Chapter 3
Dissecting Vampire Texts

This chapter attempts to analyze mainly two Vampire texts— Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) and Grahame-Smith’s *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* (2010) (see fig. 5). Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, perhaps, is the best known Vampire text and the words “Vampire” and “Count Dracula” have become almost effectively synonymous. The eponymous anti-hero of Bram Stoker's 1897 novel has become the reference point to which the characteristics of other Vampires are judged to have adhered, or to have departed from. Stoker's Vampire has ceased to be merely a fictional character, but has become an indicator of a shared cultural discourse. As Gelder comments:

It is, after all, a textually dense narrative, written from a number of perspectives or ‘points of view’, which brings together a multiplicity of discursive fields…. The productive nature of this novel may lie in the uneasy cohabitation of these various discursive fields and in the variability of their coding – it may undercode at times and overcode at others. At any rate, it seems that there is always more to be said about *Dracula*, always room for further interpretation and elaboration: this is a novel which seems (these days, especially) to generate readings, rather than close them down. (Gelder 65)

What distinguishes *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* from the regular contemporary Vampire novels is that it is not a romance about monstrosity and the metaphysical anguish that torments a modern Vampire. Rather, a historical evil has been dealt in this novel in the shape of a Vampire. The Vampires are white Southerners whose cause is the enslavement and torture of human beings. There is no sympathy for their villainy and it serves as an alternative to the
contemporary Vampire scenario where their monstrosity is dealt with ample understanding and compassion.

At the end of the 12th century, the Romanesque style gave way to the Gothic style, which originated in France, and quickly spread throughout Europe. The architecture of the late and high middle ages is usually called Gothic architecture. Gothic architecture was mainly religious that reflected the power and wealth of the cities and the hereditary, dark, sexual, reproductive, congenital power of the old monarchy. It’s the architecture that we associate most commonly with the great Cathedrals of Europe. New techniques included pointed arches and rib vaults. The weight of the rib vault rested on the pillars inside the cathedral and on the flying buttresses outside. Windows were made of stained glass; there were also rose windows in bright colors. Gothic cathedrals were high and filled with light, to represent heaven. Those high arched buildings, Gothic architecture, were very important in the development of England’s own sense of itself.

Due to political reasons and in order to make the kingdom grow, Henry VIII separated himself from the Roman church. This caused a separation between the English on the Northwest of Europe and Rome on the South of Europe. This was a separation of modern/Protestant and ancient/Catholic. This style of architecture fell into disrepair after the death of Henry VIII. The Church of England decided to give away the old monasteries to people. But people could not use those monasteries and let them go into disrepair and they began to build other churches and monasteries in England. By the 18th century, those buildings were not merely styled of Gothic architecture, but they were crumbling ruins displaying all sorts of supernatural hints.²

The use of the supernatural is one of the main features of Gothic literature and Dracula is a fine example of Gothic literature. It’s an example in which Castle Dracula becomes almost as
visible a symbol to us as does Dracula himself. And when we get to England we see Dracula again in his boxes of earth, in the basement of an old church. The imagery that surrounds all this is clear—we have castles, but not simply castles, the ruined ones which are the representations of an outmoded power structure that we need to resist. An essential inhabitant of such outdated and dilapidated castles and an equally essential ingredient of the Vampire lore is the bat. Bats are not only nocturnal they also can be considered as anti-birds. If dove is the symbol that mediates between God—the Son and God—the Father (Catholic imagery), then Bat is the nocturnal version of it. Instead of giving men its blood as Jesus offers to his followers at the Last Supper, the bat takes away human blood and hence, the Anti-Christ.

Blood consists of 2/3 plasma, a fluid portion and 1/3 corpuscles (white, red, and platelets), the latter forming its nutritive element.³ “It is absolutely essential to the life of every part of the body that it should be in such relation with a current of blood that matters can freely pass from the blood to it, and from it to the blood, by transudation through the walls of the vessels in which the blood is contained” (Huxley 141). Thus, blood is literally the vehicle of life in an organism, and it performs its function by constant circulation through the heart. The ancient world was ignorant of this circulation process. Modern physiologist William Harvey was the first to demonstrate the circulation of blood in human body. But primitive man did not need to wait for any scientific explanation in order to observe the significance of blood in a body of man or animal. Numerous primitive customs illustrate the perils and powers of blood for the ancient mind. The Quran says Allah created man from “clotted blood and blew unto him from his own breath” (XCVI: 2) and in Burma blood is preserved and consumed on special occasions.⁴ Examples like these show us the use of blood as a substitute for life. Many primitive people used to drink the blood of enemies in order to assimilate the physical energy of blood and secure their
Thus, blood being a well-known soul- or life vehicle, it was supposed that supernatural creatures were eager to obtain it, as is seen from the well-known example of the shades for whom Odysseus sacrificed sheep on his visit to Hades. The same practices can be found in the dark magic or “tantra-sadhna” in India. Primitive people used to kill animals and sacrifice the blood to the gods in order to please them. This practice is still prevalent in some religions like particular sects of Hinduism. The Vikings used to sacrifice animals in order to satisfy Frey, son of Njord and god of prosperity, and sprinkle the blood on the field before sowing seeds.

Blood serves a crucial part in Dracula. Dracula says: “the blood is the life” (Stoker 206). According to Christian belief it is a sin to consume both the meat and the blood. This is one of the bases of the Jewish laws of Kashrut. When Dracula says “the blood is the life”, he is in fact violating the dietary laws prescribed in the Bible. He is consuming the life rather than respecting life.

And finally, let’s take a look at water imagery in the novel. Water being a universal symbol is used in every culture and has some obvious associations. Flowing water in a river represents the passage of time. Dracula cannot cross an ocean or a river without being invited. Water in a deep blue ocean represents the disillusion of the self and Dracula cannot touch the ocean because he has no soul. Water as snow represents frozen water which symbolizes infertility and obscured vision. Dracula is seen at Castle Dracula in snow at the beginning and the end of the book. These key images, the bat as the Anti-Bird, the castle as the ruined zone of aristocratic power, blood as a medium for life-giving and life-taking and water as the hope for passage of time into the future and blocked fertility— these images are crucial in Dracula.

There are three key terms related to Vampires— sex, immortality and transgression. They long for their love. There is a widespread belief that the revitalized corpses can have sexual
union with the living. This motive is found in the ancient Greek story of the girl Philinnion, who after her death was found with the youth Machates as his lover in her father's house, leaving him at dawn. The Vampire-lover theme is also illustrated by the 'Dead Rider' cycle, as in Burger's 'Lenore' or Scott's spirited version, 'William and Helen'. Burger's poem is based on the folk-belief that a dead man appears to those dearly loved— lover, wife, or child— in order to draw them to the grave. The living person rides with him on horseback or follows him, ignorant or oblivious that he is really dead. Usually they reach the churchyard. The corpse sinks into his grave and the living barely escapes being entombed, or sometimes dies at the grave. Of this there are similar versions among the native tales of the Scandinavian, Icelandic, Albanian, Breton, Scots, and English.

Dracula, in some sense, is the alternative to the appropriate Victorian lover as he would come to his beloved only during the night. The marriages that take place in this book happen through actual marriage, through blood transfusion, and through Vampire-biting and nursing which indicate the transgression of the notion of marital bond. A similar treatment of blood can be found in “Flea”, a metaphysical poem by John Donne that speaks of union through blood. The poem is built around the simple situation where a flea has just bitten the man in the poem and the woman that he loves. The woman is poised to crush the flea when the man argues that the insect and its act of feeding is a corporal, though symbolic, consummation of their love affair and possible marriage that has been denied in real life as it has united their blood by drinking from both of them. In the popular TV show True Blood, Eric asks Sookie to drink his blood after he drinks from her so that they can “be one.” In the novel The Southern Vampire Mysteries exchange of blood between a Vampire and a human creates a bond that links the pair empathically, enabling them to feel each other's emotions and causing them to feel safe and
secure when in close proximity to each other. Blood transfusion, thus, unites two bodies, but not necessarily by the body and perpetuates a strange paradoxical phenomenon.

Vampire-biting and nursing indicates a transgression of the notion of marital bond. This transgression leads to the diabolical immortality. In the religiously pure case, it leads to the bearing of children as people carry on their spirit through their descendants. In the diabolical case, there are no children. But others are forced to be like the maker and live eternally. So sex is parodied, inverted and satirized. And the problem in the book that focuses on Vampires is the ways in which the transgression can be presented from normal marriage to something else, from licit to illicit sexuality.

Victorian English picked up a French phrase ―la petite mort‖ which means “the little death‖. In Victorian times that phrase was meant to refer to orgasm that happens just at post-coital moment. But calling this “the little death” refers to the idea that there is a loss of self that goes on. “The little death” that Dracula administers to his three progenies who had become his wives, “the little death” that he gives to Lucy, “the little death” he tries to give to Mina, that little death is always an alternative to ordinary, licit biological sexuality.10

In this book about sex, immortality, and transgression many characters double the roles of others and most of the times these doubles are binaries in nature. Jonathan Harker comes to Mina and the suitors come to see Lucy in the day time, but Dracula comes at night. The relation among these doubles gets even more complicated. Lucy, for example, could be thought of as a variety of Mina. Lucy finds herself attracted by her strange wild dreams and she acknowledges enjoying that. Later when Mina has that same feeling she is disturbed by the fact that she let herself enjoy that. Lucy ultimately has the blood of all three of her suitors infused into her own body when she is sick which can be taken as a perverse marriage. Mina, on the other hand, is
already a chaste married woman who despises her feelings of sexuality that go outside the marriage. She has loyal lovers as opposed to illicit lovers who help her in the hunting for Dracula in order to save her. Lucy belongs to a higher class in the society than Mina who is a school teacher and the wife of a solicitor’s clerk who conveniently becomes a solicitor later. Lucy who belongs closer to the rank of Dracula who is himself a hereditary aristocrat is more drawn to him. Mina is able to resist him to a greater extent.

In the film *Dracula, Prince of Darkness* (1966), the authority of the conventional map is shown to be flawed when it comes to Vampiric spaces. A group of travellers are warned away from a nearby castle by a local priest: “Castle— but there’s no castle marked on the map, I would have noticed!” With an ominous look, the priest continues: “Because it is not on the map does not mean it does not exist— stay away from it!” This tends to “stress the link between Vampirism and Victorian sexual repression; indeed, it could be argued that they are largely responsible for the now-conventional reading of Vampire narratives according to this model. Here repression is figured in spatial terms, as territory uncovered by the map – a fantastic space outside the symbolic order, where Dracula’s libidinous forces are at work” (Spooner 56).

Another pairing is that of Dracula and Van Helsing who form an interesting set of contrasts and comparisons. Both are old— Dracula is hundreds of years old with the ancient knowledge and Van Helsing is old in comparison to all the other mortal characters in the book. Dracula comes entirely out of the world of superstition and Van Helsing, in theory, out of the world of science. A renowned Professor he has always his scientific tools with him including the tools for doing blood transfusions which actually never could have worked the way they are said to work in the book because blood typing had not yet been invented. Though he is the man of science and yet he puts a magic circle around Mina to protect her and sterilizes the sacred earth
that Dracula needs to sleep in by putting in the Sacred Wafers of the Holy Spirit. There is a combination of the superstitions or at least the religious with the scientific in Van Helsing that indicates that in order to fight Dracula, Van Helsing must transgress the boundaries of legitimate science and accept the superstitious realities that give Dracula his immortality. Dracula does not simply incite personal transgression; he incites transgression of chastity as well as transgression of knowledge. This Vampire is himself the perfect manifestation of the transgression of sex and immortality that all human desire.

The transgression of boundaries is a common motif in world literature. We can study this in Western literature most easily by tracing the concept of Forbidden Fruit. The very term Forbidden Fruit, of course, is often used to describe illicit relations. If we look at the history of Forbidden Fruit it actually moves through a logical progression. The first example of “forbidden fruit” is the fruit in the garden that is forbidden to Eve and Adam. They disobeyed and ate the fruit. The Devil, the serpent said to Eve: “ye shall not surely die”. Immediately after eating the fruit they were ashamed of their knowledge which was not simply knowledge. It was the knowledge of good and evil represented by sexual chastity or sexual licence. To prevent them access to the tree of life, God cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. According to the King James Version of the Bible God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (Genesis 3:22) and therefore he cast them out. They did not surely die. The Devil told the truth.

The “forbidden fruit” functions in terms of sexual imagery in an interesting way. Eric Rabkin explains:
“Garden” comes from a word meaning built up of a wall which can be taken as a female symbol. Within the Garden we have two trees— which can be taken as male symbols. On the tree we have the fruit which is always translated in English as apple although the Hebrew version tells it is simply a fruit— a female symbol again. And the temptation to eat that fruit is given by the serpent— which can again be taken as a male symbol. This shows that the Garden of Eden has the male symbol within the female within the male within female which is an entire merging of the symbols of complementary sexuality, and Eve and Adam they eat of them, and they become wise. The consequence of this is childbirth, the labour and death. (Rabkin “Forbidden Fruit”)

If we look at this structurally, the God figure in Genesis had put a prohibition against the consumption of this particular fruit which Adam and Eve transgressed and in so doing, they actually became more powerful. It’s true that they would die, but it’s not true that they must “surely die.” In fact, they would have children and the line of Adam and Eve would continue. The transgression of the prohibition leads to more power and the power is transferred from the authority that made the prohibition to those who violated it.

The next crucial violation in the Bible is that when Cain kills his brother Abel. Cain has been a farmer and Abel has been a shepherd and he has slaughtered sheep offering them to God and found favour in God’s eyes. So Cain kills his brother out of jealousy as his sacrifice of the farm-products was not as valued as that of Abel which had required killing. In this context we should refer to the mark of Cain which is not a sign for his evil deed. It is, in fact, a sign which implies that Cain is under God’s protection. When Cain goes to God and says all men will want to shun him and kill him, God puts a mark on him so that others will know that he is under God’s
protection and Cain is condemned to live forever for having committed that crime. In other words, Cain gains God’s protection and immortality as a result of violating the prohibition against killing living life. That mark of Cain is, of course, the mark that we see on Dracula’s forehead when he is hit by a shovel wielded by Jonathan Harker. And it is also that mark we see on Mina’s forehead that finally disappears when Dracula faces true death. That mark of Cain makes one undead but it gives power. That is the power Reinfield wants, the power of immortality that Dracula can offer.¹³

When Dracula begins his attacks on Mina, he takes his short nail, opens a vein in his chest and holds her head against it forcing her to drink his blood. Giving his blood to Mina doesn’t kill him and in this way Dracula offers an iron-clad taboo, and a greater transgression which would give him even more power. The history of English literature is one in which power is held by those who are in authority and sought by the next generation, they violate the prohibitions and in so doing are cast out. But they are cast out into a wider world in which they become more powerful. By resisting the prohibitions, by remaining chaste, one does not grow. By transgressing those things, by coming to really taste the blood one becomes as powerful as Mina who is a sensual character, around which all the men need to associate in order to be able to truly defeat Dracula.

The notion of doubles goes back to a literary conception offered by Jean Paul Richter at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The kind of doubles he was talking about was in German “doppelgänger” (“doppel” meaning “double” and “gänger” meaning “walker”) which means someone who goes along with someone. The modern notion of double sometimes includes the more restricted notion of “doppelgänger” and sometimes a bit
broader. Both these are important in understanding the character relations in *Dracula* and, in fact, in Gothic literature.

Dracula, the character is, in many ways, alone. We see that he has no actual servants in his castle. He is the driver that brings Jonathan to Castle Dracula, then disappears and later shows up to invite him in through the doors. He is the one who prepares his meals. He is even the one in a remarkably touching domestic scene who makes his bed for him when he thinks that Jonathan Harker is out of the room. Dracula, in other words, is alone. And yet, Dracula stands in relation to each member of the group that aims to hunt him down. This group has in it Jonathan Harker, Quincey Morris, Arthur Holmwood, Jack Seward and Abraham Van Helsing.

Socially, these characters function as a composite character in some sense, opposing Dracula. Jonathan Harker begins as an apprentice to a lawyer, a solicitor to a clerk and it is on that business that he ends up going to Castle Dracula. He conveniently ends up inheriting the business. So Jonathan Harker moves up in the world as does his wife Mina. Quincey Morris is an American. This American represents a different kind of person than any of the English characters. Let’s have a look at a characteristic statement about Quincey from Dr. Seward’s diary. He says:

> I could not but admire, even at such a moment, the way in which a dominant spirit asserted itself. In all our hunting parties and adventures in different parts of the world, Quincey Morris had always been the one to arrange the plan of action, and Arthur and I had been accustomed to obey him implicitly. Now, the old habit seemed to be renewed instinctively. With a swift glance around the room, he at once laid out our plan of attack, and without speaking a word, with a gesture, placed us each in position. (Stoker 443)
The American myth has helped shaping a large fraction of American literature. First, the key aspect of that American myth is that the hero is automatically understood as the hero. The hero even if he is young and inexperienced everyone will follow him. Quincey Morris shows us that heroic version of America which is quite unlike the English. But soon John Seward admits that they had not an organized plan of attack:

But the evil smile as quickly passed into a cold stare of lion-like disdain. His expression again changed as, with a single impulse, we all advanced upon him. It was a pity that we had not some better organized plan of attack, for even at the moment I wondered what we were to do. (Stoker 444)

Bram Stoker has deliberately included an American in the group only to show that while one may want an American for a sense of freedom, independence and authority, but one can’t really count on it. To defeat Dracula, one needs someone like Jonathan Harker, who is working his way up the social scale by inheriting his job as a solicitor or John Seward, the doctor, whose diary that was. In 1897, the role of a doctor is not particularly a prestigious role, but it is a substantial role and since Seward has managed to put together and grow his own business— the insane asylum, we know that he is significant as a member of the society. His friend Arthur Holmwood, in fact, inherits a title, a small title compared to the title of Dracula. And Abraham Van Helsing is not only a doctor, he is older, he is European, and he has wisdom. Collectively they represent the modern, democratic, Protestant alternative to the older, aristocratic, Catholic fear that is projected by Dracula. Dracula is alone; they are together. He consults no one; they share their documents. He has the power of twenty men; they have the power of five, but coordinated five men. In a sense, when Dracula intends to go to London and feast there, it suggests that he will continue to be able to dominate all the people around him as he has dominated the
peasants from Castle Dracula. But in fact, England is democratic unlike Transylvania. The people share their knowledge. In the course of this novel, every time information is withheld from Mina her situation becomes worse. Every time Mina is included in the conversation and they read her notes, they collectively know more and build up their knowledge, their scientific capacity to attack Dracula even though the scientific capacity rests on the knowledge of superstition. So what we have is two kinds of doubling. In a way we have doubles who are contrasts to each other, they are just the committee, democratic, spread out, Protestant, different countries and Dracula, individual, aristocratic, old and undying. We have contrasts, but we also have doppelgängers. At the final moments it is Mina who is the other part of Dracula. There was, for that fleeting second, at the time of his true death, a look of relief on his face as his undying soul is finally released. In a way her power is linked to his, that doppelgänger, the double goer is a character that together with one or more characters forms a single psyche. “Dracula and Mina are together the single psyche that defines both marriage and its limits” (Rabkin “Class Struggle”).

Mina is called Mina throughout most of the novel but her real name is Wilhelmina. “Wil” means “intent” or “volition”; “helmina” is cognate with “helmet” which denotes “protection”. Mina symbolizes protection and on the other hand, Dracula is the symbol for attack. Both these feelings are incorporated in extreme sexuality. These two characters form a pair of doppelgängers and collectively with the other doubles they create a world that continues to attract us.

There is a concern for language throughout the novel. This book is composed of documents—diaries of individuals, their reports of other people’s diaries and clippings from newspapers. The characters struggle to understand each other, to read each other’s handwriting, to use the typewriter, to get stenography to write things down faster. Writing is one of the most
significant technologies outside our bodies that help human beings to function as social animals. And it is one that Dracula masters because he needs it to function in the modern world. All Dracula’s powers are isolated and are mainly physical powers. He has the ability of metamorphose into mist and fog. But language plays an important part. He cannot enter a house unless someone invites him in. He does not speak with anyone that does not come under his power. Language is crucial for establishing social relations, writing is crucial for widening those social relations. In Dracula there is a conflict between old Europe of ancient aristocracy and modern Europe of collaborative democracy and the move from the spoken to the written language reflects a move towards the modern democratic world.\(^\text{14}\)

In recent years there has been a marked rise in the interest in seeing Stoker’s Dracula as referring to the Irish Land League crisis. Terry Eagleton has seen in Dracula himself a personification of the bad conscience of the Anglo-Irish.\(^\text{15}\) Recently there has been an attempt to portray the novel as presenting the full gamut of Stoker’s objections to the Irish Land League, with Dracula representing the Catholic landlord, and the Slovaks and Gypsies who help him representing the farmers (Gibson 69). It is argued that Dracula’s castle and his blood sucking women represent a sublimation of the concealed perversities of the Anglo-Irish nuclear family.\(^\text{16}\) It appears that for a large number of critics Dracula’s Transylvania is merely a masked Ireland, although Stoker’s true political attitude to his country remains an object of debate among scholars.

Few critics have looked at the politics of the novel in terms of the Eastern Question, a political issue which was personally important to Bram Stoker because his brother, George Stoker, had been in the Balkan region. Vesna Goldsworthy has argued that Dracula, and other Vampire novels set in the Balkans, represent the fear of ‘reverse-colonization’, and the contrasts
in identity between a stable Britain and an unstable East European hinterland.\textsuperscript{17} The novel represents an East European or Near Eastern myth converted into a West European political allegory. The myth has been filtered through Western ideas and forms of literary representation and thus the political opinions towards the East portrayed through this novel generally have been isolated from post-colonial criticism. Gibson comments:

\ldots the two main strands of post-colonial criticism– the binarism of Said which observes Western texts discerning the Orient as racial other, and the more complex Bhabha notion of the ‘hybrid’, in which the narrative work of the Third World culture adopts the language of the aggressor in order to articulate its local content,\textsuperscript{18} – simply do not apply. The first method has been rejected for reasons already given, namely the need to observe the real circumstances against which texts are written and understand its complexities. The reason for rejecting the second is also obvious, since the text envelops Near Eastern superstitions into a Western articulation that gives the Near Eastern myth no true voice of its own, and whose ‘otherness’ is in fact controlled by already existent Gothic traditions. There is no space for hybridity of any kind… especially since the texts which informed the writers of the superstition… were all Western, and for the most part were not actually reliable. (12)

William Hughes argues that for the post-colonial critic Transylvania must represent the ‘undefined’ ‘Racial other’, in which the novel is read as “an abstracted conflict of Orient against Occident”, rather than a more defined threat like the mutiny in India (Hughes 92). He then further argues that Dracula could just as easily be read as a critique of the colonial predator—“the ‘Rhodesean colossus’ who does as he pleases” (Hughes 101). As he notes, the necessary
obliqueness of Eastern Europe’s relation to British colonialism makes such vague motifs inevitable given the lack of a hard basis in historical fact. Eleni Coundouriotis describes Dracula as the “Ottomanised European” (Coundouriotis 154) and says that Stoker was following a Gladstonian position in fearing a Turkified Balkans which could not be absorbed into his idea of European states, and that the novel is an attempt at a ‘deligitimation of history’ (144) or simply an attempt to ignore it. The Ottoman Empire having failed to Europeanize itself leaves the people it once oppressed in a position that cannot be absorbed into Europe and thus, in an obvious symbiosis, its European residue is a threat to Britain’s own understanding of itself as a European state:

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. 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 what remained of the sick man of Europe and his antithesis, the powerful belief in the existence of a ‘pure’ Christian Europe. The destruction of Dracula fantastically enacts the destruction of these historical resonances. (154)

Thus, according to Coundouriotis, Dracula acts as a form of textual repression of history due to Britain’s need to construct a self-identity in the face of reform, so that Dracula becomes symbolic of the Balkans along with its inassimilable Turkish past. The historical event, the Treaty of Berlin in the year 1878 (the year Stoker moved from Dublin to London), had greatly influenced Stoker’s attitude to Balkan politics in 1897 (the publication year of Dracula).
The Treaty of Berlin (1878) ratified the complete independence of Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, the return of Bessarabia to Russia and autonomy to a new Bulgaria, which incorporated land from Thessaly, entire Macedonia, and a part of Albania. The Turks kept Bosnia and Hercegovina, and a curtailed Albania, the Sandjak of Novipazar was divided between Montenegro and Serbia. The Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II had lost most of his European possessions by this treaty. Germany and Austria-Hungary firmly supported Turkey, and both Britain and Russia were alarmed at this. Among the major powers, only Britain recognized the threat a Russian presence would have in the new ‘Slavo-phil’ and Orthodox states, and so tried to shore up a bloc for maintaining the Ottoman presence in Europe as a counterbalance to Russia which could be a possible threat to Britain’s control of India.

It appears that Stoker’s political position as regards the Balkans and the so-called Eastern Question was decidedly Conservative. Stoker’s views are also in accord with those of his younger brother George, who became sympathetic towards the Ottomans, while working as an army surgeon for them. At an immediate political level, it is in the context of the Treaty of Berlin that Stoker’s Dracula should really be read. Dracula does not represent a denunciation of Turkish influence upon areas that have fallen under its influence so much as a complaint that the natural degeneracy of Balkan Christians requires their Ottoman rulers, an idea prevalent in the Turcophile writings of pre-nineteenth century writers like Henry Blount (1636) and Jonathan Morritt (1796), and more recently David Urquhart (1838). Matthew Gibson comments: To reiterate, the manipulation of history and ethnography in Dracula develops an unusual political point of view in relation to the Eastern Question which sanctions Turkish control while paradoxically condemning the East Europeans for being Eastern. However, while Stoker’s novel may sanction the Treaty of Berlin (1878) due to his brother’s reactionary influence, this may be
also as a result of his genuine fear of Russian influence in the Balkan region, thanks to his further immolation in the ideas of Sergei Stepniak. Thus Balkan Christian nations, while presented as Vampiric for rhetorical reasons, may mask, behind the allegory, the fear of another, encroaching imperial power. (89)

As Clive Leatherdale in his *The Origins of Dracula* has shown, Stoker’s main sources for the superstitions and ethnographic history of Eastern Europe were William Wilkinson’s *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (1820), Emily Gerard’s essay *Transylvanian Superstitions* (1885) and Major E. C. Johnson’s *On the Track of the Crescent* (1885), whose works he blended into an interesting falsehood.21 If we examine the lecture on Transylvanian history Dracula gives Jonathan, in which he delineates the history of his race, we see that Dracula is a Szekely, whose people apparently came down from Iceland to settle in the Carpathian basin to mix with the Huns. Stoker here derives this ethnography entirely from passages in Johnson’s *On the Track of the Crescent*. Stoker takes the details from this book and manipulates them to allow the Szekelys to be the earliest group in the area, who pushed out all the others (except the Huns) before others had arrived.

Technically, Stoker is wrong in his description of the historical account. The origin of the Szekelys as a people is still uncertain, but it is assumed that they were either a Hungarian tribe that was lured into the Carpathian basin by the Avars before the Hungarian conquest, or that they were a group of Turkic tribesmen who assimilated with the Hungarians, and then came with them.22 Stoker’s history of the Dracula clan was suggested by all three sources in conjunction:

When was redeemed that great shame of my nation, the shame of Cassova, when the flags of the Wallach and the Magyar went down beneath the Crescent; who was it but one of my own race who as Voivode crossed the Danube and beat the
Turk on his own ground! This was a Dracula indeed. Who was it that his own unworthy brother, when he had fallen, sold his people to the Turk and brought the shame of slavery upon them! Was it not this Dracula, indeed, who inspired that other of his race who in a later age again and again brought his forces over the great river into Turkeyland; who, when he was beaten back, came again, and again, and again, though he had to come alone from the bloody field where his troops were being slaughtered, since he knew that he alone could ultimately triumph? They said that he thought only of himself. Bah! What good are peasants without a leader? Where ends the war without a brain and heart to conduct it? Again, when, after the battle of Mohacs, we threw off the Hungarian yoke, we of the Dracula blood were amongst their leaders, for our spirit would not brook that we were not free. Ah, young sir, the Szekelys – and the Dracula as their heart’s blood, their brains, and their swords – can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach. (Stoker 47-48)

Here we can see Wilkinson’s notes on Wallachia and Moldavia influencing Stoker’s knowledge of history. Wilkinson describes how in 1448 a Wallachian Voivode Dracula was defeated along with the Hungarians at ‘Cossovo’ battle, but was avenged by another Dracula, who, most probably was his son, in a battle across the Danube after 1460. The Sultan Mahomet pushed Dracula into hiding in Hungary and placed his brother Bladus on the Wallachian throne. Wilkinson explains that Dracula can mean ‘evil’ in the Vlach language (19), and thus Stoker mixes up the mysterious attributions of Wilkinson with the Transylvanian nosferatu described by Emily Gerard in her article. Also, Stoker’s comment that the Szekelys ‘threw off’ the Hungarian yoke’ at the Battle of Mohacs is a further misrepresentation of enemies, since
Johnson describes the battle (1526 AD) as being the point at which Hungarian independence fell into the hands of ‘the unspeakable’ – meaning the Turks. Leatherdale notes that Vlad the impaler myths never surface in Dracula because the author was unaware of them.25

Thus he presents the anti-Turkish element in Dracula’s history linking Wallachs and Magyars with Serbs. Throughout the novel the Turkish connection appears time and again. When Jonathan crosses the Danube in Buda-Pesth, he finds that “the most Western of splendid Bridges over the Danube, which is here of noble width and depth, took us among the traditions of Turkish rule” (Stoker 1). This tells us that we are moving from ‘West’ to ‘East’; we are entering a land which once belonged to the Ottomans. Before they set out in search of Dracula, Van Helsing warns his confederates that “he was no common man” since he was the same “Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk, over the great river on the very frontier of Turkey-land” (240).

Coundouriotis has also noted that Dracula’s desire for infesting London with Vampirism appears to be a sense of having been betrayed by West Europeans for his valiant frontier work (149). He mentions this euphemistically to Mina Harker in the only scene when he speaks for himself while in England. Castigating Mina for working with the others to stop him, he sneers:

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 countering them. (Stoker 288)

Dracula’s meaning here might be that he is being attacked by the very people whom he has protected by fighting the Turks in past years. If this is the meaning, then Stoker is reflecting the feelings of many Middle and East European people as regards the lack of gratitude shown to
them by Western Christians for fighting the Islamic hordes, a feeling which is prevalent among Serbs and Macedonians till today.

The speech in which Dracula tells Jonathan Harker of his lineage is not only an important clue for Van Helsing in predicting Dracula’s movements, but is also important for defaming Eastern Christians. When the group are in Varna considering where Dracula might go next, Van Helsing points to that passage in Jonathan’s diary, quoted above, where Dracula declares how when his predecessor had gone, “again and again” over the Danube into Ottoman rule, “when he was beaten back, came again, and again, and again, and again, though he had to come alone from the bloody field where his troops were being slaughtered, since he knew that he alone could ultimately triumph” (Stoker 493). Van Helsing uses this to show that Dracula “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” (494). This is because he is a creature of habit who simply repeats his previous actions instead of learning from past experiences. Van Helsing frames this in the terms of one of the popular psychological theories of the day:

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. Thus, in difficulty he has to seek resource in habit. His past is a clue, and the one page of it that we know – and that from his own lips – tells that once before, when in what Mr Morris would call a ‘tight place’, he went back to his own country from the land he had tried to invade, and thence, without losing purpose, prepared himself for a new effort. He came again, better equipped for his work; and won. So he came to London to invade a new land. He was beaten, and when all hope of
success was lost, and his existence in danger, he fled back over the sea to his home; just as formerly he had fled back over the Danube from Turkey land. (495)

Van Helsing is analyzing patterns of criminal behavior in Dracula. Dracula always returned to his castle, because he had to preserve himself to continue his fight for his people and was clearly successful enough to do this “again and again”. For Van Helsing to look for patterns of criminal behavior in Dracula’s motives to recoil depreciates his declaration of heroism beyond the plausible plain pragmatism. This correspondingly casts the Turks in the role of policemen and keepers of the law, rather than oppressors. Besides, in comparing the present situation with Dracula’s previous fights against the Turks, Van Helsing is secretly identifying his group with the Turks. In contrast to Coundouriotis’s belief that Dracula echoes Gladstone’s fear that the Balkans represents a hybrid society which, thanks to its Ottoman past, cannot be incorporated within Europe (Coundouriotis 153), and, thus, whose history must be repressed. Dracula, although a supernatural Gothic novel, is placed entirely within the political and technological realities of Stoker’s time, and hence addresses the political relation to Turkey in a much more critical and urgent way. While we can see that Stoker does not praise the Turks, there is much evidence to show that he takes a pro-Ottoman position on the question of Balkan independence; particularly when Buda-Pesth and Transylvania are defined as Oriental and as showing “the traditions of Turkish rule” (Stoker 6).

When Jonathan escapes from the count’s castle, he finds salvation first in Klausenburgh, from where he is sent back to Buda-Pesth, to reside in the safe Catholic Hospital of St. Joseph and Ste. Mary and thus escapes and the terrors of the evil eye and the Eastern world. Unlike in many other sensational novels of the nineteenth century, in this novel the Catholic Church is presented as a positive influence. On St George’s day when “all the evil things in the world…
have full sway‖ (11) the old lady at the inn in Bistritz offers Jonathan a crucifix. Crucifixes are an essential protection against Vampires. Here Stoker highlights the fact that the Church of England does not provide any such safety equipment. This could be read as a coded attempt to present Dracula as the Protestant landlord.

Stephen D. Arata has argued that Dracula’s rapacity may betray the British fear of ‘reverse colonization’ by degenerate hordes. Dracula takes on the culture of his victims in order to oppress them, so that “the Count’s Occidentalism both mimics and reverses the more familiar Orientalism underwriting Western imperial practices” (Arata 634). Matthew Gibson comments:

In Dracula we have a portrayal of Eastern Europe as shambolic, wild and primitive, but with a sinister, threatening edge which argues not for control so much as for exclusion. Like Polidori and Le Fanu before him, Stoker is situating a symbolic figure for moral degeneration in politically sensitive areas in the hope of justifying a recent political policy rather than a vague ideological discourse….Stoker uses the Gothic figure of the Vampire to mix a concealed national allegory, and thus an implied rather than an overt critique of an Eastern European country, with a realist setting. (86-87)

Stoker uses the metaphor of Vampirism and symbolic values of West clashing with East. In the words of Matthew Gibson,

In summation, the unveiling of the seemingly urbane aristocrat Dracula as blood-thirsty Vampire and sexual deviant, and the further denigration of his warlike activity as being no more than the behaviour of a childlike criminal, are an attempt to undermine the idea of Balkan freedom. Stoker manipulates his sources in order to heighten the conflict between Dracula and the Turks on one hand, and the Austrians on the other, as a means of justifying the reactionary Treaty of
Berlin (1878) and the continued Turkish presence in the Balkans, which Stoker believed in. (Gibson 95)

*Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* revolves around the discovery of the late president's diary, which revealed that Lincoln had not only fought against the evils of slavery, but also against Vampires, the creatures of darkness. Pushing our “willing suspension of disbelief” to a higher level American author Grahame-Smith successfully amalgamates storytelling and mythmaking in *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* (2010). He combines the real/imaginary mythology of history with the imaginary/real mythology of Vampire lore. Beyond the literal interpretation, the story holds great potential as a metaphor for slavery. In an interview in 2010, Grahame Smith talks about the inspiration behind the idea of writing the book:

> A couple of years ago, right before the Lincoln bicentennial, it seemed like there was a new Lincoln biography coming out every week. No matter what store I wandered into, there it was – the Lincoln table, right up front. Growing bigger by the day. As it happened, this was also about the time that *Twilight* was beginning to blow up. So inevitably, there’d be a table of Vampire books right next to that Lincoln table. And there they were – the two ingredients that people couldn’t seem to get enough of. And it got me thinking… what if these things tasted even better together? (Larson “Q&A with *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* Author”)

Grahame-Smith’s skillfully makes a strong link between Vampirism and slavery. The Civil War serves as the perfect event for his plot, where slavery is perpetuated and flourished not by plantation owners but by Vampires who needed human slaves for their sustenance. The story recasts the events of Lincoln's life in a supernatural light. The death of his mother at the hands of a Vampire drives Lincoln to annihilate the creatures. He pursues his goal for decades, first with
his axe, then as a politician to end slavery perpetuated by plantation owners in league with the Vampires with the continual assistance of an ancient supportive and sympathetic Vampire Henry Sturges who becomes Abe's lifelong friend and mentor. Lincoln's life provides an excellent embellishment as he went from slaughtering the Vampires to fighting them in the Civil War with armies under the guise of ending slavery. In an entry in his journal dated May 4th, Lincoln states the connection between slavery and Vampires:

> Not long after the first ships landed in this New World, I believe that Vampires reached a tacit understanding with slave owners. I believe that this nation holds some special attraction for them because here, in America, they can feed on human blood without fear of discovery or reprisal. Without the inconvenience of living in darkness. I believe that this is especially true in the South, where those flamboyant gentlemen Vampires have worked out a way to “grow” their prey. Where the strongest slaves are put to work growing tobacco and food for the fortunate and free, and the lesser are themselves harvested and eaten. I believe this, but I cannot yet prove it to be true. (Grahame-Smith 125)

Lincoln doesn’t just eliminate slavery; he saves the humans from servitude to the Vampires. On 21 March 1861, Confederate vice-president Alexander H. Stephens declared that the ‘corner-stone’ of the new nation formed by southern states leaving the Union rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. . . . Many governments have been founded upon the principle of the subordination and serfdom of certain classes of
the same race; such were and are in violation of the laws of nature. Our system commits no such violation of nature’s laws. With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place. (qtd. in Harrold 61,62)

A sharp dividing line between slave and free took decades to emerge in both thought and practice in colonial countries including America. Slavery made an indelible mark on North American society and slaves had a critical impact to the success of the British colonies.

The novel starts with a Prologue in which the author himself is a character. While working in a store in Rhinebeck, New York, Seth Grahame-Smith receives an old journal from a stranger named Henry. He left a note which mentioned that he should read it and publish his findings. In this story, Vampires have reached America lured by the abundance of easier and cheaper food in the form of slaves. In pursuit of work Lincoln travels the country and begins to understand how slavery is becoming a major divisive issue in America. He observes Black slaves are easy target of Vampires that have migrated from Europe to the U.S. for better sustenance. Lincoln mentions in his journal in 1828, “So long as this country is cursed with slavery, so too will it be cursed with Vampires” (Grahame-Smith 114). He recognizes that the migration of Vampires from different parts of the world is due to the fact that in this land they can feed on human blood without fear of discovery or reprisal. His friend Edgar Allan Poe comments:

Vampire hunters began to appear from England to Croatia, learning from one another, chasing the undead across the continent. Chasing them into the stinking sewers and diseased slums of Paris. Chasing them down the dark alleys of London. Vampires, reduced to sleeping in crypts. Reduced to drinking the blood of stray dogs. Lions hunted by sheep! It had become intolerable to be a Vampire
in Europe. They wanted freedom. Freedom from persecution. From fear. And where could such freedoms be found?”

“In America.”

“In America, Lincoln! America was a paradise where Vampires could exist without fierce competition over blood. A place where it was common for families to have five, or eight, or a dozen children. They loved its lawlessness. Its vastness. They loved its remote villages and its ports brimming with the newly arrived. But more than anything, Lincoln, they loved its slaves. For here, unlike any other country fit for civilized men—here was a place they could feed on the intoxicating blood of man without fear of reprisal! (Grahame-Smith 203)

Seth builds Lincoln's story slowly from his advancement in society leading to his brilliant approach to campaigning for state legislator and presidential candidacy. During his time as a Vampire hunter, Lincoln shares his dark secret with a few close friends who help him in his war against Vampires. Detailed scenes on the battlefields of the Civil War with fanged opponents and Abe’s axe rolling heads, ending with Lincoln’s death at Ford's Theater, the author creates an alternative life of Lincoln.

Vampires are seen harvesting slaves to be bred for the purpose of feeding themselves. Henry Sturges uses Abe's vindictive ambition of a lifelong vendetta against Vampires and their slave-owning allies. He inspires Abe to avenge the unacceptable death of innocent people and fight the battle against slavery. The Confederacy has employed Vampires and slavery is being supported by the active assistance of Vampires who are against the abolishment of slavery as it is a continual and easily available food source for them. In order to defeat the Confederacy, it becomes essential to destroy slavery. Ultimately, Lincoln is killed by John Wilkes Booth who is
a Vampire. Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederate States is described as a sycophant of the Vampires. Abe writes:

“Why does Jeff Davis wear his collar so high? To hide the bite marks on his neck.” There must be some truth in their jests, however, for I have yet to hear of a Southern congressman who isn’t beholden to Vampire interests, sympathetic to their cause, or fearful of their reprisal. (198)

Slavery grew in size and importance in the South throughout the 1700s. Virginia became known as a ‘slave society’ during the seventeenth century, when slavery was at the center of economic production, and the master–slave relationship became the model for all social relations. Blackness became ever more firmly associated with a servile status, while whiteness, at least for men, granted some form of political inclusion—white males could vote, but most political offices were limited to those with substantial property. The plantation system imposed a ruthless discipline on the enslaved while making planters some of the richest men in the Atlantic world. Indeed, colonial historian Peter H. Wood prefers the term ‘slave labor camp’ to plantation, because of the latter’s romantic overtones in the present day which hide ‘a world of perpetual exploitation and incessant degradation built on racist ideology and overwhelming physical force.’

Masters extracted as much work as they could by the incessant use of the whip regardless of sex. Barbaric punishments were administered as a matter of routine, indicating little respect for human life and certainly none for the rights of Africans. The demographic imbalance between black and white probably ensured that punishments were carried out more severely and with more frequency in the Lower South. Reverend Francis Le Jau, a minister for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts based in Goose Creek, South Carolina, recorded
some particularly horrific incidents. In 1712, he wrote of rising levels of cruelty following a rumoured slave rebellion as masters “hamstring mai[m] & unlimb these poor Creatures for small faults” (129). One slave was punished for losing a bag of rice by being chained up by day and placed “into a hellish machine” resembling a coffin at night (129). Smith presents the tortures inflicted on the slaves with the help of Vampires. Southern plantation-owners have been projected as the blood sucking monsters. Smith describes their gruesome feasting: “the gray-bearded host gave a whistle. Upon this, nine pairs of eyes turned black, nine sets of fangs descended, and nine Vampires tore into their helpless prey from behind” (114). The vivid description is continued in Abe’s diary:

The first Vampire grabbed the sides of the thickset woman’s head and twisted it backward so that her chin and spine met—his wretched face her dying sight.

Another screamed and writhed when she felt the sting of two fangs in her shoulder. But the greater her struggle, the deeper the wound became, and the more freely her precious blood poured into the creature’s mouth. I saw the head of a boy beaten until his brains poured from a hole in his skull, and another man’s head taken entirely. I could do nothing to help them. Not when there were so many. Not without a weapon. The slave master calmly pulled the barn doors closed to stifle the noises of death, and I ran into the night, my face wet with tears.

Disgusted with myself for being so helpless. Sickened by what I had seen. But more than anything—sickened by the truth taking shape in my mind. A truth that I had been too blind to see before. (Grahame-Smith 114)

South Carolinian slaves used to have their ankle-cords cut, be burnt to death and face castration as punishment. However, it was frequent use of the whip and routine punishment that
regulated master–slave relations, not the law. As Ira Berlin powerfully argues, “violence was not only common” but was purposely “systematic and relentless” because “the planters’ hegemony required that slaves stand in awe of their owners” (Berlin 98). Historian Donald R. Wright suggests that “the equivalent of medieval torture” was used “to keep the slave population docile” (Wright 149). The barbaric behavior of planters remains abhorrent but their actions become more comprehensible. Like so many other slaves in world history, Africans in the South were outsiders denied basic human rights, with no claim to be part of civil society. Not only were the rights of citizenship or inclusion denied, but basic human rights such as marriage and family life depended on the consent of the master.

Historian Eugene D. Genovese has long argued for the significance of planter hegemony. Elite planters, according to Genovese, convinced ordinary whites of slavery’s benefits and its central importance to southern society. They steered the Old South towards a defense of slavery ultimately leading to civil war. Genovese suggests that “so long as the yeomen accepted the existing master-slave relation as either something to aspire to or something peripheral to their own lives, they were led step by step into willing acceptance of a subordinate position in society . . . because they saw themselves as aspiring slaveholders or as nonslaveholding beneficiaries of a slaveholding world that constituted the only world they knew” (263).

The Tripuris remained under nominal British rule at the time when India and Pakistan were declared independent. The Tripura merger agreement of 1949 provided official protection of the Tripuri land but led to the annexation of Tripura to India which ended the 1300 years of Tripuri independence. The Tripuri nationalists denounced the accession and Indian rule as illegal. Thousands of Hindu Bengali refugees from East Pakistan, called as “settler refugees” by the Tripuris began immigration flow that gradually started overloading the Tripuri land. This had
a devastating effect on the native population and within a short period of time their way of life was changed forever. The Tripuris were dispossessed of their arable lands and resources, trade, and access to local government services for a negligible price. Many were forcefully driven farther into the less productive hill areas away from their ancestral lands. People, who had had plenty of food, now didn't have enough. By the early 1970s Bengalis controlled the economy of the land and had gained control of the most fertile agricultural land which gradually led to their control over the political power. The Tripuris were marginalized culturally and economically. Confronted with the growing threat to their existence, and the loss of their means of survival and their native land, the Tripuris started an ethnic and religious conflict in the state. Dr. Gan Choudhury in his book *A Cultural History of Tripura* comments that the heavy influx of the Bengali religious refugees from the Meghna valley into Hill Tripura has generated anti-Bengali sentiment. The genesis of tribal insurgency, the violent riot of June 1980, the ethnic cleansing, the formation of the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (1979) and the killing of many *jawans* of the Indian security forces may be partly understood from this angle of anti-Bengali sentiment generated since 1947 A.D. The Tripuri-Bengalee relation began with cooperation, but ended in conflict.

The impact of this situation is found in a number of literary works of the native inhabitants of Tripura. For instance, in the poem *Don't Scare Me* poet Shyamlal Debbarma has mentioned a mythical blood-sucking creature called “Asikolok” which can be very aptly taken as a metaphor for the refugee Bengalees who had deprived the natives of their livelihood and captured their homes and lands pushing them away:

Asikolokma goes round my home

with steps resounding thum thom thum thom
In whose house is it now….

…………………………………………

It seems Asikolok’s queer tapering mouth

shall penetrate through the slits in my bamboo-wall. (9-11, 16-17)

The population makeup and the cultural identity of the place saw a huge change due to the immigration and infiltration. The Bengali refugees have often been alleged to exert racial superiority over the native Tripuris. They based this prejudice on a number of factors. First, the clothing, architecture, and weapons of the tribes were comparatively primitive. Second, most of them did not read or write and Bengalees viewed literacy as a mark of education, intelligence, and high social status. The settlers felt that this supposed superiority gave them the right to take control of their lands. So is this a sheer case of xenophobia that led the tribals to depict the Bengalees as their own Vampires, the “Asikoloks”?

Moreover, patronage of Bengali culture and language by the kings of the Manikya dynasty made Kokbork, the native language of the land, an alien in its own land. Tripura Royalty donated to the cause of Shantiniketan and Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore conferred the honorific title "Bharat Bhaskar" on Tagore while he never went beyond composing a play and a few poems on the state. The Tipperean influence which often was non-reciprocative added to this feeling of xenophobia. An interesting example can be found in the following observation by Dr. Ashes Gupta:

The history of cultural domination and exploitation of the ethnic minority by the majority Bangla-speaking population in Tripura reveals that this was accentuated by the fact that Bengali culture was patronized by the kings of the State. Hence historically Bengali culture and language enjoyed a pride of position vis-à-vis Kokborok. The attitude towards Kokborok language and the corresponding
culture has always been one of contempt. The worst part is that a sizeable fraction of the tribals themselves can neither speak nor read and write in this language. The fact that both S.D. Burman and R.D. Burman, the famous father-son duo of Hindi film music avoided writing Sachin DevBurman and Rahul DevBurman respectively (‘DevBurman’ or ‘Debbarma’ indicates a Tripura tribal surname while ‘Burman’ indicates a Bengali identity with the ‘Dev’ part conveniently abbreviated) though they hailed from the tribal royal stock of Tripura, points out to the extreme efforts of assimilation in the stronger mainstream culture and language i.e. Bengali. (“Translation as an Act of Ventriloquism” 111)

There is a stark similarity between colonialism and Vampirism in their respective treatment towards their victims. Ironically, the Vampire is a monster created by the West but it is the West that actually displayed Vampire-like monstrosity with their modes of exploitation of the colonies. The colonizers have exhausted and impoverished colonial territories throughout history. The Vampires are generally shown to have very low opinion about the humans. Humans are underestimated as weak— both physically and intellectually, susceptible and are merely food for them. In True Blood, the following conversation between Eric and Sookie displays their low opinion about humans:

ERIC NORTHAM. And here’s what I know about you. You're so blinded by your obsession with Bill Compton, you're likely to run through the streets screaming “werewolf-bait”, alerting whoever has Bill that we're on to him or getting yourself killed.

SOOKIE STACKHOUSE. You think I'm that stupid?

ERIC NORTHAM. No, I think you're human.
Queen Akasha plots to destroy human civilization and she comments in *Queen of the Damned*, “Humans are animals… brute creatures. Their destruction can only make sense. They are nothing to us. They are merely food.” “They believed in nothing. Now they are nothing…. We will give the world something to believe in again” (Queen of the Damned). There is an obvious similarity between the attitudes of Vampirism and colonialism:

Anglo-Indians believed implicitly in the benefits of British rule in India and in what is sometimes called the “civilizing mission” of British imperialism—the belief, that is, that the British had a mission to civilize India by reforming its indigenous ways of life with the more “advanced” ideas, culture, and practices of Great Britain and the West. Such beliefs when combined with the dominant position of Anglo-Indians within British India itself often resulted in relations with Indians that were either overtly or covertly racist. (Walsh 130)

Colonization not only colonizes a place or people, it also tries to control what people think and impose the superiority of the colonizers’ way of thinking by the denial of basic rights, exploitation and subjugation through the use of violence. Colonizers have tried to crush the spirit of Indian people and shatter their will to resist colonization. William Wilberforce, the famous English politician commented: “Our religion is sublime, pure, beneficent. Theirs is mean, licentious and cruel” (Keay 428).

Colonizers attempted to consolidate their control (and claim moral legitimacy) by training the racialized "primitive" through the ideological apparatus of both liberal and religious civilizing missions. The "white man's burden" was the onus of enlightening the ungrateful savage, the heathen, the eugenically challenged—while doomed never to be appreciated for this selfless effort. Hence, some of the most
pernicious and persistent aspects of colonization involved not just military occupation, political domination, and economic superexploitation but also the systematic assault on cultural integrity, languages, lifeways, and ethnic identities.

(Ramnath 18)

The material wealth in India combined with the cheap labor has attracted Western exploiters throughout history. The internal politics and conflict among the Indian rulers paved the way for the Europeans with their relentless drive for profit. While the British claimed to disapprove of discrimination based on racial grounds, they denied the rights of citizenship and self-government to the colonized people. The colonized were denied the European tradition of rights as free citizens. They were deprived of the benefits of capitalism even though they had been helping the British industrial development for many years.

Most historians now agree that the rigidities introduced by colonial policy decisively shaped, even distorted, modernity in India. This approach offers a corrective to what was too easily described during the colonial era as the ‘blessings of British rule’, namely the pacification and unification of the country, legal codification, the use of the English language, public works, and a range of social reforms. Critics of European modernity, among them Britons as well as Indians, even at the time saw the dark side of these changes, among them racism, militarism, and the economic exploitation that was part of the colonial relationship. (Metcalf 93-94)

Instead of investing in India, the resident British generally took their money back to their country. This ‘drain’ of wealth was complemented by the Company’s withdrawal of funds to cover the ‘Home Charges’, including pensions, debt service and the maintenance cost of the
Company’s local offices. This became a highly visible example of British economic exploitation in the later years.

Colonizers oppressed the colonized people and perpetrated the most savage, racist brutality to suppress national liberation struggles and defend their own interests – and stopped at nothing to cover up their crimes. George Mobiot’s recent article in *The Guardian* describes the level of brutality caused by the British colonizers:

People deemed to have disobeyed the rules were killed in front of the others. The survivors were forced to dig mass graves, which were quickly filled. Interrogation under torture was widespread. Many of the men were anally raped, using knives, broken bottles, rifle barrels, snakes and scorpions. A favourite technique was to hold a man upside down, his head in a bucket of water, while sand was rammed into his rectum with a stick. Women were gang-raped by the guards. People were mauled by dogs and electrocuted. The British devised a special tool which they used for first crushing and then ripping off testicles. They used pliers to mutilate women's breasts. They cut off inmates' ears and fingers and gouged out their eyes. They dragged people behind Land Rovers until their bodies disintegrated. Men were rolled up in barbed wire and kicked around the compound. The British did not do body counts, and most victims were buried in unmarked graves. But it is clear that tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands, of Kikuyu died in the camps and during the round-ups. (Monbiot “Deny the British empire's crimes? No, we ignore them”)

Friedrich Nietzsche has provided significant insights in the theorization of pain and punishment. Nietzsche understands social order to be founded not on exchange but on credit: the
body is not so much exchanged as held to account, made to pay. “An equivalent is provided by the creditor’s receiving, in place of a literal compensation for an injury... a recompense in the form of a kind of pleasure, the pleasure of being allowed to vent his power freely on one who is powerless.... In punishing the debtor, the creditor participates in a right of the masters...” (65). The debtor–creditor relationship and its accompanying craving for cruelty is, in Nietzsche’s theory, the basis of almost all social relations, moral values, and cultural production. Which means that the concept that ‘somebody’ is guilty, that somebody ‘owes me’ and must be – can be – corporeally made ‘to pay’ is a foundational notion in society and discourse. The act of exacting that payment is simultaneously a source of pleasure, of “festival” (67) and an enactment of power and dominance. But would it be appropriate to compare the requirement for sustenance of Vampires to the selfish lust for power of Colonizers?

Famous political revolutionary Har Dayal commented, "the British Empire is sucking the life blood of millions of people in Ireland, India, and Egypt" (Ramnath102). According to Ranchhoddas Lotvala, "the grinding poverty of the vast masses, the root cause of their hunger, malnutrition, bad housing and high death-rate... were... the direct result of this exploitation of labour by those who had monopolized land, factories and banks—all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange" (qtd. in Ramnath 136). British imperialists labeled freedom-fighters like Bhagat Singh and his comrades as "anarchists" or "terrorists" in order to defame them in the eyes of Indian people. Contemporary Communist Sohan Singh Josh insists that they were “not terrorists or anarchists as those terms were known in Europe” although they "accepted some of the political views" (Singh 19) associated with that denomination. On the contrary, he explained in their defense, they were nationalist revolutionaries, "the most self-sacrificing, most honest and selflessly dedicated to the cause of liberating India. They hated
exploitation of the working class and the Indian people by the bloodsucking British imperialists and their allies, and were willing to make any sacrifice for the upliftment of the working class" (Singh 143-144).

Like Vampirism, colonialism also is nowhere near a symbiotic relationship where both the parties share benefits with each other. A classic early example of this line of criticism is Hobson’s (1902) book on imperialism. Through extensive analysis of imperial economics, he argues that imperialism has been ‘bad business for the nation’ but ‘good business for certain classes and certain trades within the nation’ (Hobson 51). Although colonialism was mainly economically driven, it is, in fact, far more complex. According to Said:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination. (8)

Similarly, Nandy (1983) suggests that “It is becoming increasingly obvious that colonialism—as we have come to know it during the last two hundred years—cannot be identified with only economic gain and political power” (1). For him, colonialism is a “state of mind in the colonizers and the colonized, a colonial consciousness which includes the sometimes unrealizable wish to make economic and political profits from the colonies, but other elements too” (1–2). Alatas (1977) argues that:

The vigorous outburst of colonialism in the 19th century was accompanied by intellectual trends which sought to justify the phenomenon. Colonialism, or on a bigger scale, imperialism, was not only an extension of sovereignty and control by
one nation and its government over another, but it was also a control of the mind of the conquered or subordinated. (17)

Colonialism is not only some meticulous linear history of the material aspects of exploitation but also the cultural constructs that were produced by this exploitation. Although the political and economic exploitation of colonialism had drastic effects on colonized people, colonialism also had unignorable cultural effects. As Thomas (1994) puts it:

Colonialism is not best understood primarily as a political or economic relationship that is legitimized or justified through ideologies of racism or progress. Rather, colonialism has always, equally importantly and deeply, been a cultural process; its discoveries and trespasses are imagined and energized through signs, metaphors and narratives; even what would seem its purest moments of profit and violence have been mediated and enframed by structures of meaning. Colonial cultures are not simply ideologies that mask, mystify or rationalize forms of oppression that are external to them; they are also expressive and constitutive of colonial relationships in themselves. (2)

Colonial language policy in India was a complex site of cultural construction. Fanon’s well-known remark: “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (17–18). The liberal discourse of the civilizing mission and the moral obligation to bring enlightenment to backward peoples; the need to provide a productive and docile workforce who would also become consumers within colonial capitalism; the various Orientalist positions, including an exoticisation and glorification of a distant Indian past and a belief that vernacular languages were the most efficient way to spread European knowledge in
India; and the Anglicist insistence that English should be the language of education— both these discourses had cultural effects during the Colonial period. Chris Searle comments on English in the world:

Let us be clear that the English language has been a monumental force and institution of oppression and rabid exploitation throughout 400 years of imperialist history. It attacked the black person with its racist images and imperialist message; it battered the worker who toiled as its words expressed the parameters of his misery and the subjection of entire peoples in all the continents of the world. It was made to scorn the languages it sought to replace, and told the colonised peoples that mimicry of its primacy among languages was a necessary badge of their social mobility as well as their continued humiliation and subjection. Thus, when we talk of ‘mastery’ of the Standard language, we must be conscious of the terrible irony of the word, that the English language itself was the language of the master, the carrier of his arrogance and brutality. (68)

The spread of English in the world has not gone without criticisms that have regarded the language as a clear expression of political, cultural, and economic imperialism. According to Pennycook there is nothing “neutral” about English use in Hong Kong: “this image of English use as an open and borrowing language, reflecting an open and borrowing people, is a cultural construct of colonialism that is in direct conflict with the colonial evidence” (143). Mühlhäusler regards languages like English, Bahasa Indonesia and Mandarin Chinese as “killer languages” because as national languages of modernization, education, and development they stifle and eventually kill local languages. Dorian states the case unequivocally: “Europeans who come from polities with a history of standardizing and promoting just one high-prestige form carried
Towards the end of the twentieth century, however, in a wholly changed political context in which the global spread of English has become not so much part of colonial control but rather part of neocolonial exploitation, English and Anglicism have re-emerged in a new light. The discourses of Anglicism still adhere to English, but now to a new English, a global English, and an English in popular demand. And, while the Empire formed an important discursive web for the spread of cultural constructions of colonialism, the new global empire in English forms an even more significant means for their promulgation.

In the case of Australia, we can find a different aspect of the relationship between Vampirism and colonialism. The ill fate of the aborigines of Australia started when Captain James Cook discovered Australia in late eighteenth century and found that the aborigines of Australia were simple and peaceful. During these days British Parliament was in search for a place to deport and dump their convicts as the “. . . newly minted United States of America has refused to continue accepting shipments of British prisoners” (Brittan 73). In 1787, the British Parliament decided to turn Australia into a penal colony. It ruled Australia as terra nullius, i.e. land belonging to no one’s, brushing away the legal and sentimental claims of the aborigines. Apart from colonizing the land, the British introduced the monsters of their own to the aboriginals.

Subsequent English colonization of the American continent was just as destructive, reducing many American Indian tribal groups to tiny remnants of their former selves. Churchill argues that settler- colonies around the world established during European expansion post-1492 in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina are not only
potentially but inherently genocidal. A settler-colony to be a settler-colony requires “wholesale displacement, reduction in numbers, and forced assimilation of native peoples.”

Sven Lindqvist’s remarkable book *Exterminate all the Brutes: One Man’s Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide* (1998) traces the growth of genocide as the inevitable byproduct of progress. This book traces the genealogy of the idea that extermination of entire peoples was inevitable and necessary for the Colonizers. The death rate of indigenous peoples in all the British colonies was too high. Despite the attempts of British colonial authorities, and of non-government aborigines protection societies both in Britain and in the colonies, the slaughter continued. Lindqvist’s work depicts the huge population losses as inevitable processes whereby the higher races displace the lower, bringing civilization and progress to the world: “the Tasmanian (case) became the paradigm, to which one part of the world after another yielded.” Lindqvist also argues that the successful colonization methods of the British empire were the exemplar for Hitler when planning colonization and genocide of the Jews, Poles, Russians and others in the territories east of Germany.

Aborigines became Convicts for either defending their home or cultural misunderstandings. Warriors such as Yagan, Pelmulwuy and Musquito were outlawed for enforcing the laws of their culture. Yagan and Pelmulwuy were eventually beheaded whilst Musquito was transported to Tasmania where he again made trouble and was then executed. A number of aboriginal Australian writers and poets like Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Mudrooroo Narogin called for justice and land rights, challenged racist stereotypes, dismantled exclusionary models of national identity, and corrected biased historical narratives of progress and peaceful settlement. Oodgeroo’s poetry effectively documents, analyses and laments the effects of colonialism on Aboriginal people and the land. Some poems call Aboriginal people to action;
others directly address "the unhappy white race" in angry, accusing, disdainful and sometimes pitying tones. The early critical reception of Oodgeroo's work warrants close attention today because it exemplifies the kinds of cultural prejudices many Aboriginal writers faced, and continue to face, as they write not only for each other but for "the world of the invader ... a people not one's own ...the conquerors of one's own people" (qtd. in Webby 30). She was not only a poet, but a political activist too and her poetry was an extension of her political work. “We Are Going” ends with a sad note of resignation that the Whites have not only destroyed the livelihood of natives but they have also upset the environmental balance. Due to this reason the poem records the fact that the scrubs are gone and symbols of Australia such as emu and kangaroo are also almost extinct now.

The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.

The bora ring is gone.

The corroboree is gone.

And we are going. (22-25)

The natives used to have a symbiotic peaceful coexistence with the nature. But now everything has been destroyed by the colonizers. “We are Going” is not only about the displacement and extermination of the natives but also a powerful record of the emotional anguish of the aboriginal people against colonialism.

Though Vampirism is a construction of a Eurocentric notion of the Other, Mudrooroo produces an oppositional, revisionist discourse that works to undermine European historiography. In The Undying (1998) he locates a Vampire tale at the site of the invasion of Australia by Europeans. Particularly fascinating is Mudrooroo's rewriting of the 'conciliating' efforts of George Augustus Robinson in Tasmania, and his disastrous attempts to establish a
'Friendly Mission' that would effectively rid the small island of its Aboriginal inhabitants and thus make it empty for white settlement. This mission would see the death of most of its inhabitants.

By magically endowing George, one of the Aboriginal characters in The Undying with transmorphic border bodies, Mudrooroo prepares us for the savage and violent encounter with the “Vampires” from Europe, who are out to consume and destroy everything on Australian soil. These European Vampires transform the history of colonization into a horrific tale. Gothic horror is brought into the story by the arrival of the Vampire, which possesses the exemplary abhuman body – liminal, admixed, nauseating, abominable, existing at the interstices of oppositional categories. The Vampire, in the form of Amelia Fraser, elicits the disgust that comes from indifferentiation, from existing across multiple states of being and conforming cleanly to none of them. All the barbarity and the primitiveness that the West attributes to its ‘Others’ are here performed by the savage behaviour of these ‘white’ abhumans.

The body language of both these characters reveals a fixation on suction, incorporation, contamination, consumption. The language associated with Amelia’s behaviour, in particular, has an obsessive ‘oral’ quality, depending on tasting and biting, sucking, lapping, tearing and wrenching with mouth and teeth. For the Vampire, other bodies are simply food; in becoming her prey, humans are turned into ‘things’, raw matter indistinguishable from other raw matter, as they are rent, fragmented and absorbed into the body of the predator. This materiality – this thing-ness – of the human body is metonymically illustrated by blood, red-hot and wet, which drips from every page of the novel. Like other slimy substances – sexual fluids, saliva, mucus – blood seeps from the borders of the body, calling attention to its basic materiality. It is through
the exchange of blood and body fluids that abhumanness spreads like a virus to the aboriginals, and contamination becomes the central metaphor of *The Undying*. \(^{32}\)

In Australian Aboriginal culture one’s identity is actually written on one’s skin in initiation scars and body paint, body language and its grammar are as complicated as “mouth language.” But for the narrator of *The Undying*, it is the language of the colonizers, English, which shapes the body. *The Undying* is deeply concerned with the politics of the body and textualization.

This defamiliarizes the human body… its thingness, which here has “an obsessive ‘oral’ quality, depending on tasting and biting, sucking, lapping, tearing… “and a general concern with absorbent fluidity, Vampirism and threats of contamination, as well as the monstrous…. Embracing the abject and “abhuman,” which politically is related to the Vampire colonizers sucking Australia dry…. (Borch, Knudsen, Leer and Ross  xxxiv)

The notion of ‘abhuman’ resonates in the word *abjection* which has been theoretically formulated by Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* and taken up by Judith Butler in *Bodies that Matter*. \(^{33}\) Kristeva and Butler develop a notion of abjection that has been useful in diagnosing the dynamics of oppression. Literally meaning ‘cast away’ or ‘cast under, abased,’ \(^{34}\) ‘abjection’ describes a psychic operation through which subjective and group identities are constituted by excluding anything that threatens one’s own (or one’s own group’s) borders. Within the terms of sociality, the condition of *abjection* presupposes and produces the *exclusion* of the Other who forms the outside of the domain of the subject. Abject zones are created with areas of uninhabitability, which are nevertheless *densely populated* by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, unliveable ones inhabited by the colonized. Mudrooroo, in *The Undying*, is
signaling this process; the image is one in which a bloated and satisfied European abhuman – replenished with the vitality of strong blood nicely tasting of eucalyptus – drops the consumed body she (or he) has ‘Vampirically’ sucked dry, casting it into an abjected state of ind differentiation and eventual death. This, in *The Undying*, is the trashy space occupied by “Renfiel,” the savagely mutilated and cripple “man of many names”, who becomes servant to the Vampire and traitor to his people. Mudrooroo deliberately uses the name Renfiel which is similar to the name Renfield, the servant of Count Dracula in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Here, Renfiel is the infected body and the abject human, the meaningless, ridiculous and dangerous product of colonial Vampirism, whose servitude helps to spread abjection among his fellow beings, thus becoming instrumental to the further enlargement of the abject zone, and to the imperial project of Europe (Oboe 233).

But the question is how far do Vampirism and colonialism reflect each other’s monstrosity? Vampires have been portrayed as sustaining on human blood, but that level of monstrosity and exploitation is hard to find in the history of Vampires. Unlike the Colonizers, Vampires have a tendency to turn their victims into their own kind. This is far away from the racist brutality of the Colonizers if not purely mercy. But most of all, Vampires require blood for their own sustenance, whereas Colonizers exploit the Colonized mainly for selfish economic profit. Also, the following should be remembered:

This is not to suggest that colonial domination in India replaced an idyllic world of custom and fairness with the individualist and pluralist ethic of western society and culture. Pre-colonial India had its full measure of stratification, of exploitation, of oppression and of misery. Moreover, there were European values that genuinely attracted Indians, since many sought and sacrificed to acquire
English or another European language, western education and western goods.

(Stein 239)

Some countries had already been suffering from oppression in the hands of their own people. In such cases colonialism merely changed the exploiter-exploited scenario. As Nan Flanagan, the key Vampire spokesperson of AVL (American Vampire League) in True Blood raises a profound question: “Doesn’t your race have a history of exploitation? We never owned slaves… or detonated nuclear weapons” (True Blood Season 1 Episode 1).
Notes

1. See Hughes 197.

2. Rabkin in the lecture “Gothicism” in Coursera.

3. For detailed explanation, see Fox 401-405.

4. See Elworthy 112.

5. For details, see Trumbull 126-134.


7. Phlegon’s Mirabilia 1 as described in Ogden 159.

8. See Grundtvig for details.


11. For details, see Whitefield 98

12. See Dean 57.


14. Rabkin “Writing and Dracula.”

15. See Eagleton 57.

16. For details, see Backus

17. Goldsworthy 84. See also Kostova 33–48.


19. See Watson 333.

20. For details, see Todorova 89–115.

21. For details, see Leatherdale The Origins of Dracula.

22. See Durham 15.
23. See Wilkinson 17–18.

24. See Gerard 142.


26. See Wood 234.

27. See Phillipson.


29. See Lindqvist 123–24.

30. Lindqvist 130.

31. See Lindqvist 156.

32. See Pearson 185–202.


34. From the Latin *ab-jicere*, to cast off, away, or out.
Works Cited


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