

Dracula and the Idea of Europe

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"... and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told." (35)

Our persistent interest in the politics of Dracula—whether they pertain to Ireland, class conflict, gender, or empire—acknowledges the historical relevance of the novel.¹ Political arguments imply particular constructions of history. Yet historicity poses problems for the reader of *Dracula* as its questions are addressed by the novel scientifically, or even anthropologically, and not historically. Stoker seems to ask insistently, what is Dracula? Although this could be construed as a question of origins (how has Dracula come about and what can we infer about his meaning from such a narrative of becoming), Van Helsing, the man who masterminds the hunt for Dracula, addresses the question in terms of the monster's behavior. To come to know what Dracula is, Van Helsing first meticulously records the details of the Count's behavior. He does not insist on the causes for Dracula, but on deciphering a pattern of behavior that will enable him to classify the Count as a vampire and hence to know what he must do to defeat him.² Some of the criticism on the novel reflects this same anthropological attitude: Dracula is explained in terms of Eastern European folklore, and the "historical" Dracula (presumably, the fifteenth-century prince Vlad, the Impaler) is treated as a legendary figure about whom contradictory stories abound.³

The anthropologic masks a larger preoccupation in the novel with repressing historical discourse and delegitimizing historicity more generally. This negative attitude towards history has its own politics, a politics, I will argue, that shapes Britain's relation to the idea of Europe.

Its delegitimation of history is selective, targeting the Ottoman history of Eastern Europe in particular at a time when the nations newly emerging from Ottoman rule challenged the idea of Europe that had been defined through the Concert of Europe since the early years of the nineteenth century.⁴ Critics have consistently treated the Eastern European setting of the novel as incidental. The consensus has been that the politics of the novel lie closer to home; that Ireland stands behind Transylvania.⁵ This type of metonymic reading adds resonance to the novel's setting, but we should not overlook the significance of Eastern Europe itself. In his notes for the novel, Stoker indicates that he always had Eastern Europe in mind, setting the action first in Styria, Austria, and then changing it to Transylvania (Frayling 341, 345). Treating the Eastern Question as central to Stoker's project focuses my reading on the ways in which the actual historical context of the novel informs its discursive delegitimation of history. Instead of looking at how the novel might be coded (Transylvania as a code for Ireland, for example), I want to argue that Stoker is setting in motion a delegitimation of the Ottoman history of Eastern Europe through the figure of the vampire, whose hybrid identification (a result of his history) as both Christian and Ottoman, makes him monstrous and ultimately incoherent, a source of history that "logically" (but also anxiously) needs to be silenced.

The deployment of multiple types (even technologies) of documentation, the absence of a narrative center, and the fragmentation of the text into dated entries are evidence of a struggle to replace the authority of history with that of science.⁶ While, of course, the novel proposes neither a true history nor a true science, its narrative method suggests a scientific storytelling paradigm which is more likely than history to uphold the narratives of progress in crisis at the end of the nineteenth century. As David Glover has noted, the novel's temporality is not historical, but "a continuous present that is constituted jointly through the procedures of law and science" (62). I am less concerned here with defining this scientific paradigm than I am with the ways in which the novel constructs history as a discourse to be overcome. Formed out of a profound mistrust of historical memory, the scientific paradigm is essentially documentary.

Obsessed with the present, it seeks to establish the objective facts at the time of the events in order to obviate the necessity for remembrance.

In the epigraph of this essay (spoken by the Count to Jonathan Harker) emerges a keen awareness of history as fabulous. The "glories of the great races are as a tale that is told," and thus the glories themselves are tentative and immaterial, precariously dependent on the method of telling. The structure of the novel, its accumulation of documentary evidence, attempts to prevent a slide into the fabulous. Presented as evidence of a scientific method of representation, the deployment of various discourses gives the impression that the novel regulates the vicissitudes of telling associated specifically with historical modes of remembrance. Thus all writers of this tale come up repeatedly with the same plot. The only one with a different plot is the Count, who considers himself the victim and not the wrongdoer. As a relic, the Count speaks of and from the past. He never has his own text but his voice, like orature, has peculiar power and cultural resonance, especially in laying claim to his audience: Jonathan he declares is his, Mina the flesh of his flesh. In their pursuit of the Count, the characters in *Dracula* set out to erase a history that threatens to claim them.

When Van Helsing arrives on the scene, he immediately warns Seward of the vicissitudes of memory. He tells Seward: "Remember, my friend, that knowledge is stronger than memory, and we should not trust the weaker Take then good note of it. Nothing is too small. I counsel you, put down in record even your doubts and surmises" (112). Memory misrepresents. Although opposed as weak and strong, memory and knowledge are compared as essentially similar powers that can be used interchangeably. However why would one use the weaker, when the stronger is available? The difficulty for Van Helsing is that knowledge is tied to time so whereas he distinguishes knowledge from memory, he cannot disentangle knowledge from temporality. Knowledge itself is contingent on the passage of time. Thus Van Helsing must appeal to Seward to "remember" that "knowledge is stronger than memory." But what does Van Helsing propose is knowledge? Knowledge evolves from the comparison of written sources and lived experience. To learn, Van Helsing has recourse to books; but books are not enough. We need, he proclaims,

"the proof of our own unhappy experience" (209). Consequently, time and experience license the revision of the written record. The same documentary operation that establishes knowledge erases memory. Seward is urged to record all his doubts and surmises so that they can be compared with an ongoing experience that sheds light retrospectively on the written record and corrects it. Indeed Van Helsing regrets how long it takes him to decipher and believe in the fact of the vampire, time which is measured in the loss of Lucy. Furthermore, Jonathan's journal acquires the status of a primary text only after Lucy's death confirms Jonathan's record. In contrast to Van Helsing's obsession with controlling time, the Count has no control of time. Overwhelmed with the implications of long, historical time, the Count haunts the characters in the novel, subverting their effort to valorize only contemporaneity.

Jonathan's journal records more explicitly than anything else in the novel the claims of the past. The past that haunts Jonathan brings to the fore a European cultural consciousness that threatens his identity as an English gentleman, a man of business, traveling to the Continent. His experience at the castle of Count Dracula illustrates the dangers of memory. Although apparently secure in his modernity, Jonathan concedes that he is awed by the powers of the past. As he writes his journal in the castle, a sense of the past invades him:

Here I am, sitting at a little oak table where in old times possibly some fair lady sat to pen, with much thought and many blushes, her ill-spelt love-letter, and writing in my diary in shorthand all that has happened since I closed it last. It is nineteenth-century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill. (40-41)

Jonathan may have overcome the fair lady's anxiety about writing by using a modern spelling system, shorthand. Yet as Jonathan acknowledges the past, he is ridden with anxiety. It is not only his senses and sense, which he repeatedly thinks he might be losing, that worry him. He is anxious about the weight of the past and its capacity to drown out his modern experience. The reference to vengeance is not casual since indeed much of the hunt against the Count is achieved through the technologies of

writing. Vengeance defines modernity's attitude to the past which looms large and is ready to invalidate the new.

Jonathan's near seduction by the three female vampires is foregrounded by his seduction by the place. The beauty of the Carpathians stirs his imagination: "I soon lost sight and recollection of ghostly fears in the beauty of the scene as we drove along," he tells us (14) and proceeds to describe natural scenery that is lush and idyllic. Neither like Britain, nor alien like the tropics, the landscape shows Europe as magically familiar:

Before us lay a green sloping land full of forests and woods, with here and there steep hills, crowned with clumps of trees or with farmhouses, the blank gable end to the road. There was everywhere a bewildering mass of fruit blossom—apple, plum, pear, cherry; and as we drove by I could see the green grass under the trees spangled with the fallen petals. (14)

This is a bountiful picture of spring "crowned," as Stoker says, with the signs of man's harmony with nature: farmhouses, fruit trees. The beauty of the place is full of cultural significance since it reminds Jonathan of scenes from drawings in "old missals" (11). He is in the midst of medieval Christian Europe. After he meets his driver (the count in disguise), Jonathan's impression of the place changes; it turns dark and he enters what he calls a second "atmosphere" (16). His time at the castle, however, is once again full of recognition (as in the writing scene cited above) even as he must cope with the Count's strangeness.⁷ Jonathan seems ready to live in the imaginary space of romance. His response is conditioned by a cultural memory to which he is awakening through the imagination for the first time.

When Jonathan's journal is read later by the others, these aspects of his experience are not commented on. The return trips to Transylvania and especially the last trip, the one after the death of Dracula, refigure the Carpathians as safe, cleansed of the energies of romance that threatened Jonathan's mental equilibrium. Mina sees timeless beauty, devoid of a sense of the past. She writes in her journal before Dracula is killed: "It is a lovely country; full of beauties of all imaginable kinds, and the people are brave, and strong, and simple and seem full of nice qualities" (312). Her language

here is remarkably bland ("lovely country," "nice qualities"). In Jonathan's note that concludes the novel, there is no reference to the beauty of the Carpathians: "every trace of all that had been was blotted out. The castle stood as before, reared high above a waste of desolation" (326). The splendid landscape, which had been visible not only on the journey there but from the windows of the castle itself, is now desolate. The Carpathians have been stripped of cultural significance to Mina and Jonathan; the killing of Dracula enacts a high-handed erasure that desolates in order to eliminate the traces of history.⁸

So far I have alluded to various instances in which the characters, discomfited by a sense of the past, try to elude and repress it. Our only source of history in the novel is the Count himself. The final assault on the Count is masterminded through a reading of his history recorded in Jonathan Harker's journal. However, the Count's history is not read as history. It is read only as a predictor of the Count's behavior, and hence it is read ethnographically as a description of what the Count is. Van Helsing is not interested in how the monster came to be, but he examines the Count's history in order to find a pattern of behavior that might give clues to his future actions. Thus Van Helsing uses the Count's narrative as a means to dominate and destroy him.

Dracula's own words regarding his origins are enigmatic (32-35). What purports to be the count's history is, as Jonathan transcribes it, the history not of an individual but variously of a family, a race, an ethnicity, a nation ("country" is the word used, 33), a region, even a continent—Europe itself—since the Carpathians are figured as a "whirlpool of European races" (33) from North and South, a center that once located renders the rest of Europe (Britain, France, Russia, the new unified nations of Germany and Italy) peripheral.⁹ In a phrase that echoes the Count's expression, Jonathan speaks of the Carpathians "as if they were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool" (10). Stephen Arata has noted that the Count's vampirism is connected by implication to conquest, the spilling of blood: "In Stoker's version of the myth, vampires are intimately linked to military conquest and to the rise and fall of empires" in the region of the Carpathian mountains long associated with "political turbulence and racial strife" (113).

In the novel's image, the "earth has been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders" (27). The ground of Europe itself is bloodthirsty and seems to elicit more blood. To Mina, the Count speaks of avenging a wrong, but who is the agent of wrongdoing and what was the action?

These problems bring me to the argument that *Dracula* symbolizes Europe or at least an idea of Europe based on historical narratives conveniently contained and repressed during the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans but reemerging with great urgency in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Not unlike our own recent history that has witnessed the reemergence of the Balkan nations from behind the Iron Curtain and the outbreak of spectacular, violent conflicts on European soil which challenge Western Europe's understanding of Europeanness, so did the collapse of the Ottoman Empire expose peoples and territories of diverse cultures and beliefs to the consciousness of Europe. Underscoring the importance of the East to Europe's identity, Gladstone noted in his retrospect on the Bulgarian Massacres that "the curtain rising in the East seems to open events that bear cardinally to our race" (quoted in Matthew 32). Ottoman rule lasted anywhere from two hundred to four hundred years in different parts of Eastern Europe and spread as far West as Hungary, burying many peoples under an autocratic imperial power that shut them off from the cultural revival of the Renaissance. Jonathan reminds us in the first paragraph of the novel that the Danube River divides East and West: crossing the Danube, he recounts, "took us among the traditions of the Turkish rule" (9). Reconfiguring these borders meant redefining what Europe had become since the Renaissance. The Eastern Question—the problem of the collapse of the "sick man of Europe" and the emergence of new nations which were mostly Orthodox Christian and thus fell naturally under the influence of Russia—was avidly discussed in Britain from the mid 1870s and entailed an anxious search for Britain's identity in the new Europe.

Britain had until the mid 1870s been traditionally pro-Ottoman because it saw in the Ottoman Empire an important bulwark against Russia's ascendancy. Moreover, Britain's economic interests in Turkey were very significant. In 1875, Britain supplied one third of Turkey's imports and

much of Turkish banking was in British hands (Clayton 122-23). Yet Britain was about to see its preeminent role as Turkey's ally challenged (eventually to be supplanted by Germany) as European powers tried to uphold the Ottoman Empire in the hopes of stemming the spread of Russian control of the Balkans.¹⁰

In 1876 popular opinion in Britain turned abruptly against Turkey as a huge public outcry erupted in response to Turkish massacres of Christians in Bulgaria. Gladstone's pamphlet on the Bulgarian massacres which fueled this public debate sold 200,000 copies in less than a month (Matthew 31-32). In the pamphlet, Gladstone accused Disraeli's government of concealing what they knew about the massacres, and treating the reports of atrocities as if they were a "tale told" (Gladstone 18). Doubts over the reports of the massacres produced "the result, not of belief qualified by a reserve for occasional error, but of disbelief qualified by a reserve for purely accidental truth," what Gladstone called a "moral, though not a verbal, denial" (Gladstone 19).

Gladstone's distinction makes an interesting commentary on the uses of documentation. Provided with the evidence of atrocity, Disraeli's government refused to moralize it; it saw accident, rather than design. Gladstone, however, insists that a historical consciousness should have guided the reading of the evidence. Depicting the Turks as a people with a history of bloodthirsty, autocratic rule over conquered nations, Gladstone hoped to make political support for the Turks untenable unless one saw Britain as similar to Turkey, and thus as bloodthirsty and autocratic. Gladstone describes the Turks' history in phrasing that is echoed by Dracula's description of the savagery of the Ottomans who left behind "the bloody field where his troops were being slaughtered" (35):

Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and, as far as their dominion reached, civilization disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force, as opposed to government by law. . . .

They were indeed a tremendous incarnation of military power. This advancing curse menaced the whole of Europe. It was only stayed, and that not in one generation, but in many, by the heroism of the European population of those very countries, part of which form at this moment the scene of war . . . (Gladstone 13)

In a similar vein, Dracula boasts: "to us was trusted the guarding of the frontier of Turkey-land" and that he "beat the Turk on his own ground" (34). Gladstone feels obligated to remind his readers of a history they have neglected: Europe was saved by the sacrifices of the people at its Eastern frontier, who have been buried under a rule "of force." Whereas Gladstone uses the litany on Ottoman violence as, what I called earlier in the case of Van Helsing's use of Dracula's history, a predictor of behavior, the history brought to light here is the history of the martyrs who resisted Ottoman rule. It is the obligation of the rest of Europe to save these Christian peoples now and in the process restore all of Europe to civilization.

When Gladstone returned to power in 1880, he actively promoted the Concert of Europe as a means of governance of European affairs through consensus among nations. His vision was "to sustain the United Kingdom as a Christian, united, free-trading, non-expansionist political community in the comity of nations" (Matthew 5). The Concert of Europe was the model for this "comity of nations," an expression of the "reasonableness of Europe" which, from the mid 1870s was to be repeatedly "assaulted by the brutality and inflexibility of the Ottoman Empire" (Matthew 5). In its mandate of "settling . . . disputes by the consensual authority of the great powers" (Jenkins 314), the Concert of Europe worked to integrate the newly unified Germany and Italy, and Russian ascendancy into its body. But it also had to deal with Turkey which had joined in 1856 under the condition that it would reform and modernize. The reforms, however, failed and an Islamic reaction put an end to further reform in the early 1870s (Matthew 21).¹¹ The Bulgarian massacres of 1876 proved for Gladstone the failure to Europeanize the Turkish Porte. Gladstone attacked the "moral failure of Turkish rule" (Matthew 27) which had allowed slaughter "within the boundaries of 'civilization'" (Matthew 21). The implication was that the legitimacy of Ottoman rule depended on Turkish consent to the European standards of civilized governance and that the ethnic and religious differences that separated the Turks from their Christian subjects did not necessarily invalidate their authority to rule. Gladstone did not promote openly the nationalist claims of Eastern

European ethnic groups; he advocated the punishment of Turkey for its misgovernance (Matthew 21).

Gladstone saw Britain's role in Ireland as analogous to the Ottomans' role in Eastern Europe (Jenkins 280). The Eastern Question and Home Rule together constituted for Gladstone the main issues for national debate in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Despite the Bulgarian Massacres, Britain's pro-Turkish policy resumed,¹² although strong anti-Turkish feeling resurfaced in 1894 when revelations of further massacres (this time against Armenians) were made. Gladstone's last public speeches in 1895 and 1896 were on the Armenian massacres (Jenkins 619).

In his notes for the novel, Stoker places under the heading "characteristics of Count Wampyr" an entry which reads: "Immortality-Gladstone" (Frayling 343). Although this reference is too elliptical for us to be certain of its meaning, it is provocative that Stoker links the Count to Gladstone. Michael Valdez Moses argues that Dracula comes to embody the contradictions of an authoritarian, nationalist leader (in fact he links Dracula to Parnell) and using the same reference ("Immortality-Gladstone"), he sees Van Helsing and his companions as Gladstonian "liberal progressives" (98, 109n44). If we follow this string of associations further, we might ask a broader question: how does Dracula's history address the implications of Gladstone's politics for the Concert of Europe—in which the fate of Irish home rule is also entangled?

The analogy between Dracula and the idea of Europe is complicated by the incoherence of the Count's history as we have it in two places: Jonathan's reported account (33-35), and then later Mina's repetition of the Count's words at the scene of her "bloody baptism" (247-49). The historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler, supports the fictional Dracula's monstrosity, his insatiable violence, and reputation for autocratic and arbitrary rule.¹³ To be a hero, Vlad the Impaler, also had to be a villain, ruling his people, who were often reluctant to fight the Turks, with force (Nandris 370-71). But, despite his cruelty, the historical Dracula was a hero of Christendom, a defender of Christianity against Islam. His reputation as a villain was fanned largely by the Turks.¹⁴ It is unclear whether Stoker knew the sobriquet "impaler," but he never uses it in the novel.

Stoker's reinvention of the historical figure is driven by his desire to disclaim the Europe that the Count represents. The Count, I have suggested, symbolizes medieval, Christian Europe reemerging into modernity, monstrosously out of date. To hold this reality at bay, Eastern Europe can be left to linger behind the "iron curtain" of the Ottoman Empire. As this became politically untenable because of the spectacular violence against Christians, Eastern Europe had to be refigured without the traces of its Ottomanization. Brought under the cultural influence of Western Europe, these nations would have to be newly assimilated. Dracula, who fought against the Turks and then survived Ottoman rule, represents both Christianity and the history of Ottoman Europe. His hybridity—an Ottomanized European—results in a dissonant figure fitting uncomfortably, a blasphemous Christian hero.

The Count complicates his affiliations in his accusatory speech to Mina:

And so you, like the others, would play your brains against mine. You would help these men to hunt me and frustrate me in my designs! You know now, and they know in part already, and will know in full before long, what it is to cross my path. They should have kept their energies for use closer to home. Whilst they played wits against me—against me who commanded nations, and intrigued for them, and fought for them, hundreds of years before they were born—I was countermining them. (251-52)

Reminding Mina of his antiquity ("hundreds of years before they were born") and of the debt owed to him by the West for guarding against the Turks, the Count asserts a forgotten history. But he also warns that all along he has been "countermining" the West. The references to struggles between Europeans and infidels here are oblique. If the Count is referring to those battles, then his narrative can be glossed as follows: I fought for you—the West, Christianity, Europe. Then you turned against me, but all along I have been "countermining" you. The count casts himself as the victim seeking to avenge himself by "countermining" the West. As a countermining agent, the Count, however, blurs his identity as a Christian martyr and becomes the antagonist of the West, hence a closer affiliate to the Ottomans.

Therefore, an alternative identity for the Count suggests itself. The claim of "countermining" makes sense in terms of Turko-British relations in 1870s and 1880s, affiliating Dracula with the "sick man of Europe," the Ottoman Empire itself. "Countermining" seems more like the behavior of the Ottomans who repeatedly promised reforms to maintain the support of the Western powers but failed to fulfill these promises, delivering instead massacre after massacre. We need to see Dracula as a composite figure straining to represent coherently all the social forces that the disintegrating Ottoman Empire brought to light. There is even a similarity, for example, between Dracula and the Grand Vizier Abdul Aziz who ruled from 1861 until May 1876 when he was deposed; he committed suicide five days later (Clayton 133). We know from folklore that vampires are suicides (Leatherdale 28). The cultured, "occidentalized" Abdul Aziz is like the cultured, "occidentalized" Count Dracula.¹⁵ Abdul Aziz was the first ruler of the Ottomans to travel extensively in the West, and to learn European languages. Indeed he became a cosmopolitan leader, but he was plagued with charges of corruption and of misappropriation of the loans he received from the West. The Bulgarian massacres occurred in the crisis that followed his deposition and the backlash against his reforms.

Created out of violent conflict in the fifteenth century and brought back into the limelight once again in violence in the nineteenth century, Dracula represents the irreconcilable aspects of history that do not fall neatly into a European narrative of progress and cannot be accommodated without forcing a significant change in that Western identity. British policy indicated a preference for a Europeanized Ottoman state over the resurrection of a pre-Ottoman, Christian Eastern Europe that would ally itself with Russia. Yet the Europeanized Ottoman state had proven to be impossible to realize; hence, Britain's burden as the hegemonic force behind the Concert of Europe was to create a new Europe by destroying both what remained of the sick man of Europe and his antithesis, the powerful belief in the existence of a "pure" Christian Eastern Europe. The destruction of Dracula fantastically enacts the destruction of these historical resonances. It is imperative to slay the dragon (Dracula means "son of the dragon") in an action that calls to mind the feat of England's patron saint, Saint George.

It is also best not to learn too much about the Count since his history, according to the testimonies of both Harker and Seward, is seductive.

Dracula's own ambitions are less imperial than reclamatory. The Count emerges into modernity having studied it (what Arata refers to as the Count's "occidentalism") and seeks not to defeat it but to appropriate it, to reinvent it as his own community, monstrous as the results will be. In his resurgence, the Count lays claim to a kind of worldliness denied him as he is driven back to his homeland. To defeat the Count, Van Helsing must recontain him geographically, force him back to his place. History for Van Helsing is ultimately a metaphor for place. When he describes the challenge with which the Count's defeat presents him, he describes it in terms of place, giving further evidence of the novel's obsession with geography. Van Helsing asks, "How shall we find his where; and having found it, how can we destroy?" (209). Van Helsing implies that the Count is synonymous with his place of origin and that destroying him is also destroying it, the place. But the Count's identity is more properly transnational. Although intimately identified with the soil of Transylvania, the Count demonstrates in a very alarming way that his "where" can travel without changing its essence. In a wonderful image of migration that displays all the problems that migration causes for national histories, the Count not only packs his soil but spreads it and threatens to proliferate accordingly.

The Count is finally defeated because his history gives him away. When the Count fails to show up in Varna, Van Helsing turns once again to Jonathan's journal to find clues that will reveal the Count's nature and likely actions. With Mina (who helps him decipher the journal), Van Helsing turns to the Count's own words, as rendered by Jonathan, for evidence. Van Helsing triumphantly concludes, "His past is a clue" (296), by which he means that the count is likely to repeat the strategies that he had followed in the past. The historical account reveals that the Count always returns home. So Van Helsing surmises that the Count misled his pursuers by pretending that he was going to Varna, but has fled instead to Galatz. Van Helsing reaches the correct conclusion, but more importantly he demonstrates that the count's vulnerability was his desire to tell his history. Van Helsing's logic, therefore, demonstrates why it is best not to

tell one's history. In a similar vein, Jonathan remarks with relief at the end of the novel that there are no authentic documents of their adventure, and thus no way to prove that it happened. To verify the history of the struggle against the Count is in some ways to risk resurrecting him. It is best to forget.

In the letter to Gladstone that accompanied his presentation copy of the novel, Stoker states that "I trust that [the horrors and terrors] are calculated to cleanse the mind by pity and terror" (quoted in Belford 275). By deploying the language of tragedy, Stoker elevates the artistic stakes and makes the novel's happy ending appear problematic. He also indicates obliquely that Dracula is a tragic hero. Dracula, however, fulfills the model of a tragic hero only perversely. He is a nobleman and, at key moments, he speaks with eloquence and dignity. But he is also a vampire who indulges in shameful acts and whose death is particularly undignified. The indignity of his death threatens to cling to his murderer, Quincey Morris, just as the killing of the three women vampires stains Van Helsing. He refers to these killings as "butcher work" (320).¹⁶

Divided in its attitude towards the hero, Stoker's narrative sets in motion an incoherence that aims to blur and repress the cogency of Eastern Europe's claims on Europe. As readers we can either accept this incoherence as irresolvable or try to forge the disparate characterizations into a plausible explanation. Dracula remains the central challenge, as critics continue to ask Van Helsing's question, "what is Dracula?" Michael Valdez Moses aptly explains that "*Dracula* owes much of its mythopoeic power to the uncanny ability of its central figure to call forth a diverse and even mutually contradictory set of symbolic associations" (68). My reading, therefore, adds yet another set of associations to our considerations of *Dracula*, but it also addresses what I perceive as an oversight in the many fine contextualizations of the novel (in terms of empire and Ireland especially) that overlook the more obvious historical context of the novel, the Eastern Question. If we overlook this entirely, we risk carrying out the historical elision that the novel itself seeks to establish.

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NOTES

¹For political arguments made about *Dracula* in recent years see: Glover, Moses, and Schmitt on Ireland; Croley, Moretti, Wicke on class and capital; Auerbach, Craft, Roth, Signorotti on gender; Arata, and Boone on empire and national identity.

²Van Helsing's strategy is to determine first "the kind of enemy with which we have to deal." He arrives at the conclusion that it is a vampire by comparing the evidence of the monster's destructiveness with information he finds in his books. After he has gained knowledge of the enemy, he will "make known to [the others] something of the history of this man" so that the history can be used against the vampire to defeat him (209). I examine this reasoning more closely later in the essay.

³See, for example, Leatherdale, Kirtley, Nandris, McNally. The acknowledged source of Stoker's descriptions of the Carpathians is his brother's travel narrative, *With the Unspeakables; or Two Years' Campaigning in European and Asiatic Turkey*. On this, see Belford (128-29).

⁴The historian of Gladstone's political career, H. C. G. Matthew, describes how the Concert of Europe functioned from 1814 until 1871: it "had rested on the principle of reconciling the interests of the Great Power states through congresses (occasionally), conferences (frequently), and co-ordinated pressure upon deviant members. Membership of it conferred and confirmed status and in turn expected responsibility, and its members were ready to go to considerable lengths to maintain the framework of Concert and Conference. It thus had a practical and a theoretical justification. It recognized the differing interests of state, it accepted that some states were more powerful than others, and it worked through the existing social structure of Europe, the continuing power of the aristocracy being exemplified in its control of the embassies and chancelleries through which the Concert system was worked" (19). This was the Concert of Europe that Gladstone wanted to strengthen; free trade would regulate the international community economically and the Concert would regulate it politically (Matthew 20).

⁵See critics cited above in note 1. The most extreme argument of this sort is Moses's who argues that Dracula is a portrait of Parnell, not necessarily the historical Parnell, but the mythified Parnell. Moses's essay is provocative on the emergence of the new nationalisms of postcoloniality for which Ireland sets the example and which he discusses as setting forth a "vampire nation" built on the idea of freedom but tyrannical in nature.

⁶Because of Stoker's deployment of multiple discourses, there have been several narratological readings of the novel. See, for example, Seed, Case, and Wicke.

⁷Not only does Harker recognize contemporary things in the castle (as, for example, the Count's English books), but he recognizes all the signs of wealth: the quality of the upholstery and draperies, the furniture, the table service. He recognizes all the accoutrements of aristocratic existence which he acknowledges are not only old but well preserved in comparison to those he has seen in Hampton Court (25).

⁸In a suggestive, alternative reading of Stoker's image of eliminating ("blotted out") the "trace" of Dracula, Stephen Arata argues that the "psychological and epistemological" erasures suggested here also "poin[t] to the cancellation of writing, to Harker's

(though not necessarily Stoker's) attempt to disavow the Gothic narrative preceding the 'Note'" (130-32).

⁹Jennifer Wicke also argues that the Count is portrayed as the "purest European;" the Count, however, according to Wicke "has . . . felt himself on the periphery . . . and by coming to England he has an opportunity to meld vampirism to the modern forces of imperial control" (487). Wicke thus argues that the vampire colludes with Britain's imperial project. I argue instead that the characters in the novel must come to terms with the revelation that the center of Europe may be in the East, in the Carpathians.

¹⁰For a discussion of the changing attitudes of the British public toward the Ottomans from the early to late Victorian periods see Cunningham 75ff.

¹¹The reform-minded Grand Vizier Abdul Aziz was deposed in May 1876. The Bulgarian massacres occurred in June of that year. A new regime installed in 1877 passed a new constitution, "a mere manoeuvre, another airy promise of reform, which would not be fulfilled" (Clayton 137). This constitution was thrown out soon after.

¹²Much of the anti-Turkish sentiment faded in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 where Russia's successes in the early part of the war panicked Britain (Webb 354-55). Bram Stoker's brother, George, served as a medical officer in this war on behalf of Turkey. He drew on these experiences to write *With the Unspenkables*. See note 3 above.

¹³Although Stoker's Dracula is a composite figure, he is usually identified as Vlad V who ruled as Prince of Walachia from 1456-62. He defeated an invading Ottoman army of 250,000 men on the Danube in 1461, but then lost his throne in 1462 when the Ottomans installed his brother Radu on the throne. For fuller historical information see Nandris, and MacNally.

¹⁴Kirtley enumerates the atrocities supposed to have been performed by Vlad (13-14). Nandris explains how Vlad's scorched earth policy alienated the peasantry and made them reluctant to fight the Turks. The Turks capitalized on this dissatisfaction by demonizing Vlad (371).

¹⁵Arata describes Dracula's knowledge of the West as his "occidentalism;" this is part of Arata's argument of "reverse colonization" (121ff.).

¹⁶Quincey already mortally wounded by the gypsies strikes the decisive blow but Mina narrates this as if it is the knife and not Quincey that kills: "Mr. Morris's bowie knife plunged into the heart" (325). Quincey is presented clearly as a martyr; his death cleanses him of the stain of the murder.

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