

2004

Vampirism and the Degeneration of the Imperial Race - Stoker's Dracula as the Invasive Degenerate Other

Monika Tomaszweska

Follow this and additional works at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tomaszweska, Monika (2004) "Vampirism and the Degeneration of the Imperial Race - Stoker's Dracula as the Invasive Degenerate Other," *Journal of Dracula Studies*: Vol. 6: No. 1, Article 1.

DOI: 10.70013/37k4l5m6

Available at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies/vol6/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Research Commons at Kutztown University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Dracula Studies by an authorized editor of Research Commons at Kutztown University. For more information, please contact czerny@kutztown.edu.

Vampirism and the Degeneration of the Imperial Race – Stoker’s Dracula as the Invasive Degenerate Other.

Monika Tomaszewska

“I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, and all that makes it what it is.” Count Dracula (Bram Stoker, *Dracula* 31)

The late nineteenth century, which witnessed the birth of Bram Stoker’s vampire, was marked by an unsettling feeling that the ordered world of Victorian values was irrevocably disintegrating. Apprehensions about the progressive deterioration of national fitness extended to variegated areas of life; as Stephen Arata remarks, the fin de siècle “was saturated with the sense that the entire nation – as a race of people, as a political and imperial force, as a social and cultural power – was in irretrievable decline” (622). The practice that proved quite effective for mitigating the social disquiet consisted in projecting this repertoire of anxieties upon one scapegoat figure – the degenerate. The common use of degeneration theory to explain various problematic issues enabled one to easily ostracize certain groups and simultaneously to relieve the social tension by identifying the apparent sources of disruption. Thus the label “degenerate” became, in William Greenslade’s words, “a catch-all term of abuse” (38). In the rich collection of unsettling issues of the 1890s which clustered around the equivocal term “degeneration,” apprehensions about the decline of the imperial race stood out conspicuously.

While writing his novel, Stoker was inevitably exposed to the pervasive influence of the closely interlinked pseudo-sciences of criminal anthropology and racial degeneration. Significantly, themes of degeneration appeared not only in strictly scientific publications, but also in the periodical press, boosting the popularity of degeneration theory and criminal anthropology. As the peculiarities of the construction of *Dracula* attest, Stoker, like the majority of contemporary educated Englishmen, must have been well acquainted with the works of Cesare Lombroso and other influential alienists¹ and incorporated into his novel the crucial principles of degeneration theory, putting special emphasis on the aspects concerning race.

According to the basic tenet of these theories of criminality, degenerate criminals represented a particular group of lunatics. In order to accentuate the difference between “ordinary” madness and “criminal” lunacy, French pathologists coined the term “folie morale”(moral insanity). On the basis of their research, the English alienist Prichard formulated the “Doctrine of Moral Insanity” which he explicated in his *Treatise on Insanity* (1835), thus initiating the common tendency to label criminals “moral lunatics” or “moral idiots” (Kline 30). Consequently, pathologists began to emphasise the distinction between “occasional criminals” whose criminal behaviour was due to the degenerative influence of their social environment but who were not innately evil, and “habitual criminals” who were simply “predestined to a life of crime” (Kline 31). Further systematization of degenerates was developed by Valentin Magnan who proposed a hierarchical division, beginning with the first class of the most severely retarded people, and closing it with the category of criminals. Though not intellectually impaired, “born criminals” were characterized by utter lack of moral standards and spiritual values. They were led by primitive instincts and entirely egoistic, infantile drives. Lombroso compared their level of development to children, perceived by him as “natural criminals” – the primitive human beings who did not pass through “the process of sociocultural evolution” (Hurley 97) and who drew their knowledge exclusively from empirical experience. Only after undergoing both ethical and physical evolution could a child transform into a well-developed human; however, if physical development was not paralleled by spiritual maturation a man remained impaired in the ethical sense, capable of normal reasoning but morally “insane.”

In his novel, Stoker refers explicitly to these principal assumptions of degeneration theory and criminal anthropology. In one of the crucial sections of the book, Van Helsing explains, in his broken

¹ Although the English translation of Lombroso’s *L’Uomo delinquente* (1876) appeared in 1911, the French translation *L’homme criminel* was already available in England in 1895.

English, the true nature of Dracula, describing him as a Lombrosian criminal with infantile brain: “The criminal has not full man-brain. He is clever and cunning and resourceful; but he be not of man-stature as to brain. He be of child-brain in much ... [he] is predestinate to crime” (406). Mina Harker appropriately responds to this lecture, concluding: “The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind” (406). This direct reference to criminal anthropology and the famous degenerationists provides explicit confirmation that Stoker consciously modelled his vampire on the figure of the degenerate criminal. As Salli Kline emphasizes, this passage is “completely unprepared for on the pure story level and it shows how concerned Stoker was with making his point absolutely clear. It provides the readers with the ‘correct’ interpretation of Dracula’s character, [and] leaves them no freedom of personal evaluation whatsoever” (71).

By ascribing Dracula to this particular class of degenerates Stoker made his protagonist particularly threatening, since Lombroso emphasized in his works that habitual criminals posed the most serious danger to the healthy society. As degeneracy affected their moral system and did not enfeeble the intellectual capacities, born criminals could function in society under the guise of ordinary citizens. In order to protect the populace, degeneration psychiatrists began to develop systems by which one could easily identify “moral lunatics.” European alienists registered various physical aberrations as indicative of moral degeneracy; however, it was Lombroso who popularized the idea that habitual criminals exhibited atavistic similarity to animals. The appeal of Lombroso’s hypothesis is attested by the fact that the vampire protagonist in Stoker’s novel is depicted in complete accord with the scheme of atavistic criminal elaborated by Lombroso. As the novel abounds in descriptions of Dracula’s appearance, it is easy to indicate parallels between Lombroso’s degenerate and Stoker’s Count. According to Lombroso, one of the major atavistic stigmata that exposes a person as a degenerate is abundance of hair, perceived as a remnant of bestial fur. In Stoker’s novel, Jonathan Harker emphasises this conspicuous trait of the Count’s appearance in the report of his first encounter with Dracula: “His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion,” and subsequently notices: “Strange to say, there were hairs in the centre of the palm” (28). Furthermore, Jonathan notes that Dracula’s ears were “at the tops extremely pointed” (28). This specific feature was also ascribed to habitual criminals, as according to Lombroso, this was “a relic of the pointed ear characteristic of apes” (qtd in Fontana 161). Another textual description of the Count, included in Mina Harker’s journal, recounts Dracula’s “beaky nose” and “big white teeth ... pointed like an animal’s” (207). Significantly, Lombroso enumerated these features as typical for degenerate criminals. Thus, a hooked nose resembled the beak of a bird of prey, while sharp teeth indicated their affinity with predatory animals. Moreover, Lombroso claimed that flaming red eyes constituted an atavistic feature of born criminals, as Havelock Ellis wrote in *The Criminal* (1890), his synopsis of Lombroso’s work: “the eyes of assassins resemble those of the feline animals at the moment of ambush or struggle” (qtd in Kline 54). Importantly, Stoker’s vampire also possesses peculiar red eyes (342). Another feature that indicates Dracula’s affinity with animals is his extraordinary agility. In one of his journal entries Jonathan describes an amazing event that took place during his visit to Castle Dracula: “I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall over that dreadful abyss, *facedown*, with his cloak spreading around him like great wings ... I saw the fingers and toes ... move downwards with considerable speed, just as a lizard moves along the wall” (47). This description of Dracula’s phenomenal swiftness corresponds to Lombroso’s observation concerning the “ape-like agility” of criminals (Kline 61) which enabled them to easily escape from prisons.

Dracula’s anatomical stigmata provide an external proof of his moral degeneracy. Taking into account the widespread popularity of criminal anthropology, the late Victorian reader must have been able to immediately associate the textual descriptions of Dracula’s physique with Lombroso’s portrait of the criminal man. The focal question, however, consists in explaining the role that Dracula, constructed as an exemplary degenerate, was supposed to enact in the novel, which is strictly connected with the fears of racial decline that beset the fin-de-siècle England. At the mid-century most pathologists held an optimistic view that the degeneration of certain individuals did not pose a conspicuous danger to the general populace, as it was believed to be a self-regulating process, always leading to final extinction of a pathological line. However, in the closing decades of the era this conviction faded and a pessimistic vision began to emerge. In 1883 the famous eugenicist Francis Galton wrote in “Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development”: “Those whose race we especially want to have, would leave few descendants, while those whose race we especially want to quit of, would crowd the vacant space with

progeny” (qtd in Greenslade 39). Similar concerns were expressed in Lombroso’s writings, in which he emphasised that the main danger was posed by the atavistic degenerates who attempted to hinder the development of Western civilization. In late Victorian England the threatening degenerate was commonly identified as the racial Other, the alien intruder who invades the country to disrupt the domestic order and enfeeble the host race.

Utilization of the vampire myth enabled Stoker to incorporate into his horror tale this characteristic fear of foreign invasion, making the novel especially relevant to the fin-de-siècle epoch. In the book, the vampire does not represent a single disruptive figure but a subversive primitive alien force that threatens the civilized, ordered world – therefore, the protagonists constantly speak of the “vampire kind,” not simply of “vampires.” The opposition between Dracula’s atavism and English advancement is highlighted already at the beginning of the novel, in Jonathan Harker’s description of his journey to Transylvania. As he crosses the river Danube, Harker seems to realize that he is just about to depart from the familiar world and enter the totally alien region, he writes: “The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East” (9). However, Jonathan is initially comfortably detached from the world he arrives in, since his visit to Dracula’s country is dictated by purely professional matters – as a young solicitor, he is sent to transact a deal concerning the purchase of estates in England by a foreign aristocrat. Thus his journal entries, which describe the customs, geography and cuisine of the region, resemble the style of travel narratives. He perceives this exotic land and the perplexing behavior of its inhabitants as a picaresque spectacle and constantly compares the unfamiliar, barbaric East with his native, civilized West. He juxtaposes Eastern superstition to Western rationality, as when a local woman offers him a rosary as a weapon against the “evil eye”; Eastern wilderness to Western orderliness, in his comment that Dracula’s land is “the wildest and least known portions of Europe” (10); the tardiness of Eastern transport with Western punctuality, for “The further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be in China?” (11). This practice of contrasting British advanced civilization with Transylvanian barbarity recurs throughout the novel, allowing Stoker to accentuate the threat of the primitive force invading England.

As Jonathan reaches his destination, his initial stance concerning the inherent disparity between Transylvania and Britain is consolidated. In Dracula’s ancient castle, he encounters a peculiar aristocrat, in all respects different from typical English nobles, who immediately emphasizes their cultural dissimilarity: “We are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things” (32). Subsequent days spent in Castle Dracula, during which Jonathan is nearly vampirized by Dracula’s mistresses and the Count himself, ultimately compel Harker to establish Transylvania as a symbolic “land of darkness,” juxtaposed to Britain, “the island of light” (Hatlen 125). As Stoker’s protagonist moves deeper into Dracula’s mysterious country and reaches his castle, the boundaries that safely separated him from the primeval world gradually dissolve, and eventually, defenceless Harker enters the symbolic heart of darkness. Having approached so closely Dracula’s domain, Harker is no longer able to remain a detached observer and is thus almost overcome by the alien evil. The inherent innocence of the English protagonist explains his initial confusion in the confrontation with evil; as Hatlen elucidates, the English “are vaguely aware of that surrounding the island of light that is England there is a vast darkness; but they, like Conrad’s Kurtz, are confident that the light will gradually penetrate the darkness. As he travels east towards Castle Dracula, however, Jonathan Harker discovers, again like Kurtz, how deep this darkness is, and he himself is very nearly swallowed up by it” (125).

The next significant step in resolving the role of the vampire figure consists in establishing Dracula as the active alien invader of the civilized world. This shift in the perception of Dracula is depicted in the scene in which Harker descends into Dracula’s crypt. After lifting the lid of the coffin, he discovers the Count after feeding, “gorged with blood” (67), which makes him realize the awful truth: “This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where perhaps for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless” (67). From this moment, Harker no longer treats Dracula as a peculiar stranger existing on a distant primitive frontier of Western culture. Jonathan realizes that the Count is the active invader who attempts to overrun the civilized world. This direct threat of incursion of the foreign Other into Britain induces Harker’s transformation from a passive observer into an active defender of his world.

As Dracula arrives in Britain and begins to enact his demonic plans of invasion, there emerges a strong oppositional force. The formation of the group of vampire hunters seems to be Stoker's answer to Max Nordau's appeal to create a league of professional men to protect the social body against degenerate influences: "Only by each individual doing his duty will it be possible to dam up the invading mental malady...[He] must mercilessly crush under his thumb the anti-social vermin" (qtd in Hurley 79). Thus the members of the Crew of Light, as Christopher Craft labels the group (171), are very carefully selected by Stoker, as each of them is expected to enact a specific role in the annihilation of the degenerate Other.

Three vampire hunters are native Englishmen; however, they represent different layers of English society. As a solicitor, Jonathan Harker personifies British judicial system, whereas Dr Seward embodies science, whose development made England a world power. Lord Godalming, or Arthur Holmwood, epitomizes English aristocracy. As Hatlen claims, his first name associates him with King Arthur, and thus with English heritage, while his family name Godalming – "God almighty" suggests that he remains under divine protection (121).

Significantly, the two remaining representatives of the Crew of Light are not English. Van Helsing is a learned Dutch professor, Seward's former teacher, who comes from the Continent to help the Britons fight the degenerate force. As an advocate of the philosophy of an "open mind," he is able to combine Western science with Eastern superstitions, unlike English protagonists who are restricted to purely rational perception. Thus, he represents "the wisdom of the continent and of the West put at British disposal" (Walker and Wright 72). The indispensability of Van Helsing's presence is dictated by the specificity of Dracula who embodies the primitive and the superstitious and thus cannot be fought exclusively by rational means. It is Van Helsing who informs the English about the existence of vampires, who uses hypnotism, thought-reading and other occult practices to hunt the Count; who, as a Catholic, has an access to the Host and holy artefacts. Stoker depicts him also as a protagonist capable of convincing others of the significance of degeneration theory. Nevertheless, despite his positive role, Van Helsing does not entirely merge with the British protagonists. His profound knowledge of evil distinguishes him from his English companions who are initially unaware of the existence of the dark forces that suddenly invade their native land. Moreover, Van Helsing's imperfect, often unintentionally comic English, marks him as an outsider.

Another foreign member of the group of Dracula's pursuers is an American, precisely a Texan. Quincey Morris is depicted as a pragmatic man of action, the one who provides the group with knives and Winchesters. Thus Morris represents American virility and pragmatism which the British should absorb in order to revitalize their faltering nation. However, despite his dedication to England he is, like Van Helsing, marked as an outsider by his speech – an overtly Texan accent. Similar to the Dutch professor, he possesses certain knowledge about the existence of vampiric creatures even before encountering Dracula, since, confronted with Lucy Westenra after Dracula's secret nocturnal attack on her, he instinctively reminisces about his adventure on the Pampas when his mare was attacked by "One of those big bats that they call vampires" (183). This awareness distinguishes him from the English protagonists, totally shocked by the discovery of such creatures. Morris's status as an outsider is solidified in the denouement. At the end, Dracula is annihilated with, in Stephen Arata's words, "the weapons of empire": Jonathan's Kukri knife, symbolizing British rule in India, and Morris's bowie knife, epitomising "American westward expansion" (641). Significantly, the American protagonist dies in the struggle, which provides an indication that Stoker perceived Morris not univocally as an ally to the British, but also as a representative of America, an emergent imperial power that posed, as Arata contends, "a second threat to British power hidden behind Dracula's more overt antagonism" (641). Therefore, the treatment of the two foreign vampire hunters indicates Stoker's typically late Victorian view on the role of external influences on Britain. Stoker seems to admit that the British may absorb the knowledge of the Continent and the virility of America, prioritizing, however, the preservation of the national integrity. Foreign visitors might help restore the order only if they operate as outsiders, without merging with the English.

Whereas Stoker's evaluation of Van Helsing and Morris may be seen as slightly ambivalent but quite positive, his portrait of Dracula is unequivocally negative. The Count is depicted as a reversion to the primitive races of mankind, Lombroso's atavistic criminal defined in *The Criminal Man* as "a relic of a vanished race" (qtd in Fontana 159). Among his ancestors Dracula enumerates the Szekleys and the Huns, emphasizing proudly that in his veins "flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights" (41). Such presentation of Dracula establishes him as a warrior, "a survivor from an earlier warlike period when his race's bloodthirsty behaviour on the battlefield was functional and even

necessary” (Fontana 160).² Significantly, many late Victorian intellectuals maintained that primitive degenerates were becoming more vigorous than “healthy” citizens, gradually undermining the fitness of the Anglo-Saxon race. Thus, as Carol A Senf remarks, Stoker’s ancient vampire represents contemporary apprehensions about “a kind of reverse imperialism, the threat of the primitive trying to colonize the civilized world” (“Unseen Face” 97). The description of Dracula’s heterogeneous ancestry and the complicated history of his native regions solidifies his status of the racial outsider. Thus Stoker’s choice of Transylvania as a homeland of his vampire was determined not only by the fact that this was one of the centres in which the vampire superstition flourished but it was primarily dictated by a common contemporary perception of Eastern Europe as a place of “political turbulence,” “racial strife” and “ceaseless clash of antagonistic cultures” (Arata 627). In a conversation with Harker, Dracula himself presents his land as a bloody battlefield, inhabited by “the whirlpool of European races” (41) that constantly struggle for dominance. This racial heterogeneity puts Transylvania in clear opposition to Britain, where, as Jan Gordon remarks, the British tend to “attribute their cultural domination to an inherent racial homogeneity” (103). Ethnic purity is juxtaposed to racial diversity, seen by alienists as a source of degeneration. Therefore, Dracula’s threat is to be perceived predominantly in racial terms. According to Arata, his attacks may be regarded as a “colonization of the body,” since the victims do not simply die but are transformed and appropriated by Dracula – “they receive a new racial identity, one that marks them as literally ‘Other’” (630).

It is the close relationship between the vampire and blood that allows Stoker to encode the theme of racial contamination within the symbolic as well as scientific resonance of blood. According to late Victorian scientists, blood is to be treated as material that contains all the information pertaining to the mental and physical characteristics of an individual. If an individual is perceived as “a synecdoche of a greater community united by encodings invested within a common blood” (Hughes 242), this substance becomes a potent signifier of racial relationships and the vampire’s thirst for blood may be seen as a desire to appropriate the victim’s racial qualities encoded in the blood signifier. Moreover, the act of vampirization results in the contamination of a vampirized individual, as Hughes observes: “The vampiric process is not simply one of drainage, but of osmosis also. As sustenance is taken out, degeneration is injected in, and the widening circle of vampires represents the gradual decline of the host race. In an age of pogroms and mass-immigration into Britain, the potential racist connotations of the vampire metaphor become seemingly unavoidable” (244). Therefore, when Lucy Westenra is vampirized, the group of vampire hunters offers their own blood to revive the woman and restore her identity. Even the sequence of donors is significant, as during the first transfusion Lucy is given the aristocratic blood of Lord Godalming, subsequently she is rejuvenated by the bourgeois, but still English, blood of Dr Seward, and finally the blood is transfused from a Dutchman, Van Helsing, and an American, Quincey Morris. Nevertheless, Dracula manages to repeat his attack and irreversibly transform Lucy into a degenerate vampire. Thus the Count represents the racial Other who invades Britain with the purpose of contaminating the racial purity of its inhabitants and dissolving them into atavistic vampires.

In the analysis of Stoker’s vampire as a monitory figure that emerged from the epoch-specific fears of the racial decline, it is significant to note Dracula’s affinity with the nineteenth-century stereotype of the Jew that circulated in the contemporary press and literature. The late nineteenth century witnessed conspicuous intensification of anti-Semitism, as the escalation of fears concerning the impending imperial decline coincided with the great influx of Jewish immigrants, primarily from Eastern Europe, who were perceived as a threat to “the mythical homogeneity of the indigenous population” (Hughes 132).³ Thus immigrants were quickly identified as an invading force, becoming a popular object of the degenerationist discourse; as Judith Halberstam observes, “nineteenth century anti-Semitism replaced religious anti-Judaism with ... pseudo-scientific construction of the Jewish body as an essentially criminalized and

² Stoker derived the name of his Count from the fifteenth-century Wallachian prince Dracula, also known as Vlad Tepes or Vlad the Impaler, who was notorious for his atrocities. Stoker found references to voivode Dracula in William Wilkinson’s *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (1820). However, it is highly doubtful that Stoker knew much about the historical Dracula’s reputation as a brutal tyrant. What probably attracted Stoker to this figure was his name, as in Wilkinson’s book there is a footnote stating that “Dracula in the Wallachian language means Devil” (Wilkinson 19). Nevertheless, Vlad Dracula was not considered a vampire by his contemporaries: “There are no folk legends that recount the vampiric machinations of Vlad Tepes returned from the grave, persisting in life through the blood of relatives, enemies or Englishmen” (Senn 22).

³ Between 1881 and 1900, the number of foreign Jews in England increased by 600% (Davison 155).

pathologized body” (255). An especially disturbing aspect of increasing Jewish immigration consisted in great fitness of the newcomers and their ability to accommodate to new conditions⁴ Therefore, Jewish immigrants were commonly branded as the alien parasites who deceitfully penetrated into the domestic order, trying to contaminate it from within, as “an intractable, proliferating, polluting cancer eating out the heart of Empire” (Greenslade 44). Significantly, Stoker depicts Dracula as a foreigner who attempts to assimilate the customs and to master the language of the country he plans to invade, which would allow him to merge with the natives and secretly feed upon them, like a parasite. Van Helsing thus describes Dracula’s tactics: “He find out the place of all the world most of promise to him...He study new tongues. He learn new social life; new environment of old ways, the politic, the law, the finance, the science, the habit of a new land and a new people” (381). The veracity of the professor’s assumptions is confirmed by Jonathan’s description of Dracula’s library that contained an impressive collection of various books and magazines “all relating to England and English life and customs and manners” (30). The Count thus explains his vital interest in English culture: “... a stranger in a strange land, he is no one; men know him not – and to know not is to care not for. I am content if I am like the rest” (31). The affinity between Stoker’s vampire and the late Victorian image of the Jew is also reflected in numerous descriptions of Dracula’s characteristics, considered typically Jewish at that time. Thus, his pointed ears and hooked nose, the apparent markers of his criminality and degeneration, were simultaneously perceived as indications of his Jewishness. Another feature that associated him with the Jewish Other was Dracula’s smell, since, as Hatlen remarks: “The notion that ‘they’ (those who are racially ‘Other’) smell ‘different’ from us is a recurrent theme of racist rhetoric” (129). According to Jonathan’s account, the smell of the Count evoked “a horrible feeling of nausea” (29), whereas the worker who delivered Dracula’s coffins to Carfax identified the smell of Dracula’s hiding place as specifically Jewish, saying: “yer might ‘ave smelled de Jerusalem in it” (272). Furthermore, Dracula’s connection with gold, which he keeps locked in the castle, and the lack of allegiance to his homeland also link him to the anti-Semitic stereotypes widely disseminated in the 1890s. Similarly, his association with rats (Dracula’s house in London is full of rats) connects him with the stereotypical Jew, since rats were commonly perceived as a symbol of plague and, as Senf remarks, “It was believed that Jews spread this and other infections, while, thanks to demonic pacts with the devil, remaining immune themselves” (*Vampire* 154). Therefore, Stoker’s vampire embodies, along with the general apprehensions about degeneration of the imperial race, the more specific fear of Judaisation. Stoker decided to use this especially loaded designation to construct the fictional epitome of the fin-de-siècle fears, since “during Stoker’s era, Jewishness functioned as a signifier under whose aegis the fear of syphilis, alien invasion, sexual perversion, and political subversion, stood united” (Davison 152).⁵

Thus Dracula as an atavistic Lombrosian criminal, a foreign invader from barbaric Eastern Europe, and a parasitic Jewish immigrant, conceptualises the crucial components in the rich constellation of the fin-de-siècle fears. Though apparently disparate, all these representations weave together, constituting a unitary threat to British racial identity. Dracula’s degeneration is defined predominantly in terms of his racial otherness, as Judith Halberstam observes: “the otherness that Dracula embodies is not timeless and universal, not the opposite of some commonly understood meaning of ‘the human’ – his otherness is dictated largely by racial foreignness, he is on ‘the other side of national identity’” (249). Stoker’s concern about the contamination of the imperial race through the contact with the racial Other is accentuated in the denouement by the birth of Jonathan and Mina Harker’s son who is named after the vampire hunters who fought for his mother, in commemoration of their apparent victory over the forces of darkness. However, the boy possesses not only the pure English blood of his parents, but also Dracula’s blood which Mina was forced to drink during her vampirization by Dracula. Although some critics maintain that Stoker conceived of the baby as a symbol of rejuvenated England, regenerated by the osmosis of Dracula’s primitive vitality, the boy may also be seen as an admonitory token, reminding that

⁴ Apprehensions about the high adaptability of Jewish immigrants were highlighted in contemporary writings. For instance, the Earl of Dunraven commented in “The Invasion of Destitute Aliens” (1892) that in light of social Darwinism, England was witnessing the superiority of the lower order over the higher order of organisms – the comparative indestructibility of lower forms of animal life” (qtd in Greenslade 44).

⁵ The late Victorian tendency to project evil upon the Jewish Other was reflected in the actual case of the deviant serial killer, Jack the Ripper, who terrorized the Whitechapel district in 1888. As Davison points out, the Ripper was immediately “demonized in the popular media as a ‘kosher butcher’,” an Eastern European Jew (154).

degeneration was not univocally destroyed and still threatens the potency of the imperial race. Although Dracula did not manage to turn England into his wild, vampire-haunted domain, the threat of degeneration remained, the threat that “from now on, Englishness, rather than a purity of heritage and lineage, or a symbol for national power, will become nothing more than a lost moment in Gothic history” (Halberstam 263) if society is not constantly alert to possible dangers. It is disturbing that Harker writes in the final note of the novel that Dracula’s castle “stood as before, reared high above a waste of desolation” (449).

Works Cited:

- Arata, Stephen. “The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization.” *Victorian Studies* 33.4 (1990): 621-645.
- Craft, Christopher. “‘Kiss Me with Those Red Lips’: Gender Inversion in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed Margaret L Carter. Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1988.
- Davison, Carol M. “Blood Brothers: Dracula and Jack the Ripper.” *Bram Stoker’s Dracula: Sucking Through the Century 1897-1997*. Ed Carol M Davison. Toronto: Dundurn P, 1997.
- Fontana, Ernest. “Lombroso’s Criminal Man and Stoker’s *Dracula*.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed Margaret L Carter. Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1988.
- Gordon, Jan B. “The ‘Transparency’ of *Dracula*.” *Bram Stoker’s Dracula: Sucking Through the Century 1897-1997*. Ed Carol M Davison. Toronto: Dundurn P, 1997.
- Greenslade, William. “Fitness and the Fin de Siècle.” *Fin de Siècle/Fin du Globe: Fears and Fantasies of the Late Nineteenth Century* Ed John Stokes. New York: St Martin’s P, 1992.
- Halberstam, Judith. “Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.” *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*. Ed Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Hatlen, Burton. “The Return of the Repressed/Oppressed in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed Margaret L Carter. Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1988.
- Hughes, William. “‘For the blood is life’: the construction of purity in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.” *Decadence and Danger: Writing, History and the Fin de Siècle*. Ed Tracey Hill. Bath: Sulis P, 1997.
- Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Kline, Salli J. *The Degeneration of Women* Rheinbach-Merzbach: CMZ Verlag, 1992.
- Senf, Carol A. “*Dracula*: The Unseen face in the Mirror.” *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*. Ed Margaret L Carter. Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1988.
- Senf. *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State UP, 1988.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. 1897. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994

Walker, Gerald and Loraine Wright. "Locating *Dracula*: Contextualising the Geography of Transylvania." *Bram Stoker's Dracula: Sucking Through the Century 1897-1997*. Ed Carol M Davison. Toronto: Dundurn P, 1997.

Wilkinson, William. *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia*. 1820. New York: Arno, 1971.