revolve around supporting, altering or rejecting different versions of the "economic theory of imperialism." These disagreements have resulted in distinctions between various imperialist eras and forms of expansion and domination. The most significant one is probably the distinction between the New Imperialism, which started in the 1880s, and the time between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.

Historians frequently describe the years before the 1960s as characterised by a lack of allusions to imperialism and an anti-imperialist mindset. While historians of a later age accept that the British Empire grew between the 1830s and the 1880s as a period of steady but irregular expansion, they occasionally approach this period as if imperialism had not yet become a major issue.

From a literary perspective, historians have noted, there was in the late Victorian and Edwardian Era a growing tendency to portray such themes. Historians supported this tendency, believing that they were experiencing a shifting between the Old Empire (signalled by the loss of American colonies during the revolution between 1775 and 1783) and a New Imperialism (starting in 1880). This shift also involved some improvements for the subjects of the empire, such as the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery in all British territories by 1834 and the establishment of partial self governments for some colonies.

Recent historians noted that during the Victorian period until 1880 the expansion of Britain went on rapidly. Between 1841 and 1851, Great Britain gained control over many territories, including for instance the Gold Coast, Punjab and Hong Kong. Over the next twenty years it acquired the control over Berar, Oudh, Lagos and Transvaal among the others. Between 1830 and the 1870s there were frequent discussions about the conditions of the "British Empire": most British people during the reign of Queen Victoria (regardless of their age) firmly believed that they were meant to be a "conquering, governing and civilising race" (Brantlinger, 1988; 21). The question of emigration was born in that period (around 1815) and cultured people approved it. Furthermore, the primary areas of white colonisation retained close links to Britain while enjoying some degree of autonomy between 1840 and 1870. On the other hand, attempts by the mostly non-white areas of the Empire to remain independent become scarcer, especially after the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Francis Hutchins believed that the Mutiny played a role in shaping an abiding notion of British dominance in India, which he described as an "illusion of permanence."

Britons felt entitled to colonise other lands, mostly adopting the excuse that other peoples would benefit from the progress, civilisation and Christian religion they meant to export. According to Charles Kingsley (an English writer, lecturer and anglican priest), commerce and colonisation are synonyms of progress, and it's the duty of white (preferably Protestant) people to bring it to underdeveloped populations. Victorians thought that they could expand naturally using goods and Bibles, or guns, if those didn't help. They could go wherever they wanted bringing progress to foreign countries and seeking for new ways to expand their industrial revolution, as well as "their bourgeois-heroic values of self-help and upward mobility" (Brantlinger, 1988; 32). The concept of free trade was central, from their perspective, to turn a non productive country into a productive one. For some intellectuals of the time, free trade was something positive that would bring civilisation in uncivilised areas of the world.

By the end of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras the optimism that characterised these early stages of the Empire is gone. Social doubt became more pressing in the 1870s, as it emerges in many texts of that period.

Ideas such as the utopian concept of imperial "federation," the "service" ideal expounded by Kipling and others, missionary fervour, utilitarian reformism in India in the 1830s, became increasingly subjected to anti-imperialist criticism, as the grim realities of exploitation and genocide became more apparent.

The term “imperialism”, according to Richard Koebner, was used in the 1860s with a precise reference to the French empire of Napoleon III. But from 1830s to 1870s “the colonies” and “colonial interests” were terms of common use.

In opposition to the damaging effects of popular reform and democracy at home, imperialist ideology had retained and fostered a variety of conservative myths during the preceding age of great social confidence, foremost among them the mythology of the English gentleman.

In a story from 1905, Bithia Mary Croker’s “The little brass God”, the author talks about a central feature of the period that goes from 1880 and 1914, a kind of magic that comes from the Orient and is very a disruptive energy, that takes revenge on colonising Occidental countries. In this story, the little statue in brass of a Goddess of destruction cast a curse on a village, bringing misfortune and to its Anglo-Indian possessors. First their pets start killing each other and then people fall ill or get killed. In the end, the statue gets stolen and destroyed. The Imperial Gothic, as the genre has been called, melanges the historical features of the Imperial Age and the literary features of Gothic fiction. Gothic fiction was very popular during late Victorian Era, but the shade of occultism added by the Imperial Gothic shows perfectly the anxieties that were starting to rise during the “climax of the British Empire” (Brantlinger, 1988; 227), and that cultural form is the most significant expression of the anxiety that spread in that period. Imperialism and occultism were considered as some sort of faiths. The former is more of a *political* faith than a religious one and the latter has grown in popularity because, as Janet Oppenheim states: “much of the attraction of these and related subjects depended on the dominant role that science had assumed in modern culture” (Oppenheim, 1985; 160). The fusion of these two “religions” in the imperial Gothic represent a further step in the evolution of society and mentality of the time. The novelists described a pattern of “going native”; this, together with the concept of atavism, describe a regression of society, not a progress.

The term “atavism” was theorised by Joseph Schumpeter, an Austrian economist, and was one of the “greatest fears” of British people in the Victorian Era.

Related to this is the concept of “barbaric invasions” that rises from about 1880. The narrator of Robert Childers’ *Riddle of the Sands* (1903) states: “I have read of men who, when forced by their calling to live for long periods in utter solitude—save for a few black faces—have made it a rule to dress regularly for dinner in order to… prevent a relapse into barbarism.” (15)

The central topics of the imperial Gothic revolve around three main themes: the reversion of the individual to native cultural practices, the invasion of barbarism or demonic elements into civilisation, and the diminution of chances for adventure and heroism in the present era. According to Brantlinger, in some romances (among which we find Bram Stoker's *Dracula*) "the supernatural or paranormal, usually symptomatic of individual regression, often manifests itself in imperial settings" (230). In every imperial gothic story, eventually, the curse coming from an Oriental source of magic is broken thanks to Western technology.

Although imperialism and occultism have similarities with religions, the combination of the two in imperial Gothic art represents a unique phenomenon, rather than a quest for completely new faiths. The depictions of atavism and "going native" patterns by imperialist writers provide long-lasting images of the decline of civilisation, rather than solutions for individuals seeking religious enlightenment.

Imperialism became increasingly racist during the 1870s, partly due to the belief that the bourgeois and aristocracy were losing power over society. Reviving the ideas of nobility and heroism is a recurrent topic among the adventure novels published by many late Victorian and Edwardian authors.

Numerous genres of romance literature that were popular between 1880 and 1914 are linked to the Imperial Gothic. Judith Wilt noticed a link between late Victorian imperialism and the resurrection of Gothic fiction. "In or around December, 1897," she writes, "Victorian gothic changed into Victorian science fiction. The occasion was… Wells's War of the Worlds, which followed by only a few months Bram Stoker's… Dracula." (Brantlinger, 1988; 18)

Judith Halberstam, in her essay *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995), supports the idea of how in the Victorian Era the body became source of a sort of "terror" linked with bodies that they perceived as "different" and became the focus of Gothic fiction. She observes that "Monstrosity (and the fear it gives rise to) is historically conditioned rather than a psychological universal". (Robert Mighall, 1999; 130)

Skin Shows situates its exploration of the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in nineteenth-century British monsters within a broader argument about the limitations of psychoanalytic interpretations of gothic monstrosity. According to Halberstam, psychoanalysis is another form of horror that must be contextualised historically.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's essay *Monster Theory*. In the introduction, he “provides an overview to the theoretical preoccupations of the collection. His seven theses outline the way in which the monster serves as a site of cultural production.” (Goddu, 1999; 4) The “cultural fascination with the monster," Cohen argues, "is born of the twin desire to name that which is difficult to apprehend and to domesticate (and therefore disempower) that which threatens" (Cohen, 1996; VIII).

Several of the essays concentrate on the generation of monsters within particular cultural contexts, such as the unusual duo of Gargantua and Tom Thumb in Stuart England, the portrayal of Saracen alterity in crusade literature, and the relationship between dinosaurs and US consumer capitalism. By examining the cultural significance of each monster, these local histories provide comprehensive explanations of the symbolic frameworks that monsters surpass and the cultural boundaries they violate as they disrupt and define gendered, racial, ethnic, sexual, class, and national identities.

In case indigenous people weren’t fully exterminated by Christianity, affliction, pretension, and genocide, their fate was to be controlled, changed over, saddled to the uncommon wheel of industry comparable to the lean chain bunch Marlow sees at the Heart of Darkness. (Brantlinger, 1988; 18)

“Imperialist discourse is inseparable from racism. Both express economic, political, and cultural domination (or at least wishes for domination), and both grew more virulent and dogmatic as those forms of domination” (Brantlinger, 1988; 39). In late Victorian literature, Dracula was portrayed as a Gothic invader who threatened to establish a necromantic domain of the deceased, challenging the thriving British Empire. Similarly, in Haggard's *She*, Ayesha intends to use the British throne for Queen Victoria's benefit, but her plan is disrupted when she meets her demise in the flames of perpetual youth.

In *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Nina Auerbach agrees with Monster Theory's thesis and the understanding that the monster is "known only through process and movement, never through dissection-table analysis" (Auerbach, 1995; X).

1.2. The Gothic genre in literature

From a literary perspective, the second half of the 18th century witnessed the birth of a new genre: the Gothic. The first book ascribed to the genre was *The Castle of Otranto*

(1764) by Horace Walpole. By the 1790s, the genre saw an expansion: it was one of the most popular ones of the time. It became so important that in the 19th century it influenced many different productions: plays, operas, sensation novels (for women and the working class), poetry and paintings. The late 1890s saw the rebirth of the Gothic, through novels (such as *The picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, *The turn of the screw* by Henry James and *Dracula* by Bram Stoker); in the 1900s films, ghost stories and romance books proliferated. It is now one of the most studied topics in academic criticism.

Gothic fiction has undergone a significant evolution over time. During the Victorian era, it introduced a new setting that deviated from the traditional works of authors like Ann Radcliffe and George W. M. Reynolds. This novel setting was based on the "real world," featuring familiar places that readers could easily identify.

According to Jerrold E. Hogle in his *Cambridge companion of Gothic Fiction*, a recurring theme in Gothic fiction is the concept of a family curse, which is explored in greater detail in the second chapter. Horace Walpole's contribution to this genre was the idea that the sins of the father could be passed down to the children for up to two or three generations. According to David Punter, this theme is among the most significant ones in Gothic fiction.

Overall, Gothic fiction's fluidity and evolution make it a fascinating and complex genre. By incorporating new settings and themes, its authors have been able to create enduring works of literature that captivate readers to this day. Gothic fiction is a literary genre that has evolved.

In *A geography of Gothic fiction*, Robert Mighall dedicates a whole chapter to haunted houses. He splits the theory of haunted houses applied to gothic fiction into two parts: in the first one, the author examines the central aspects of curse narratives and legendary fictions, and demonstrates how these elements were reinterpreted by authors during the mid-century to investigate fresh avenues for malignant fiction. The subsequent section of this work shifts its focus from a psychological and pathological perspective to explore the ways in which the chosen works by Charles Dickens and the Sensation novelists of the 1860s expand upon and scrutinise the themes of ancestral legacy, repetition, and the weight of memory.

As the story unfolds, fresh revelations come to light, revelations that “enlighten the replace […] and superstition but still […] visits its punishment on successive generations” (Mighall, 1999; 81).

Stoker is interested in the decline of the British empire specifically. The critic Carol Senf, among others, noticed the political overtones of Dracula’s trip to Britain and suggested that he manifests "the threat of the primitive trying to colonise the civilised world” (Arata, 1990; 7), while Judith Wilt calls “awful visitation” Dracula’s invasion of Britain and “wilful” penetration of Harker (a British envoy), stressing the opposition between the archaic forces of which the count disposes to threaten the empire of Britain, which is based on science and rationality: it is in fact a specific trait of Gothic fiction to shift constantly between laws of reality and the supernatural. The novel is often referred to as both the "terror of Gothic" and the "horror of Gothic." The former term describes a threat to life and safety, while the latter pertains to the characters' struggle with violence that challenges the norms of life and their beliefs.

Gothic novels were mostly read by the middle classes, and this makes perfect sense. The characters of Gothic fiction often belong to the middle (or upper-middle) class, they are caught in between a past where society was controlled by the aristocracy and the Church and a present menaced by obscure forces that oppose it. Such figures become increasingly important: Sigmund Freud attributes them the meaning of “old, infantile and repressed memories or impulses, the archaic underworld of the self” (Robert Hogle, 2002; 3).

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* participates in the modernising process of the Gothic which occurs at the close of the nineteenth century but, unlike many previous authors of that genre, he sets his novel in the present and in a specific place.

In addition, Stoker's romances may be considered fanciful retellings of invasion-scare stories, another popular literary genre. The theme of the returning prisoner suggests that the imperialist adventure's outward course is reversed in these stories. Dracula is a dream with political connotations about a lone intruder or demonic possession. Not only is Stoker's brutal Count the "final aristocrat," but he also represents the last survivor of a "conquering race”.

Stoker wrote about colonisation in basically all of his works. We can divide his production into two categories: in the first one (exemplified by the anthology “Under the Sunset”), the concept of colonisation is not central to the events that happen, while the second one is composed mainly of Gothic fiction. The first category features legends of French invasions, attacks, a Spanish-American war, Normans invading England and so on. The second category, on the other hand, is more focused on the imperial Gothic, and emphasises atavism, demonism and the supernatural; the female protagonists are associated with the burst of archaic dangerous forces in modern life. A Gothic story is usually set in an antiquated place (or places) that contain some secrets that hunt the characters both in a physical or psychological way. For example, in the case of Dracula, it is the old palace where the Count lives, back in Transylvania, and the threats for Harker come from both the Count himself and the three women Harker meets: he feels menaced by them, their powers, and the understanding that they want to suck his blood and eventually kill him.

Gothic fiction is interesting because it addresses to the anxiety of that period, both from a individual point of view and, in a broader sense, social and cultural ones. Generally speaking, the profound desires and anxieties that the gothic expresses and covers up in "romantic" and exaggerated ways have proven contradictory in western readers. The relation with fears and desires, their explanation through a pattern of disorders and, eventually, deaths, is very frequent in Gothic fiction. These fears and these desires are mainly derived from a crisis that took place by the end of the century. It was the fear of the acceleration of industrialisation, that would lead to a life more linked to the machines. The expansion of the British Empire, then created a mixed society in which British people were forcefully brought in contact with other populations that they wanted to keep separated, even though they depended economically on them. That crisis appears in *Dracula* in the form of “dead undead”: everything is different from what appears and even the dead are not actually dead. This is not intended in a sort of Biblical sense of “life after death”: here, dead people rise from their tombs to drink human blood. Such creature appears in different forms in every Gothic novel and represents human fears and turns them into something external, as something that doesn’t belong completely to us, since they are completely visible outside the human body. The effectiveness of Gothic literature can be credited to its use of symbolic ghosts and terrifying creatures, which enabled individuals during that era to confront the unsettling aspects of change in their current situations. According to Freud, who analysed a German Gothic tale (*The Sandman*, by E. T. A. Hoffman) in his essay *The Uncanny* (1919), these ghosts and strange, unfamiliar figures are an expression of psychological and familiar fears.

For the French therapist Julia Kristeva the “uncanny” we can find in the Gothic literature comes in the form of repressed human impulses; ghosts and the supernatural in general, are created to represent something that Kristeva defines abject, meaning that we throw off everything that is ambiguous in ourselves as human beings, our contradictions and fears.

The Gothic also has to deal with the excesses of the social class it represents: characters such as Mr. Hyde, Dorian Gray and Count Dracula serve for this purpose.

(Jarrod Hogle, 2002; 9)

More recently, critics have started to look at Gothic novels from a feminist perspective: the Gothic has dealt with "gender distinctions" and "boundaries between genders" (Jarrod Hogle, 2002; 9). Women are figures that are most easily trapped by the impulses and contradictions displayed in those novels. In *Dracula*, two of the main characters are women: Lucy and Mina, and they are both under the Count's influence: Lucy is turned into a vampire, in a painful process that nobody but professor Van Helsing can link to the powers of a vampire, and Mina is almost turned into a vampire herself and is often treated as a fragile person, too fragile (yet at the same time important as a stenographer) to take part in the men's activities.

Additional studies led to distinctions between a more psychological kind of Gothic terror in female Gothic fiction and a more "graphic" horror in male Gothic novels. In *Dracula*, for example, Jonathan Harker experiences real fear, a profound sense of horror, in the castle of the Count, especially when the three women try to seduce him and suck his blood.

The opposition man-woman is just one of the many oppositions that we can find in Gothic fiction. In *Dracula*, for example, we find questions of gender identity, sexual orientation, the mingling between different races and social classes. Concerning *Dracula*, critics advanced some hypothesis of the sexual orientation about some characters and the sexual connotations of some actions: in the original version, the Count can produce blood in its breasts and the act of sucking blood through someone's skin after puncturing it with sharp canines can be assimilated to something phallic (Jarrod Hogle, 2002; 9). Freud himself, while analysing the uncanny presences in Gothic fiction talked about the fact that this disturbing elements are produced by human familiarity with psychological drives we have as children, in the case of a man the desire of the mother that can result in the wrath of the father.

The other important genre employed by Stoker was very popular in the late Victorian era: the travel narrative. It deals with the concept of boundaries (both physical and psychical, as it will be shown) and how fragile they are. Stoker uses these genres to emphasise the problems related to the boundaries on which Britain depended and by doing so he can investigate British culture. Vampires move and break boundaries both by displacing themselves from one place to another (this is possible also due to the vampire's ability to transform into different animals) and by attacking other people, violating their bodies and minds by feeding on their blood and using their power to put human beings in a situation of distress (as it happens to Harker in Castle Dracula).

The theme of invasion and the concept of violating the boundaries are also evident from a linguistic perspective. The story begins in Transylvania, a place in which different populations and different languages meet and where German is the common language, Dracula himself is willing to learn English: he is well aware that he will be a foreigner in England and he doesn’t want the language to be an obstacle in his voyage.

The Count and Mina are linked by another common characteristic from the linguistic point of view. *Dracula*, in fact, is a very important novel because it displays very different kind of technologies: letters, diaries, the phonograph, pages of journal and transcriptions. Different techniques of communication are displayed, including the most advanced ones for the time. Mina is an able stenographer (she translates Harker’s diary in current English), she can use many different technical tools for communicating, while on the other hand Dracula is a polyglot in the most traditional sense. Mina is the person who understands Dracula’s thoughts and by the end of the novel her ability to know where the count is, and what he’s thinking increases; this will be the turning point for the story, what will allow the characters to defeat the Count.

In her article entitled *Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's “Dracula”*, Judith Halberstam dedicates a section to antisemitism in Gothic literature. “In *Dracula*”, she states, “vampires are precisely a race and family that weakens the stock of Englishness by passing on degeneracy and the disease of blood lust” (Halberstam, 1993; 9). The link with antisemitism comes because in its various forms it brings together and reproduces diverse forms of threat, encompassing those tied to capital and revolution, criminality and impotence, sexual power and gender ambiguity, and money and mind, within a coherent entity, namely, the body of the Jew.

Dracula represents a turning point for vampiric tradition. The association with Transylvania begins with it: Stoker stated that originally he drew inspiration from Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* (1872), but then decided to move the setting from Styria to a place with a different meaning for 1897 readers. By moving Castle Dracula in Transylvania, Stoker wanted to give his Gothic story a political background: the Carpathians are the perfect setting for the story because, as the Count himself states, his homeland was invaded by different populations (Greeks, Romans, Huns, Avars, Magyars, Turks, Slavs, French and Germans). Dracula never states openly which “race” he belongs to: he mentions his past as a Szekely warrior and his present as a vampire, but nothing more. This opens the correlation between being a vampire and a conqueror, and that’s why vampires here are different from the tradition: Polidori and Le Fanu depicted their vampires as pale and unnerved, while Stoker characterised Dracula as vigorous and energetic. A vampiric attack here can initially make the victims stronger too. Lucy Westenra, after each time Dracula feeds on her blood, initially seems stronger, her eyes look brighter and her skin gains more colour. Harker, on the other hand, is the perfect representation of the British man: he’s pale and looks weak. Harker becomes weaker while the book goes on (his hair turns white, he becomes increasingly pale and so on), while Dracula becomes more vigorous, his hair becomes darker and it’s repeated many times that he looks younger, presumably after nourishing himself.

Dracula represents the nobleman as a warrior, in life and after his death he can be seen as a conqueror. The vampire “race” is for Stoker the most powerful of the warrior “races” inhabiting Transylvania, and conflict was, in fact, common. In the same years *Dracula* was being written, for instance, there was the massacre of Armenians perpetrated by Turks (1894-1896). Vampires are generated by racial weakness and lack of vitality of an empire, not the other way around. The late Victorian terror of reverse colonisation is embodied by Harker who pictures semi-demons colonising humans and territories, and the fact that the Count needs blood embodies both (the vampire's need for food and the warrior’s desire for conquest). His attacks aim more at making people lose their identity, which means the colonisation is to be intended as a colonisation of the body: Count Dracula does not destroy his victims’ bodies, but rather he changes them so that a person who is turned into a vampire regresses to a primitive status. According to John Allen Stevenson in his essay of 1988 *A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula*, blood is a sign of racial identity and Dracula deprives his victims of their previous identities and gives them a new one.

1.3. *Dracula* and the Protestant Work Ethic

Franco Moretti and Carol Senf have paid much attention to labor in *Dracula*, referring to Marx’s: "Capital is dead labor which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks" (Marx, 1: 342).

Moretti says that Dracula is “a true monopolist: solitary and despotic”.

The concept of hard work is strictly related to the Protestant religion and to the “Call”.

According to Weber, the calling was not only "a task set by God," but a “life task, a definite field in which to work” (79).

For Max Weber, this idea emerged from the Protestant Reformation. Although Martin Luther played a crucial role in popularising the concept of calling through his translation of the Bible, the development of a diligent work ethic rooted in religious calling was significantly advanced by Calvinism and other denominations of the Protestant faith. The Protestant ethic is deeply rooted in a primal fear.

Dracula appears to evoke a sense of ancient religious fervour, pitting the forces of good against evil and the supernatural, yet it may ultimately be as irrational and profane as the spirit of capitalism itself.

The ethic of work is embodied by the “Crew of Light”, the group of men that investigates on the case of Dracula and eventually kills the Count. This ethic of work is represented, according to Eric Kwan-Wai Yu, by “industry, asceticism, rationalism, and a solemn sense of duty”(Kwan-Wai Yu, 2006; 6).

Van Helsing embodies the triumph of the Enlightenment and the transcendental subjectivity, while vampirism represents the violence of reason itself and can be seen as a sign of the return of the repressed and the uncanny, which cannot be accommodated within the rational order of things.

When discussing the "Calling," Van Helsing employs the language of Protestantism, invoking the idea of divine vocation and alluding to the concept of the Elect. He cautions Mina that she is already affected by Dracula, and thus it is imperative that they destroy the count, as failure would result in Mina becoming the Undead. The task is also perceived as a divine mission to save all of humanity.

With a profound sense of "calling" arising from the deepest fear, the Crew of Light naturally develops a heightened sense of urgency and stricter abstinence. The usual Protestant work ethic is characterised by a sense of dislocation and dissonance. Ascetic hard work, typically associated with industrial and commercial settings, is relocated to the realm of Dracula, where it takes on a distinctly Gothic atmosphere, both geographically and psychologically.

1.4. Brief biography of Bram Stoker and early works

Dracula (1897) is the most famous novel by the Irish writer Bram Stoker.

Little do we know about Stoker's childhood. He was born on 8th November 1847 in Dublin, the third child of Abraham Stoker (a Civil Servant who worked in Dublin Castle) and Charlotte Stoker (born Thornley). He spent most of his childhood ill, laying in bed, and was not able to walk until the age of seven. We don't know anything of the nature of this illness, but the recovery was complete, so much so that Stoker could become an athlete who competed for his University. The impact of his early childhood on his work is evident: a constant state of forced sleep, wake, a body laying still waiting to rise again. We can therefore say that Dracula mirrors in some sense Stoker's early years: an illness no one could explain, a sudden recovery and unusual cures. Once he recovered from his illness, Stoker enrolled at a private religious school in Dublin and then at Trinity College.

After graduation, he worked with his father as a civil servant in Dublin Castle**.** In 1878, Stoker married a girl from Clontarf, and a year later, the couple had their only child, a son named Noel. In December of the same year, he joined Henry Irving as the acting manager of the Lyceum Theatre in London. He worked as a factotum for Irving for the next twenty-seven years.

He was very interested in the theatre and in fact *Dracula* is a novel filled with very "visual" details and remarkable scenes.

Among the celebrities met in this period, was Sir Richard Burton, a famous orientalist, the translator of the Arabian Nights and also of a book of Indian vampire stories.

Stoker's first fictional book is a collection of short stories for children (dedicated to his son) entitled *Under the Sunset*. The themes that appear in this collection are repeated in all his subsequent work. The first short story worth discussing in relation to *Dracula* is called *How 7 went mad*.

It is about a schoolboy named Tineboy and his lame pet raven, Mr. Daw. When Tineboy was in school doing his sums one day, he was attempting to get his pet raven to come in through the window rather than paying attention to what he was doing. His problem was to multiply 117, 649 by seven. After struggling, he said: "I wish number seven had never been invented." Tineboy turned very sleepy and had a dream in which his teacher was about to tell the story about how number 7 went mad. In the story told by the teacher, number 7 is mortal bad**.** We don't think he'll ever live through it. He was foaming at the mouth and quite mad. The nurse from the grammar village was holding him by the hand, trying to bleed him. The foot-smith, the man who puts the feet on the letters and numbers to make them able to stand upright without wearing out, was holding down the poor demented number, who is visited by a doctor through many different devices (the stethescope, telescope, microscope and even the horoscope) After this examination, the doctor interrogated No. 7 and found out that what made him mad was being "wrong added, wrong divided, wrong subtracted, and wrong multiplied." By the end of the teacher's story, No. 7 got better.

In this story, Stoker addresses for the first time the theme of madness, the psychiatrist and the insane asylum, the sleep disturbances, and the constant feeling of approaching horror. In Dracula, the character of Renfield is the mad man who is committed to an insane asylum and is eventually killed. Renfield, the madman, compares himself to Cain's son. It is believed that the mark of Cain was on the forehead. At the beginning of the novel, Dracula is hit in the forehead with a shovel and receives a scar. Mina also has a scar on her forehead.

Another short story contained in the anthology “Under the Sunset” in which critics have found similarities with *Dracula* is called “The Wondrous Child” (1881).

This is the story of a village of husbandmen who live a happy life in their house by the edge of a cliff. The lord of the manor has three children, Sibold and May, the protagonists of the story, and a baby boy with no name. Sibold and May are very fond of each other and spend a lot of time playing together and exploring the surrounding area. They spend a lot of time near a great weeping willow, playing, eating and taking naps. One day, after eating their lunch, they fall asleep and dream of a land in which flowers are as big as trees and huge lily flowers. Here, Mary expresses the desire to find a child, and as she makes that wish, they hear a baby crying: they find the source of that crying and decide to keep him, starting to discuss which of them should take him. Eventually, they became like a mother and a father to this child. Mary sings to him a lullaby and feeds him with the milk of a cow when he starts crying.

Together with the baby, they start to explore this land filled with perils (a Crocodile, a Shark, a Bird of Prey): they risk to be attacked, but as those animals see the baby (who can speak even though he’s just an infant), they withdraw.

The final threat is represented by a dragon: all the animals try and protect the baby (who is now addressed to as Wondrous because of his ability to submit animals), but the dragon quells too.

Similarities with *Dracula* include for instance the ability of both Count Dracula and the Child protagonist of the short story to tame beasts, their being called “wondrous” and the theme of sleep disturbances.

1.5. Dracula: a brief summary

The author stated that the idea for Dracula came to him in the summer of 1885, when, after eating too much-dressed crab for dinner and having consequent food poisoning, he had a nightmare in which a vampire king raised from the coffin he used as a bed. Inspired by this dream, he started writing the first draft and finished it by the autumn of the same year, although it was not printed and published until 1897 (Bierman, 1972; 2).

The story begins with the diary of a young barrister, Jonathan Harker, who is travelling from London to Transylvania (now in Romania), to meet with Count Dracula, who hired him to buy a house in England. Harker has been hired to arrange for the shipment by boat of fifty great boxes of earth to London. Soon, strange things start to happen: he notices that the Count's grip is very strong despite his (apparent) old age, then he notices Dracula doesn't cast any reflection in the little mirror Harker uses to shave and, one day, the Count makes him the strange request to write three letters and to postdate them. Harker only slowly realises that Dracula is a vampire who plans to leave him imprisoned in Castle Dracula with the company of three women (presumably his wives) while he sails for England. Dracula leaves, but Harker manages to escape to Budapest where he is put in a hospital suffering from brain fever. Dracula's arrival is marked by a horrible storm and he immediately starts to turn a young woman, Lucy Westenra, into a vampire: as a consequence, she starts to walk in her sleep. Although she becomes increasingly weak and pale, her blood analysis doesn't show any particular illness. Her canine teeth though become elongated and sharp. The diagnosis baffles a close friend of hers and rejected suitor, Dr. John Seward, a psychiatrist, who runs an asylum in London. Dr. Seward calls in his former teacher, a specialist in rare diseases, Dr. Abraham van Helsing, from Holland. Van Helsing is also puzzled at first but, after he sees two small wounds on Lucy's neck, he realises that she is the victim of a vampire. He commences to treat her with blood transfusions and garlic, but these cures turn out to be ineffective. Dracula succeeds in drawing too much lifeblood from her. After her death, she in turn becomes a vampire. Van Helsing with difficulty persuades Dr Seward and two others, Quincey Morris, another rejected suitor, and Lucy's fiancée, Arthur

Holmwood, that Lucy is now a vampire who is victimising young children. Together, they cure her of her vampirism through "operations of life and death" in which they drive a stake through her heart and cut off the head with a "post-mortem knife." Mina Murray, Lucy’s best friend and Harker’s fiancée, is summoned to Budapest by Jonathan's nurse before Lucy's death. There, she marries him and brings him back to London. While a prisoner in Castle Dracula, Harker has kept a diary and hands it to Dr Van Helsing, who reads it**.** The physician realises that Dracula is the very same vampire who had bled Lucy.

Further investigation reveals that Dracula has rented an old house adjacent to Dr. Seward's insane asylum. One of Dr Seward's patients is Mr. Renfield, who suffers from a strange and interesting illness, "zoophagous mania." He eats flies, and spiders that have eaten the flies, and even birds that have eaten the spiders, but he vomits the birds up. He keeps a notebook in which he jots down columns of figures about his prey. He becomes agitated at night. Renfield falls under Dracula's spell and finally affords Dracula entrance to the madhouse where Mina and Jonathan Harker are now staying as guests of Dr Seward. While Van Helsing, Harker, Seward, Morris and Holmwood are out searching for Dracula, the vampire is beginning to make Mina his next victim. This becomes apparent when Van Helsing is immunising everyone in the group by touching their foreheads with a holy wafer. Mina's forehead is burnt by the Host, leaving her with a red scar. The only way to cure Mina before she turns into a vampire like Lucy is to find and kill Dracula. The chase begins. Dracula gets cornered but escapes and books a passage on a ship back to Transylvania. The group followed by the Orient Express across Europe. At the last possible moment before sunset, they kill Dracula in a great box of earth with the battlements of Castle Dracula in the background. At the moment of his death, the scar on Mina's forehead disappears. She has fully recovered, and no trace of her illness remains.

Chapter 2: Love and sexuality in *Dracula*

2.1. Social turmoils in Victorian Era

Bram Stoker's professed feminism made it possible for *Dracula* to embody Victorian dreams concerning sex roles and repression. This sexual repression and Stoker's feminism are inserted perfectly in *Dracula* and particularly are represented by the character of Mina, that is the "most feminine when aping masculine pseudo-rationality and eighteenth-century gentlemanly stoicism" (Demetrakopoulos, 1977; 2).

As was shown in the previous chapter, the Victorian Era was a period of great political turmoils and fears.

But at the time there were also social turmoils, such as the fear of women's rebellion, of sexual transgressions (such as homosexuality, which was considered indecency). All those concerns are expressed in Gothic literature through all the monsters, ghosts and creatures.

Eric Kwan-Wai Yu, in his essay *Productive Fear: Labor, Sexuality, and Mimicry in Bram Stoker's Dracula* develops the thesis of "Productive Fear" first introduced by Nicholas Daly. He states that vampirism takes the form of a "sexual menace or a dreadful perception of sexual perversity". (Kwan-Wai Yu, 2006; 4)

John Allen Stevenson analyses the sexual competition between characters from the perspective "of that frequent antagonist of psychoanalysis, anthropology" (John Allen Stevenson, 1988, 2).

Eros and horror mix in some scenes. The most emblematic one is in Harker's diary when he meets the three vampiric women: he's attracted by their sensuality but at the same time he's revulsed by their blood-like smell and their "animal-like liking" (Eric Kwan-Wai Yu, 2006; 4), as he lays paralysed he is in a "languorous ecstasy" (Stoker, 42). The arrival of the Count stops the three women from sucking his blood and, eventually, killing him. He brought with him a child that he offered to the women in exchange for Harker. This is a scene that is at once erotic and repulsing. The exchange of words between Dracula and the three women (possibly his three wives) about the

Count’s incapability of loving someone (Dracula says: “This man belongs to me”; to which one of the three women replies “You yourself never loved; you never love” and the count final statement is: “Yes, I too can love; you can tell it from the past”. Stoker, 43) suggests the possibility of polygamy and bisexuality. The perversion of group sex is also noted by Stephanie Demetrakopoulos, that noted how all the other men surrounded Arthur in something that she defines as a “rather voyeuristic brotherhood as he pounds the stake into Lucy” (Demetrakopoulos, 1977; 3). Other examples of this “group orgy” are provided by the character of Lucy. When three men propose to her on the same day, she confesses (with shame) to Mina that she wished it was possible to marry all three. A further example is provided by the episode when Harker meets the three vampire women at castle Dracula. Harker finds himself an accomplice of that scene, witnessing it with a sense of guilt and fear. The role of those women in Dracula’s life is not clear. Some critics, like Craft and Richardson, believe that they are the Count’s daughters, Carol Frye states that they’re his wives, and Leonard Wolf calls them “the Count's beautiful brides” (Stevenson, 1988, 6), C. F. Bentley says that they’re either his daughters or his sisters. The difficulty in establishing who these women are comes from a possibility that has not been considered by the majority of readers: that is “the possibility that Dracula's relation to these women has […] changed, that they have occupied both roles […]” (Stevenson, 1988, 6). Thus, Dracula's relationship with women is transformed by the economy of vampiric sexuality. Vampires not only associate reproduction with eating but also associate sexual partners and offspring. The process via which "wives" become daughters is incredibly accelerated; penetration, sexual activity, conception, pregnancy, and birthing are all integrated into one seamless action. John Carwelti explains that “Stoker dreamt of the episode of Harker swooning as the vampire women assault him, suggesting a male desire to assume passivity at the hands of an aggressive woman” (Demetrakopoulos, 1977; 4). Therefore we can consider that “Harker is clearly a projection of Stoker himself” (Demetrakopoulos, 1977; 4).

At the outset of the book, the reader is introduced to Harker's yearning for a spirited female companion. This desire is conspicuously evident when he is confronted by three captivating and high-born vampire women. In the early chapters of the novel, Harker's longing for an energetic female counterpart is made manifest as he comes face-to-face with the three enchanting and aristocratic vampire ladies. As he captures their attention, he strikes a pose that could make any maiden swoon and playfully peeks out at them through his lashes, leaving them mesmerised. Harker tells us of the blonde girl’s "deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive"; he seems to wait for the consummation "in languorous ecstasy" (p. 48). This is important because in the Victorian period, only lower-class women were believed to enjoy sex. But Dracula's women are "Ladies by their dress and manner" (as Harker describes them).

The Victorian era's vampire women's striking rejection of motherhood must have captivated men of the time. Motherhood was viewed as the defining characteristic of a "good" woman during that period, and the vampire women's disinterest in anything beyond sexual exploitation and their willingness to sacrifice children to fulfill their desires inverted the core aspect of "good" Victorian womanhood, which was maternal devotion.

In Victorian times this “closeness” of mothers and children became almost unnatural. Parental projection of ego onto children can have devastating consequences. In some cases, it has resulted in a wave of suicides caused by shame and fear of punishment.

The violation of virtuous women is another significant fantasy in the minds of Victorian men, as evidenced by Dracula's aggressive behavior towards their esteemed and idealised partners.

“According to Jung”, Demetrakopoulos writes, “in dreams our shadows act out our unspeakable and most deeply represses our desires” (Demetrakopoulos, 1977; 6)

Many reviewers have perceived the challenge posed by the New Woman to Victorian patriarchy in both *She* and *Dracula*. The demons represented in those novels “threaten to subvert the Empire and invade Britain are of both sexes and come in many guises.” (Brantlinger, 1988; 18)

The individual cherishes the remembrance of the woman from the 1850s, while also holding Mina in high regard, as she embodies the qualities of the "New Woman" of the 1890s. Lucy, on the other hand, is portrayed as a fair-haired, delicate, porcelain-like individual with a limited degree of intellectual capacity, epitomising the conventional notion of femininity. In contrast, Mina is characterised by her "man's brain, a brain that a man should have were he much gifted, and a woman's heart" (p. 26)

In the concluding portion of the book, Mina employs her telepathic trances to confront Dracula, and she pinpoints his location in Transylvania by identifying it during her trances. One of the most captivating scenes in the novel showcases Mina's unwavering efforts to ward off Dracula's advances. Through her trances, Mina successfully thwarts Dracula's attempt to establish a connection with her, obliging her to drink his blood like "a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (p. 313). This metaphor is intriguing as it positions Mina's sexuality at a prepubescent level, which is infantile in fact, and reflects Stoker's consistent portrayal of virtuous women as decarnalized and non-sexual. Nevertheless, Mina clearly recalls the events and narrates them with disgust, whereas Lucy only has indistinct dream-like memories and the assault itself remains unrecorded for both the reader and her.

Furthermore, Mina plays a pivotal role in the Count's demise. She collaborates closely with Van Helsing and impresses him deeply with her intelligence. Conversely, he earns her admiration for his courage: ”his mouth is set as firmly as a conqueror's; even in his sleep he is instinct with resolution" (p. 398).

Although Bram Stoker wrote Dracula during a time of feminist awakening in the Victorian era, it is possible that his personal experiences influenced his depiction of Mina. For instance, Stoker's mother, Charlotte, was a feminist who advocated for women's suffrage. In addition, the author had female confidants like actress Helen Barry and was friends with esteemed actress Ellen Terry. These relationships suggest that Stoker held professional and talented women in high regard. In fact, he credited his marriage to Florence Balcombe to her intelligence and thirst for knowledge.

However, despite its exploration of sexual pathology, Dracula falls short of psychological profundity due to its persistent dichotomy between sexual passion (evil) and sexual innocence (good). Moreover, Stoker's insistence on the necessity of death for women who succumb to Dracula's sexual charms and allow him to dictate their will and morality is problematic. These women are redeemed and restored to purity and morality only when the stake is driven through their hearts, thereby reinforcing the binary distinction between good and evil.

John Allen Stevenson in his essay *A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula* draws the connection between love, marriage and possession in *Dracula*. By the end of the novel, when Mina is partially transformed into a vampire by the Count, she implores her husband to kill her in case the transformation becomes complete, saying: “It is men's duty towards those whom they love” (Stoker, 336) to kill women (in particular the loved ones) to prevent them from falling into the enemy’s hands. Here, Stevenson wonders why it is better for women to be killed than to fall. In the case of *Dracula*, he states that Mina asks so ardently for this particular kind of “euthanasia” not to prevent her from being captured by the Count (for she has already caught the interest of the vampire), but to avoid the risk of following him of her own free will. The nature of this competition for women is not certain, but the most popular theory can be found in Freud’s work: according to this school of thought, *Dracula* is an anticipation of the theory of the “primal horde”, advanced by the Austrian psychoanalyst about fifteen years later in his work *Totem and Taboo* (1913). According to this interpretation, the count wants to “conquer” all the women, leaving the younger generation of men “no recourse but to rise up and kill the wicked “father", thus freeing the women for themselves” (Stevenson, 1988; 2). Stevenson’s essay sees about competition in *Dracula* in a psychoanalytical and anthropological sense, in particular concerning incest: on this topic, the two disciplines diverge a lot. The essay tries to prove that, contrary to the anthropological convictions of the time that believed human beings to be obsessed with incest, in *Dracula*, the Count is not seen as a father, but as an invader, as Mina and other characters keep repeating throughout the novel. It means that we should reconsider the way Stoker deals with love more in “terms of interracial sexual competition rather than as intrafamilial strife” (Stevenson, 1988; 2).

The regulation of sexuality is a particularly important concept in the context of group identity.

Despite all of its obvious oddities, what's remarkable about vampire sexuality is how similar it is to human sexuality, that is, human sexuality in which the psychological or metaphorical becomes concrete or tangible. This is true even if vampires reproduce differently. Although it can appear odd at first, it frequently presents an inaccurate picture of how individuals act and go about their everyday lives. Dracula’s strife for self-preservation (that is proper of human beings too) and for the preservation of the species can be satisfied at the same time, and that’s why Dracula is so terrifying. This seeming paradox most likely captures the nuanced nature of how one culture reacts to another's sexual traditions.

The union of a vampire with another species is made official through blood: when Lucy falls ill because Dracula is sucking her blood, Doctor Seward, Van Helsing and Mr Holmwood “are desperate to transfuse their blood into Lucy because they understand that sexual intercourse with a vampire deracinate” (Stevenson, 1988; 7).

The critics who discuss Vampirism in Stoker’s novel state that the seduction constitutes a symbol of the corruption of English womanhood. The primary scenario in question is exceedingly inhumane and raises ethical issues. In Jennifer Wicke's viewpoint, the group is engaged in a "sexual pursuit." Arthur Holmwood, Lucy's fiancé, disfigured her corpse in the churchyard, which Van Helsing, Morris, and Seward witnessed.

2.2. Technologies of Monstrosity

Judith Halberstam in her essay Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's "Dracula" (1993) analyses the technologies of monstrosity also applied to sexuality, starting from Foucault's theory:

> the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power (History of Sexuality, 1976; 105-106)

Even if Foucault does not take into consideration specifically Gothic novels as "strategies of knowledge and power", Halberstam considers it to be an important part of the "network of sexuality" (3). He also identifies some feature of psychoanalysis such as, for instance, the hysterical woman, as "inventions of sex's technologies" (Halberstam, 1993; 3). Dracula embodies sexuality with his figure that is perceived as seductive and fertile.

The narrative of *Dracula* depicts the threat of the monster as sexual, psychological, class-bound and gendered.

The technology of the vampire's monstrosity, she continues, is connected with the novel's production. A correlation can be found between sexuality and the reading and the transcribing of the various media through which the story is told. Reading a diary or listening to the phonographic recordings of specific events for a prolonged time creates a deep connection between people: at the same time, it is different from the violent sexuality of vampires but they agree in identifying it as a threat to be eradicated, making common front through the written or recorded text. Van Helsing, Lord Godalming, Quincey Morris, Renfield, and Dracula are only heard through their recorded voices. Interestingly, three of these characters are foreigners: Van Helsing is Dutch, Quincey Morris is American, and Dracula is from Eastern Europe. Lord Godalming, while likely of English descent, belongs to a different social class, as he is an aristocrat. Renfield, on the other hand, is depicted as insane, and his subjective experiences are always represented by Dr. Seward.

The novel delves into the intricate interplay between reading, writing, and sexuality, particularly in the context of middle-class British society. It reveals that a select group of professionals, including doctors, psychiatrists, and lawyers, hold sway over the production of sexual identities. Writing, in this regard, becomes a potent tool for exerting control and power over individuals, while reading is subject to censorship and authoris ation, as it represents the acquisition of knowledge. The novel highlights these themes through the experiences of various characters, such as Mina and Dracula, who are both subject to different forms of control and suppression. Ultimately, the text demonstrates how the production and dissemination of knowledge is a complex and often contested process, with significant implications for individual and collective identity formation.

A Freudian theory deals with the “sexual connotations of Stoker’s vampire story” (Demetrakopoulos, 1977; 3) and is also connected with the sexual connotation dealt by C. F. Bentley’s "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's Dracula” of 1988 in which the author traces incest between his three sisters/ daughters, adulterous relationships (as have been seen in the moment when several men give their blood to make Lucy feel better), a “forced quasi-fellatio” when Dracula forces Mina to drink his blood, other than the so-called *droit du seigneur* assertions of Dracula.

The theme of incest is thus proposed: all vampires can be considered as kins since they are “created” by the same person, so they seek reproduction with always a new partner. Rather, because of his distinct physiology, Dracula is forced to pilfer women in other countries from the men to whom they are married or engaged, he’s obliged to “steal” them in order to make the species proliferate. "Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them, you and others shall yet be mine" (Stoker, 312), the Count himself confesses to Van Helsing and the group of people who are hunting him. Dracula is considered frightening in two senses: he is both a powerful and mysterious man who comes from abroad and as such he is seen as monstrous, and, more importantly, he is an imperialist who invades a country for a sexual purpose. He is a man who will take wives away from their husbands to make them his own.

Through the lens of Dracula as a technology of monstrosity, this analysis aims to assert a certain level of productivity within the text, ultimately leading to various interpretive avenues. However, it is important to note that the concept of monstrosity in the novel is not consistently fluid. Occasionally, it takes on a discernible shape and form, during which time Dracula's characteristics become more easily recognisable and evocative.

The sexuality of vampires embodies a fusion of power and femininity within the same physical form and is further distinguished by its otherworldly nature. Dracula is a complex and multifaceted character who transforms innocent and chaste women into seductive beings, while simultaneously generating sexual desire through their willing participation. The transformations of Lucy and Mina highlight the urgency of their sexual appetites, which are mirrored in the aggressive behavior of the three women who attack Harker at Castle Dracula.

When Mina Harker falls under Dracula's influence, he perverts her maternal tendencies. The woman who, during the day, tends to the needs of the men around her, by night imbibes blood from the very heart of the Vampire King himself: "Her nightdress was smeared with blood and a thin stream trickled down the bare breast which was shown by his tor-open dress" (298).

The technology of Gothic fiction *gothicises* certain bodies turning monstrosity into a matter of race, class, gender. Sometimes it's a mixture of all of these. Judith Halberstam states that gothicisation "is a generic feature of many nineteenth-century human sciences" (Halberstam, 1993; 18). "Even though monogamous heterosexuality appears to triumph", Halberstam states, "the boy is as much the son of Dracula as he is of the band of men" (400) after whom he is named" (Halberstam, 1993; 18).

2.3. *Dracula* in cinema

It is noteworthy that there is no distinct film genre denominated "Gothic cinema". Although Gothic features, such as images, plots, characters, and styles, are often categorized under the broader horror genre, they do not constitute a specific genre. Consequently, the film industry has had to classify them under the catch-all category of "terror and spookiness". However, viewers are capable of identifying Gothic fiction when they encounter it. If we were to define the Gothic genre, it would encompass the association between eighteenth-century heroines in decaying castles, Romantic wanderers and truth-seekers, nineteenth-century ghosts and vampires, and the more recent presence of aliens (cyborgs and slashers, among others). Two remarkable examples of Hollywood Gothic are Tod Browning's "Dracula" and James Whale's "Frankenstein", both of which were released in 1931. These films laid the groundwork for the future of Gothic films and continue to be influential. In the expression of Gothic elements, humans are often overwhelmed and confined by the space, which seems to press down on them, while the monstrous undead dominates the space with its superior position.

The history of cinema owes a lot to Dracula. Over the years, many movies have been produced having for subject the Count-vampire. From *Nosferatu* (1922), usually remembered because of the plagiarism suit filed (and eventually won) by Stoker's heirs, to *Dracula Untold*, through animated series dedicated to secondary characters such as the retelling *Van Hellsing* (inspired by the homonym manga) and even comic sketches such as the one by the Italian comic trio Aldo, Giovanni e Giacomo in the movie *Tre uomini e una gamba*, *Dracula* has always been a fertile ground for remakes and retellings.

One of the most popular is *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1993)by Francis Ford Coppola with, among the others, Gary Oldman in the role of the Vampire, Keanu Reeves as Jonathan Harker and Winona Ryder as Mina Murray-Harker.

The main focus of this adaptation (that differs from the original in some points that will be discussed later on) is the erotic love: every scene is treated in a much more explicit way than that presented in the book.

The plot serves this purpose, therefore is slightly different from the one of the book. The movie begins with the story of the Count and how he turned into a vampire: in 1462, after conquering Constantinople, the Turks arrive in Europe and threaten Romania. The most powerful Romanian knight, Vlad Draculea (also known as "the impaler") rises to defend his country. When he comes back from war, he finds out his beloved wife committed suicide because she received a letter warning her that her husband died on the battlefield. Considering his wife the only positive thing about his life, and since she is condemned to eternal damnation because she committed suicide, the Count, blinded by rage, denies God and the Church that he had defended during the war, therefore transforming into a vampire.

After this prelude, there is a shift in time and place, in London in 1897 to be exact. This part follows the path of the book, introducing the character of Jonathan Harker, a young lawyer that is commissioned by the enterprise for which he works to go to Transylvania to sell a series of houses to the Count. When Harker arrives, Dracula asks him to write a letter to his girlfriend (which the count recognises to be a reincarnation of his wife Elisabeta) back in London, and make arrangements for the delivery to occur the following month. Soon enough, Harker understands he's a prisoner in the Count's household. During the period he spends there, three women hunt him (even sexually), making him question his sanity, alternating moments of mental stability and despair. There, the young lawyer finds out the terrifying nature of his host, firstly by seeing him easily crawling on the outer wall of the building and then spotting him laying in a coffin from which he abruptly raises every night with a leap.

So Dracula embarked on a ship bound for London, utilising one of its many animal forms to adapt to the changing circumstances. During the voyage he kills the whole crew of the boat *Demeter*.

With the arrival of the boat in Great Britain, a younger looking Dracula starts influencing Mina introducing himself with his real name and title, Prince Vlad, and succeeds in seducing her. In the meantime Mina's best friend, the aristocratic Lucy Westenra (who is about to get married with Lord Arthur Holwood) is constantly drained of her blood by the Count, that feeds like that so that he can grant his rejuvenation. Lucy asks doctor Jack Seward (one of her suitors before she decided to marry Holmwood) to help her. He calls his old mentor, Professor Abraham Van Helsing, that knows where the "illness" comes from and uses various cures to neutralise it. Doctor Seward is the director of the asylum of Carfax Abbey, where Renfield is hospitalised. Renfield used to work for the same company as Harker, that substituted him after the arrival of his madness, derived from a trip in Transylvania.

When Harker manages to escape Castle Dracula, he seeks help in a monastery, where the nuns write to Mina, informing her of what happened. Despite her infatuation for Prince Vlad, Mina reaches Jonathan and marries him.

After Mina's departure, to nourish himself Dracula sucks Lucy's blood until he kills her. Van Helsing comprehends that the enemy he has to face is the one he has been chasing for a long time and so, together with Doctor Seward, Lord Arthur and Quincey Morris enters the grave of the girl to kill the vampire she has become, "freeing" her from the malediction that turned her into an undead.

To find the vampire, the group enters the church that Dracula uses as a base, destroying all the coffins full of earth from Transylvania that the Count needs when he is far from home. Dracula, obliged to flee, materialises in the asylum and kills his servant, Renfield, who had betrayed Dracula, warning Mina to flee from the Count in order to save herself. She was moved away by Seward, but the Count managed to find her anyway and he crawled into her bed. He was initially reluctant to "vampirize" her because he did not want to condemn her to his same destiny made of darkness and blood but in the end, driven by the insistence of the woman who feels for him a visceral attraction, he bites her on the neck, turning her in a vampire. Professor Van Helsing, together with Harker, Morris, Lord Arthur and Doctor Seward, hunt the Count that, chased, flees, turning firstly in a monstrous demon and then in a colony of mice escaping from London to Transylvania. Van Helsing and the other men try to hunt Dracula but he manages to escape thanks to the connection he has with Mina’s mind and learns about Van Helsing’s plan. For this reason the group splits, trying to anticipate Dracula before he arrives to his castle. Van Helsing, while holding Mina in custody (since she started to manifest the signs of the metamorphosis in a vampire), arrives near the estate of the vampire, where he finds his crypt. Inside, he finds the three “undead” wives of Dracula. After a chase among the snows of the Carpathians from Morris, Harker, Lord Arthur and Doctor Seward, before the sunset comes and Dracula takes back his full strength and power, the count is stopped at the gates of his castle and the gypsies who carried and served him are killed by the group of Englishmen. Harker opens a coffin with a knife and cuts the vampire’s throat, while Morris stabs Dracula with his knife too: after that he dies by the hand of a gipsy. The vampire is about to get killed, but in his defence arrives Mina, armed with a rifle, and the two escape in the chapel of the Castle (the same one in which Dracula, four centuries before had turned into a vampire). At this point the prince is dying and begs Mina to save him from his condemnation. The girl, weeping, decapitates him with the knife used by Morris. By doing this, she frees also herself from the damnation of vampirism. During the final scene of the film, the camera stops on the image of four hundred years before, the painting of the chapel that portrays young Prince Vlad Draculea, hugging with his beloved Princess Elisabeta.

This adaptation owes a lot to Nosferatu (1922). Carrol L. Fry and John Robert Craig pointed out that Gary Oldman's compelling on-screen presence is due to F.W. Murnau's innovative portrayal of Count Orlok's mysterious abilities. That, together with self opening doors (as happens when Harker first enters in Castle Dracula), constitute one of the many clichés in horror movies and was firstly displayed in Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau’s Nosferatu. Other movies that influenced Coppola are *Ten Days That Shook the World* (a movie from 1927 that he saw at 17) and most importantly Ivan the Terrible (1944). From the very beginning, the references to this movie are evident, as in the coronation scene in which the Russian zar is crowned surrounded by orthodox priests that witness the process. Ivan defies the priest's warning and raises his arms high in response to Kurbsky’s betrayal, which is captured in a low-angle shot. This scene is replicated in *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* when the Count vows eternal vengeance to God after his wife’s death. *Ivan the Terrible Part Two* (1958) examines the manner in which

Francis Ford Coppola, the director of the film, employs the visual representation of roiling clouds to instil a sense of impending doom in the climactic chase scene. Additionally, the author highlights how Sergei Eisenstein, another director, captures the vulnerability of the character Prince Vladimir through a high-angle shot. In this scene, Prince Vladimir is required to wear the Czar's clothes and walk with him to the cathedral. This shot is reminiscent of Jonathan's perilous journey across the mosaic eye in Dracula's entrance hall.

The stylistic homages that Francis Ford Coppola pays in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* are more complex than just an artistic vanity. Ivan's narrative shares striking parallels with the tale of Dracula. Both men are initially good but transform into violent individuals when betrayed and suffer the loss of a loved one. The czar's vow to become terrible and renounce God aligns him with the new Dracula in the film. Kurosawa's Kagemusha (1980) left a lasting impact on Bram Stoker's Dracula, with memorable shots being incorporated into the movie. The opening shadow-play battle scene borrows from Kurosawa's shot of troops marching along a high ridgeline backlit by sunset, and the subsequent battle scene echoes Kagemusha's backlit by fire and explosions. Lastly, during a desperate rider's attempt to report Shingen's assassination, he dashes up the center of the screen, mirroring Coppola's Dracula's actions after learning of Elisabeta's peril.

But, while the movies Coppola’s *Dracula* draws inspiration from set clear boundaries between good and evil, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* is a more “villain friendly” movie. Another important movie that influenced *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* is Jean Cocteau’s *La belle et la Bête* (1946). Coppola and Hart observe in their moviebook that the candlesticks looking like human arms were taken from Cocteau’s film. Other than that, there are some other “visual” debts to that film (lanterns that light magically when a character enters a room, “dolly glides” of a character towards the camera etc.) more evident than for all the movies quoted above. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a narrative that recounts the transformation of a morally upright individual into a monstrous creature, an occurrence not dissimilar to Cocteau's portrayal of Bate, whose fate is sealed by his parents' lack of belief in magic. In the novel, the character of Chesare the Priest delivers a harsh judgment, asserting that Elisabeta is damned for eternity due to her suicide, Dracula "cries out - a *dying animal*” (Coppola and Hart 19).

The film was not warmly received by critics. Nina Auerbach stated: “[it] completely subvert[s] Stoker’s conception of the vampire” (Auerbach and Skal; 407). Auerbach suggests that Coppola's Dracula project should not disregard the notion of "commercial purposes." Following the underwhelming box office performance of Tucker (1988), New York Stories (1989), and Godfather III (1990), Coppola sought a profitable venture.

Fry and Craig extend Auerbach's analysis by highlighting the similarities between Oldman's Dracula and his predecessors. They argue that the 1973 and 1979 adaptations of Dracula by Dan Curtis/Jack Palance and John Badham/Frank Langella established a trend of portraying the vampire as a sympathetic character. This trend has not been diminished by the Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer and its related films.

If Coppola wanted to create a character like Oldman's Dracula, who could be redeemed by a loving Beauty, he found a kindred spirit in Hart. Hart discovered the seed of the sympathetic character and his savior in the original novel. Mina's redemptive and merciful role in Dracula's life is developed through a significant subtext that was just as relevant in 1992 as ethnic difference, a theme that Coppola pursued in bringing Stoker's novel and Hart's script to the screen for the '90s.

Bram Stoker's Dracula tackled the issue of AIDS head-on, and for good reason. In the movie, when we first meet Van Helsing, he is delivering a lecture on blood and the diseases concerning blood, such as syphilis.

Many critics have talked about this specific topic. It is relevant to acknowledge Dyer’s thoughts on this: he “touts the film’s central concern with socialising what is all-too-often represented as "unsocialised and *unsocialisable* male sexuality”” (Reed, 2010; 10). Presenting a justification for Dracula's animosity towards the Church is a key approach implemented by Coppola and Hart to elicit sympathy for the character.

Carol A. Senf claims that Stoker’s "humanising touches" makes it "difficult to determine whether [the vampire] is a hideous bloodsucker [...] or a lonely and silent figure who is hunted and persecuted" (95).

Bram Stoker’s Dracula stresses Dracula’s love for Mina on two occasions: firstly in the Cinematograph when he’s about to bite Mina (but he eventually holds back); and secondly and more importantly, when she states out loud: “I want to be what you are," at which he replies: "I cannot let this be! [...] I love you too much to condemn you.”

In this movie, the boundaries between good and evil are not set as in the book and, according to Lyndon W. Joslin, Coppola has stated that his Van Helsing is as evil as the Count.

The exploration of medical science's potential to combat degeneracy is demonstrated through the connection between Dr. Seward and his patient in Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film. The film explains Renfield's madness as a result of being Harker's predecessor at Castle Dracula, where he learned vampiricism firsthand. Although this explanation makes sense and is consistent with the madness that Harker perceives as a threat and the brain fever he actually experiences, it is not explicitly stated in the text, as the origin of Renfield's madness is not discussed.

Chapter 3: The Human Mind and Paranoid Behaviour in *Dracula*

3.1 The post traumatic stress disease in *Dracula*.

This chapter will further analyse a theme that has already been mentioned throughout this thesis: it is the theme of trauma, with a particular focus on how different characters react to it.

At the end of the novel, while coming back from a trip to Castle Dracula with his wife Mina and his son Quincey, Jonathan Harker reflects upon the vicissitudes happened in the past. Doing so, he happens to question the reliability of his memories and the utility of the records they collected to take down the Count, he states that "in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of type-writing, except the later notebooks of Mina and Seward and myself, and Van Helsing's memorandum" (326-27).

The issue of documentation is analysed several times during the novel, as the actions take place. It is clearly stated that the collection of the documents involved a group of people that removed all of the unnecessary elements and ensured that the final product was free from any errors resulting from the fallacy of memory.

Vampires are considered horrific not just when it comes to their attacks: what traumatises their victims is how they, on different occasions, continually prey and haunt their victims (Jonathan Harker, Lucy Westenra, Mina Harker, the children the count gives the three women in the castle to feed themselves). Trauma stems from the paradoxical nature of the vampire that may be seen but can hardly be recognised due to his shapeshifting nature, and its apocalyptic potentialities (that is the possibility of a reverse colonisation, a world governed by vampires that was already developed in the fist chapter). The book presents a convincing thesis on the relationship between terror and trauma, which is demonstrated by the ongoing vampire assaults. Furthermore, it investigates the intricate aspects of recalling and narrating these harrowing experiences.

As Jamil Khader points out in the essay "Un/Speakability and Radical Otherness: The

Ethics of Trauma in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*"

> The novel makes explicit this connection between traumatic experience, as embodied in the horror of the endless vampiric attacks and the paradoxical structure of trauma, and the problematic of memory, representation, and writing.

Subsequently arguing that:

> Not only, as many critics have pointed out, does Dracula's blood run through the veins of the Harkers' son Quincey, while Mina remains contaminated in some sense by the vampiric but also the vampire's victims continue to be haunted by Dracula's polymorphous spectral presence

That said, it is explained why the victims of the Count still feel Dracula's spectral presence, after he bites them. A clear connection is drawn between traumatic experiences and location, implying that a part of the original trauma remains at the site where it occurred.He adds two further points to his statement:

> Second, an overt link is established between traumatic experiences and place, suggesting that some thing of the original trauma still inheres at the site of its occurrence.

And lastly that:

> this passage is remarkable for its obliteration of the memory of the victims of the vampiric attack, especially Lucy Westenra. The survivors' obsession with authentic documents that can presumably validate the living betrays the mem ory of the dead, and detracts from the ethical project of bearing witness to them.

The perplexing inattention to the paradoxical nature of trauma and its relevance to understanding the novel is concerning. Although some critics recognise Bram Stoker's inventive application of psychoanalytic concepts, especially Freud's idea of female hysteria as the foundation for his depiction of feeble, emaciated female vampires, the majority of psychoanalytic analyses have primarily focused on the vampire in Dracula as a sexual metaphor, without exploring the connection between the vampire and trauma.

Recent theories of trauma have emphasised Freud's diagnosis of its lateness, which stems from the victim's inability to grasp, much less explain, the terrible event and make it available to the consciousness. This painful event, or "traumatic neurosis" as he puts it, is registered in their unconscious and can only be processed after a time of latency.

Stoker's Dracula accepts that trauma sufferers (particularly Jonathan Harker, Mina, and Lucy) may fail to capture the traumatic core or horror of the vampire assaults, but argues that this language of unspeakability is exaggerated.

While the specific experiences of individual victims of traumatic vampiric attacks cannot be fully comprehended or articulated with precision, it is feasible, indeed desirable, to convey these occurrences at the societal level through a concept introduced by Mina as “working together” and by Van Helsing as “the power of combination” (197, 210).

The unique characteristic of vampiric attacks, which involves their postponement and inability to be articulated, is emphasised by the inability of victims to grasp and convey the distressing fundamental aspects of their experiences at a conscious level. This is achieved through methods such as journaling, maintaining a diary, letter writing, and keeping memos. Consequently, the distressing aspects of vampiric attacks, including their harshness and breach of telepathy, are unconsciously registered in the minds of those affected, rather than being consciously experienced. After being attacked (or seduced, depending from the point of view) by three female vampires in Dracula's palace early in the novel, Harker thinks: “strange things which I dare not confess to my own soul” (24).

According to Freud's description of trauma, it represents spectral and malignant entities, that is the manner in which an individual is dominated and troubled by a force or power from the past that cannot be easily expelled from the patient's subconscious.

The characters who have experienced a vampiric attack are unable to forget or repress the horrific experience, which constitutes the disaster of the vampiric attack. According to Caruth (1996, 7), the recurrence of the traumatic event attests its enduring impact on life. In Stoker's Dracula, the vampire's obsessive return is a "repetition compulsion" that demonstrates not only the vampire's overwhelming oral needs, as suggested by psychoanalysts, but also the victims' inability to comprehend, master, or repress the traumatic core of the attack. Mina and Jonathan Harker further illustrate the inability of victims to articulate the traumatic knowledge in their own language, emphasising the unspeakability of traumatic experiences at the individual level.

The novel *Dracula*, penned by Stoker, presents an opportunity to question the widespread use of the language of unspeakability in trauma theory. It proposes that joint endeavours from survivors and witnesses can ultimately make traumatic events discussable and depictable, even if the narrative that emerges is jagged and contradictory. In fact, the book indicates that any record of collective trauma is bound to be incomplete and fragmented, giving only a fleeting look at the heart of the vampiric assault.

The "Crew of Light" fails to provide testimony to Lucy's narrative of her suffering and transformation into a vampire. Moreover, their testimonial speech act is inhuman at its core. Their testimony is contingent upon the foreclosure of Lucy's subjectivity as a victim, as she is so fully identified with the persecutory Other that she is assimilated into it. Van Helsing exemplifies this foreclosure of Otherness when he lectures his crew about the nosferatu and the urgency of killing it. The "Crew of Light" is repulsed by vampirism as a criminal act against human existence and sameness, and they kill Lucy in the most gruesome act of misogynistic violence in the novel. Notably, the members of the "Crew of Light" are the only characters in the novel capable of such maniacal brutality. The effort to attest to Lucy's experience proves futile as she is killed and integrated into the divine law of salvation and redemption that Van Helsing and his allies aim to institute on her body and soul. Lucy's demise is rationalized within the framework of redemption to bolster the survivors' faith during moments of doubt and darkness, absolving them from their involvement in her murder, which remains unofficially unreported and unpunished. In a strange twist, the "Crew of Light" takes Lucy's life while attempting to establish a sense of unity among victims, witnesses, and survivors through complete identification and transference.

In the chapter entitled *Vampiric Alterity: Towards an Ethical Responsibility for the Persecutory Other*, Jamil Khader notices that the absence of Count Dracula's voice in the narrative of the "Crew of Light" and their portrayal of the vampire as a completely different species cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, more recent analysis has revealed the novel's more subtle encoding of Dracula as a sign of otherness. This allows for the reconsideration of two fundamental concerns in trauma theory and Holocaust studies: the incomprehensible inhumanity of the Other, whose motives and desires presumably exist beyond the limits of human discourse and thought, and the psychosexual entanglements between persecutors and victims. Although some critics and theorists, such as Caruth, acknowledge the slippages between Self and Other, victims and persecutors, and the reversibility of their roles, others argue that Stoker's novel highlights an important issue that is not addressed in Caruth's reconfiguration of Otherness and Levi's organization of the "grey zone": the eroticised nature of the violence that arises in such horrific contexts and the dynamic of collaboration, complicity, and intimacy between vampires and their victims.

This concept of “grey zone” may lead to the displacement of sexual desire between persecutors and victims, and raise unsettling questions about the entanglement of

pleasure and pain in their relationships. Despite this, the novel distinguishes the voice and desire of the Other from the realm of the alien and re-inscribes it within the conventions and limits of human discourse, relating it to the victim's desire.
Jamil Khader adds that

> such a complex relationship between victims and persecutors constitutes an important site for interrogating what Primo Levi calls the "gray zone," that ambivalent space of "protekcja," the Polish term for connections or protected privileges, and "collaboration" in the concentration camp where the slippages and interchangeability between persecutors and victims are continually re-enacted. (1989, 42)

Khader concludes with a last general reflection on trauma: the concept of trauma and its paradoxical structure serve as a crucial foundation for comprehending Bram Stoker's renowned work, Dracula. By examining this influential vampire novel in conjunction with and in opposition to theories of cultural trauma, new avenues for further exploration and expansion are opened up. In particular, the analysis of Dracula and cultural trauma theory enables a deeper examination of the ways in which, as Paul Fussell noted, "the drift of modern history domesticates the fantastic and normalizes the unspeakable" (quoted in Bartov 2003, 94).

3.2. The six stages of paranoia

Moving into a deeper level, it will be now analysed the aspect of paranoia in the novel, with the aid and the analysis of the article Bram Stoker's "Dracula". A Study on the Human Mind and Paranoid Behaviour by Andrés Romero Jódar.
The release of Dracula was undoubtedly contemporaneous with significant advancements in scientific fields, as well as the scrutiny of degeneration principles based on Darwinist assumptions. In addition, the scientific discoveries and evolving perspectives on life and existence had become integral aspects of everyday life for the common people. The proliferation of newspapers and periodicals during this period facilitated the dissemination of detailed accounts of scientific breakthroughs and pressing social concerns to the reading public.
Although the lunatic is primarily observed from the outside, with no attempt to delve into his mind, the focus is on his patterns of behavior rather than his physical appearance.

There is a limited description of his appearance, and hence, no reference to traditional visual iconography. In contrast, traditional ways of understanding have been incorporated into references to ancient humoral theories of personality, which have been integrated into the novel's thematic framework. On the other hand, the physician's attempts to understand the lunatic utilise the concepts of contemporary medical discourse, and the novel employs the most current ideas on hypnosis and cerebral physiology. This duality reflects the opposition present throughout the novel between the mind as an enigmatic entity and the mind as a subject for scientific inquiry and research.

Bram Stoker's interest in psychology has consistently been a focus of attention. According to Stephanie Moss, the writer demonstrated a particular inclination towards understanding the complex relationship between body and mind. Furthermore, Stoker was well-versed in the works of renowned French psychiatrists, such as Jean-Martin Charcot, an innovator in the study of hysteria, Pierre Janet, and William James.

The madman is perceived as a threat to masculinity, as his condition leads to a diminution of autonomy. The lunatic is viewed as a problem to be studied and solved rather than a suffering individual in need of a cure. In the solipsism of his madness, he is vulnerable to psychic invasion, just as a fragmented, weak, and confused society is susceptible to malign external influences. The only defence against this is unselfish cooperation.

In 1903, Judge Schreber published his book, Memoirs of My Nervous Illness, which became famous in 1911 when it was included in Freud's collection of case histories. Schriber, who was 42 years old at the time, described the details of his own suffering from delusions and hallucinations. According to his report, paranoia evolves through six stages:

1. hypochondriac ideas,
2. feelings of being chased and persecuted (also called hallucinosis),
3. heightened sensitivity to light and noise,
4. visual and auditory hallucinations,
5. suicidal thoughts, and
6. mystical and religious manias

Paranoia can be classified into three forms: sensitive hallucinations, hallucinoses, and pseudo-hallucinations. Sensitive hallucinations entail the sensory perception of horror, where what is perceived is projected onto the external environment. According to Jódar, the patient is really convinced of the reality of a situation and his behaviour reacts to that experience. Applying this type to the present study, Jonathan Harker would perfectly fit this classification. In his adventures at Dracula’s castle he actually describes his reactions toward his delusions.

He goes on stating that:

If we compare Judge Schreber's account with Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania, we realise that Dracula's first part seems to fit the pattern of the development of paranoia. The young lawyer's behaviour turns from the absolute scepticism of a rational mind into a presumed suicide while trying to escape from the Devil's claws of the Count.

Other than his fear of being in a foreign country, there is no other reason for his mind to become engulfed in a persecution complex. Not surprisingly, this nervous condition results in a suffocating imprisonment. Harker perceives Dracula as a menacing figure that is pursuing him, he distrusts the Count, and he fears that his letters have been read.As the narrative progresses towards the end of the first part, a significant development occurs in Harker's growing paranoia. In this instance, the young lawyer willingly adopts the role of the divine figure that Dracula represents in his mind. By imitating the monster's actions, he aims to escape the castle through the window. Throughout this process, Harker observes his own descent into the final stage of his mental disorder by the end of chapter IV, thereby concluding the first part of the novel. Faced with an unbearable reality, he attempts suicide as a means of escape. His delusional world has become so hostile and menacing that his only option for escape is death. Consequently, a suicidal urge drives him to jump out of the window.

The second form of hallucinatory experience, is called hallucinosis. It is distinguished by a heightened sense of reality through a specific sensory channel. Conversely, the third form, known as pseudo-hallucination or psychic hallucination, entails the subject perceiving reality less vividly within the mind, rather than through the senses. Despite these differences, the patient's experience of these hallucinations remains genuine, and their behavior conforms to their hallucinatory worldview.

As Judge Schreber explicitly indicated in his comprehensive case description, individuals with paranoid tendencies perceive hallucinations as genuine. Consequently, given the progression of Harker's mental disorder, it can be concluded that he has reached the fourth stage of paranoia, characterised by visual and auditory hallucinations. The portrayal of Dracula's realm in his journal can be interpreted as a representation of the pathological world that he, as a paranoid individual, fully embraces.

Romero Jódar discusses Harker's reality, which he documented in his journal and that can be considered a paranoid projection of his unstable mind (18). He displays behavior akin to Schreber's, carefully documenting his own case as he progresses towards the fourth stage of paranoia. Submerged within his own delusions, the young lawyer's visions are destined to persist as his mental disorder intensifies. By the conclusion of chapter III, where Harker is anticipated to confront the three female vampires, the distinctions between reality, imagination, and dreams grow increasingly ambiguous.

He adds that Harker:

> notes in his journal: "I suppose I must have fallen asleep; I hope so" (i993- 52). But for him this event is also part of his reality and, thus, real in his paranoid world. His ability to witness the pseudo-pornographic scene "perfectly under the lashes" (1993: 54) confirms him as an unreliable narrator.

As the story progresses towards the conclusion of the first part, we can observe another significant development in Harker's paranoid state. As previously mentioned, the fifth and sixth stages of paranoia occur concurrently. These stages involve having suicidal thoughts and experiencing megalomania, such as speaking with God or becoming a divine figure. His mind drives him to attempt suicide as a means of escaping from his own reality. His delusional world has become so hostile and threatening that death seems like the only way to escape it. Harker undoubtedly expects death at the bottom of the precipice to liberate him from this bizarre reality.

After examining Harker's paranoid behaviour in Transylvania, we can proceed to the final segment of this essay: the examination of letters, journals, and diaries as dependable sources. In accordance with conventional interpretations of the novel (such as those by William Patrick Day in 1985, Ken Gelder in 1994, David Punter in 1996, and Robert Mighall in 1998, among others), Dracula can be perceived as a collection of diaries and letters, organized according to the objective of an unknown editor. As a result, the novel takes the form of an epistolary narrative, similar to Samuel Richardson's Clarissa (1747/1749) or Frances Burney's Evelina (1778).

The notion of the "old knights of the Cross" (Kermode, 1993: 412) could be seen as a representation of impoverished individuals who are afflicted with madness and reside in a delusional world shaped by their fears and inability to surpass Van Helsing's misconceptions. Harker's experiences in Transylvania exemplify the development of paranoia, as illustrated by Judge Schreber's narrative. Upon his return to England, Van Helsing will persuade Harker and the broader community to accept the existence of vampires and demons. As a result, they not only assemble the Crew of Light to eliminate the undead monster but also embody the nineteenth-century psychiatry concept of insanity.

3.3. Mesmerism and traumatic memory

The essay *The Zoophagous Maniac: Madness and Degeneracy in Dracula* by Valerie Pedlar begins with a reflection of Max Nordau on the term “fin-de-siècle”. He states:

> however silly a term fin-de-siècle may be, the mental constitution which it indicates is actually present in influential circles. […] Fin-de-siècle is at once a confession and a complaint. The old Northern faith contained the fearsome doctrine of the Dusk of the Gods. In our days there have arisen in more highly developed minds vague qualms of a Dusk of the Nations. (2006;2)

According to Nordau, who was intrigued by the work of Lombroso and Morel, this period was marked by the phenomenon of degeneration. It is noteworthy that Nordau was diagnosed with an illness related to hysteria, a condition prevalent in contemporary industrial societies due to the pervasive nature of nervousness.
Pedlar goes on stating that:

> Although the idea of degeneration was originally a biological concept, it adapted easily to more figurative usage, providing a scientific foundation for the moral panic at the end of the century. In the deviations from and perversions of what was seen as normal, society seemed to be no longer progressing, but regressing; it was both hurtling forward to disintegration and retreating into primitivism. (2006;2)

As Jonathan Dollimore (1996) eloquently stated,

> this was evolution simultaneously accelerating forward out of control and regressing backward out of control; a terrifying forward and backward unbinding of the arduously achieved higher forms of civilization and biology. (96)

Dracula introduced various innovative elements to the vampire literature genre, including the lunatic asylum, the madman, and the doctor. The author's working notes indicate that the madness theme was present from the beginning of the novel. In the chapter outline dated March 14, 1890, Dr. Seward's diary refers to "the fly patient," who is infatuated with death, and two years later, he appears as the "Fly man" in Seward's diary, suggesting Harker's arrival at Castle Dracula rather than Dracula's arrival at Carfax. Despite this, Stoker did not read the clinical literature extensively. Three of his brothers were medical professionals and could have provided him with information. However, this chapter's purpose is not to establish a direct connection between Stoker's portrayal of madness and any specific clinical source, but to examine the conception of insanity that informs his writing, its role in the novel as a whole, and how it relates to the novel's ideas about masculinity. This analysis will focus on the interplay between realism and fantasy and the gradual erosion of the boundary between sanity and madness.
Pedlar states that:

> Renfield’s scheme of collecting and eating flies, then spiders, then sparrows, which has culminated in a request for a kitten leads Seward to the hypothesis that he is an undeveloped homicidal maniac who, like the old lady in the nursery rhyme, is working his way up a hierarchy of consumption in the interests of absorbing as many lives as he can through a cumulative process. Having confirmed this hypothesis by offering Renfield a cat as a preferable, because more vivacious alternative to a kitten, Seward invents a new classification for the lunatic and calls him ‘a zoophagous (life-eating) maniac’ (2006, p. 6)

The term in question was not incorporated into the medical framework of the 19th century: it was derived from a series of scientific researches that served to demonstrate the extent to which Renfield was regarded as a specimen of natural history, a perception that was prevalent during the Victorian era in the field of medicine. As a result, Renfield's intense craving for blood signifies his suitability as a follower of Dracula, as the vampire is eternal and the patient, being alive, can still avail himself of ordinary sustenance. Renfield's zoophagy is read as an attempt to escalate his way up the Great Chain of Being, in the hope of indefinitely prolonging his own life by absorbing other life forms, taking the concept of sustenance to an illogical extreme by assuming that 'life' is a quantifiable commodity. The taboo that Renfield is violating centres on the subject of food and distinguishes between the consumption of flesh solely for survival and the drinking of blood for the purpose of augmenting power.
Talking about Renfield’s condition of zoophagus, Pedlar states that:

> His repeated cry, ‘The blood is the life’ is in fact taken from Deuteronomy 12.23-25 and is an invocation of the Judaic belief, shared by other races, that blood literally is the source of life. (2006; 6)

By consuming blood, Renfield breaks the Old Testament taboo on eating flesh unless it has been properly drained. His desire for blood and worship of the Master also parallels the figurative reincarnation of the belief in the Christian Eucharist. However, Renfield's abstention from lower forms of life in the promise of something better appears to parody conventional religious beliefs only to the extent that his drinking requires a preliminary killing for that specific purpose. Renfield's madness, in fact, returns to literalness what has become a figurative practice. Dracula's resurrection embodies the Christian belief in the afterlife while adding a unique twist, as noted by David Punter in *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. Unlike Renfield, whose vampirism is fuelled by souls, Dracula's is purely physical, thereby transcending moral and social codes. This formidable opponent, even for a lunatic like Renfield, defies the conventional norms. As Punter observes, Dracula's desire is unadulterated and his objective extends beyond merely prolonging his immortal existence. Rather, he aims to create a world teeming with his kind, with women transforming into vampires as offspring in his encounters, marked by strong sexual undertones. Thus, mating seems akin to infection, signifying a fear of degeneracy that was prevalent in the late 19th century. Furthermore, the comparison between Dracula and Renfield, whose "cause" is deemed insane solipsism, serves to pathologise Dracula's equally solipsistic mission. The excessive egoism exhibited by both Dracula and Renfield symbolically reflects the fears of degeneracy that were prevalent in the late 19th century.

The analysis of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* offers a compelling interpretation of the novel's treatment of morality, degeneracy, and social responsibility. The idea that Dracula is positioned outside the realm of human responsibility by emphasising his connection to the natural world and his obedience to "natural" laws aligns with how the novel often portrays him as a primal, almost elemental force rather than a fully human character. This depiction helps to distance him from the moral and ethical standards that apply to human society.

However, Van Helsing highlights Dracula's past as a strong and honourable warrior, and this, along with his status as a representative of a "great and noble race," complicates this distancing. It suggests that Dracula was once a figure of high standing and virtue, whose degeneration into a vampire is the result of a corrupting influence—his association with the devil. This narrative allows Stoker to externalise the source of degeneracy, attributing it to an external, supernatural force rather than to inherent flaws within humanity or society itself. In doing so, the novel absolves the bourgeois society of responsibility for moral decay, instead reinforcing conventional restraints by making Dracula a scapegoat for the ills of modernity.

The writing of the diary provides temporary relief for Harker, but ultimately results in a complete breakdown and the loss of his role as narrator until after Lucy's passing. When he begins writing again in Chapter 14, his comments are insightful, as Mina has presented her Transylvanian diary to Van Helsing, who has written to her to confirm its authenticity.

Pedlar notes that, because of this,

> 15 of his experiences has, he then writes, ‘made a new man of me. It was the doubt as to the reality of the whole thing that knocked me over. I felt impotent, and in the dark, and distrustful’ (2006; 15)

In *Dracula*, Harker's identity and masculinity are increasingly threatened as he becomes linked with the Count in a grotesque mimicry. Dracula's "sucking" of information from Harker can be seen as a violation of Harker's autonomy and professional integrity, reducing him from a confident young lawyer to a passive vessel from which Dracula extracts knowledge. This process of extraction is symbolic of the broader theme of vampirism in the novel, where Dracula feeds on the life force of others, weakening them while strengthening himself. By taking Harker's clothes—symbols of his professional and social identity—Dracula further blurs the boundaries between himself and Harker, suggesting a kind of assimilation or transformation that undermines Harker's sense of self.

Seward’s recounting is notably concise and restrained, particularly in comparison to the vivid, almost visceral details that Stoker sometimes uses elsewhere. By omitting graphic particulars, including the disturbing image of Harker lying on the bed, flushed and breathing heavily, Seward presents a sanitised version of events. This omission can be understood as part of a larger narrative strategy where certain details are either suppressed or strategically minimised to manage the impact on other characters, particularly Mina, and to maintain a certain decorum or emotional distance in the narrative.

David Punter's interpretation of Dracula indeed highlights a striking paradox in the novel: Dracula embodies a form of resurrection that starkly contrasts with Christian teachings. He posits that Dracula targets "the entire concept of morality by preying upon and liberating facets of the psyche that are beyond moral restraint."

Hypnotism, rejecting the concept of mesmeric fluid, accentuated the subject's psychological state, the "suggestibility" that determined the hypnotist's likelihood of exerting power, and consequently, also engendered suspicion since it could be equated with mental despotism. It is evident from the text that Stoker was acquainted with the work of Charcot. In a pivotal scene, Van Helsing attempts to counteract Seward's scientific arrogance:

> Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot? … I suppose now you do not believe in corporeal transference. No? Nor in materialisation. No? Nor in astral bodies. No? Nor in the reading of thought. No? Nor in hypnotism –' 'Yes,' I said. 'Charcot has proved that pretty well. (191)

The three characters exhibit mesmerism to varying degrees, with each consistently displaying dominance and subordination. While Lucy generally praises Seward's skills as a physician, she also contemplates the immense influence he must possess on his patients, as evidenced by the potency of his gaze. Despite its appearance, which may suggest mesmerism rather than hypnotism, it is argued that Renfield's psychological state, established in the text as highly susceptible to Dracula's persuasion, truly matters here. His hesitant mention of the voice could reflect his own desires, while the blood-colored cloud that surrounds his eyes might symbolise his preoccupation with blood. Furthermore, a clear reference to the temptation of Christ in Luke 4.5-7 adds a spiritual dimension to the scene, imbuing the mesmerist with satanic connotations, similar to other fictional mesmerists such as Antomarchi and Svengali: the first one is a character from the book *The Rose and the Key*, the second is a character created by George du Maurier, an anglo-french writer. It is also noteworthy that Dracula exerts an easy influence over Lucy, who, like Renfield, has demonstrated vulnerability to Dracula's advances in her somnambulism, expressing feelings of powerlessness.

The book seems to express worries about the loss of conscious self-control, which might lead to the emergence of instincts that are hostile to societal respect and order. However, it also appears to reflect contemporary fears about the potential for sexual manipulation of the female subject under hypnosis, resulting in an infection with predatory sexuality that threatens the most cherished values of Victorian society. Similarly, like Harker, Mina has experienced the Count's hypnotic advances, and while they may not have been entirely unwanted, they have still caused her significant distress.

Pedlar states that:

> Peter Keating puts Dracula in a tradition of literature which sees facts and science as obscuring rather than revealing the truth about life; in fiction of this kind 'true knowledge is attained not by marching doggedly forward with each scientific discovery, but by moving further and further back to a point where the mind is no longer corrupted by modern scientific reasoning' (2006; 21)

The process of recording, collating, and comparing information to deduce vampirism in the 1890s was an attempt to establish scientific facts by using established methods. Folklore and superstition have long recognised these facts without requiring proof. The problem with this approach is that it reveals facts that contradict customary experiences and expectations, leading to disbelief. The novel's insistence that the dead will not necessarily lie down is as difficult for the reader to accept as it is for characters in the story. Because direct sensory experience is lacking, readers must interpret the text as allegorical, poetic, mythic, or symbolic to understand it on a different basis.

The novel is concerned with the potential loss of conscious self-control, which could lead to hostile instincts that disregard societal respect and order. Moreover, it appears to reflect contemporary anxieties about the possibility of the sexual manipulation of women under hypnosis, resulting in an infection with predatory sexuality that endangers the cherished values of Victorian society. Mina, like Harker, has experienced the Count's hypnotic advances, which while not entirely unwanted, still caused her considerable distress.

The novel blends realism and fantasy, creating a narrative that challenges readers' perceptions and interpretations. This mixture is not just a stylistic choice but reflects the dual modes of understanding within the story: the folkloric or superstitious perspective and the scientific approach. These two perspectives are in tension throughout the novel, mirroring the broader conflict between old-world beliefs and modern rationality.

Dracula presents a society struggling to uphold traditional Christian and chivalric moral codes in the face of biological determinism. This suggests that the characters' attempts to live by these moral standards are often undermined by the more primal, deterministic forces at play, such as vampirism and the influence of Dracula. The novel thus explores the idea that human behavior and morality are not entirely within the control of rational, moral decision-making but are also subject to darker, uncontrollable forces.

Madness is depicted as a key element of the novel, serving as a focal point for the narrative's exploration of the boundaries between the human and the animal. The representation of insanity in Dracula ties into the traditional view of madness as a loss of self-control, which can lead to violent, animalistic behavior. This connection between madness and the animalistic underscores the novel's concern with the thin line separating civilisation from savagery, reason from instinct.

To conclude: the central theme of this novel is insanity. It is depicted as the loss of self-control, which can result in violent behaviour and connect humans to animals. While the character's inner thoughts are not explored, the focus is on his behaviour patterns. There is minimal description of his physical appearance, and no references to traditional visual imagery are made.

Valerie Pedlar concludes by saying that: “*Dracula* is a novel of ambiguities and contradictions” (2006; 23). She eventually adds that

> Madness is a focal point. Its representation in this novel incorporates the customary conception of insanity as the loss of self-control which can lead, if unrestrained, to violent behaviour, thus relating the human to the animal.

Conclusions

Dracula is an epistolary novel by Bram Stoker. Written in 1897, it runs between Romania and England: the stories are told by the characters themselves through different means (letters, phonographic transcriptions, diaries, etc.).

In the novel whose idea, by the admission of the same author, was born after an indigestion of shrimps, several themes are dealt with. In addition to being one of the first stories of vampires in the English literary landscape, which influenced the conception of vampires that we still have today (the sensitivity of those monsters to sunlight, garlic and their vulnerability to wooden stakes stuffed into the heart), addresses some important issues for the society of the time.

In the first place, in this thesis, we analyse the widespread phenomenon that occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century, which has been defined as the fear of "reverse colonisation”. The seemingly perfect situation often conceals an impending crisis. The dawn of the new millennium revealed the harsh reality that appearances can be deceptive. The world is in a state of chaos, and the idea of a subversion of life itself is not far-fetched. The novel, originally titled "The Dead Undead," explores this theme. It suggests that even death is not as it seems, as the deceased consume human blood.

The second chapter of this thesis is dedicated to analysing the conception of love and sexuality in the Victorian age, with the help of the film *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola. Here were taken into account several issues that are very avant-garde for the time, such as polygamy, represented in Dracula through the character of Lucy, who in the novel, writing a letter to her dear friend Mina confesses the desire to be able to marry all three of her suitors, so is linked to each of them. Partially, the role of the three women in the Castle of the Count also represents a link with this theme, although their role in the story is unclear, since it is unknown whether they are the wives or daughters of Dracula. The importance of femininity and sensuality, in general, is one of the keys of the novel, embodied in particular in the character of Mina.

To conclude, the third chapter deals with the theme of trauma and how the various characters of the novel cope with it and elaborates the dramatic situation in which they are, starting from Harker, the most fragile of the group, who falls prey to a violent cerebral fever once he managed to escape from the Castle of Dracula, to pass to Mina, who is often entrusted with the most important tasks such as transcribing the various diaries and reports collected by the other characters to be able to have a complete collection of information to kill the vampire.

The theme of sanity in Dracula is an indication of the narrator's unreliability. Links have been identified between the behaviour of the characters and what has been called the "six stages of paranoia”.

Renfield himself, the zoophagous interned in the asylum where Dr Seward works and Dracula’s servant, who uses him as contact with the group led by Dr Abram Van Helsing, represents the more common form of madness. According to Carol A. Senf, Lucy Westenra suffers from schizophrenia, showing herself as a submissive and sweet woman when she is awake but becoming voluptuous in search of pleasure when she falls victim to sleepwalking. Seward is the most prone to introspection and self-criticism, wondering repeatedly how far the mission he and the other protagonists have set themselves is to be considered sensible.

Madness is commonly seen as a threat to masculinity because of its potential to reduce autonomy. The madman is typically seen as a topic of study and a problem to be solved, rather than as a suffering individual in need of care. In the isolation of his madness, he becomes vulnerable to psychic invasion, just as a fragmented, weak and confused society is prone to the harmful influence of malevolent external forces. The most effective defence against such an invasion is disinterested cooperation between members of society.

Reading this novel and applying cultural trauma theory in an unorthodox manner allows for examining the ways in which, according to Paul Fussell's writing, the passage of modern history tames the fantastic and makes the unspeakable acceptable. The vampires in the novel may be a product of literary creativity, but the Holocaust, as unimaginable as it was, remains, in Omer Bartov's words, a product of human imagination. Bartov finds it perplexing to represent horrific events that seem to resist human comprehension. Although no fictionalisation can fully capture the reality of the Holocaust, that unimaginable reality emerged from the depths of the European imagination. Interestingly, Bartov employs the fantastic figure of the Golem to symbolise these completely new and indescribable entities that surpassed the limits of human imagination's capacity and creativity, constantly lurking just below the surface, occasionally erupting with all the intensity of repressed, untreated passions and anxieties. If critics believe it's time to diminish Dracula's obvious horrors, reading

Stoker's canonical vampiric text with and against the language of trauma theory promises to delineate the more intricate epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical dilemmas that continue to plague and haunt modern life in a post-atrocity world.

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