About the Author

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Count Transylvania Out: Bram Stoker’s Dracula as a Reflection of Irish Myth and History
Kaitlin Johnstone

Introduction

Throughout time many people have attributed Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* to the tale of Vlad the Impaler, a corrupt ruler who executed similar acts of punishment to those seen throughout the pages of the novel. The presence of beheading and the act of impaling his victims often links Vlad to Stoker’s vampire. The basis for this novel has long been attributed to Transylvanian culture and folklore. People have rarely speculated whether this attribution was true or not. It was easy to accept a fact that seemed so accurate, with a tale wrapped in mystery and horror. Many people do not necessarily know much about the Transylvanian culture or its traditions, therefore the ambiguity makes it a perfect setting and catalyst for this mystifying creation. However, beyond the story and correlation with Vlad the Impaler, there lies little similarity.

The basis for Dracula’s character and the novel’s plot itself lies deeper in the Irish tradition than one may think. Throughout time the Irish have established an identity as storytellers. Within their history and culture as a people lies a strong connection with myth and legend. This aspect of Irish identity allows readers to note similarities between Dracula and Irish legend, connecting the aspects together and completely dismissing the Transylvanian relation in its entirety. Still, the essence of the novel goes further than the Irish story itself.

The root of Stoker’s novel lies more obviously in the history and culture of the author’s homeland, rather than that of Transylvania. Stoker, an author raised and living in Ireland during the 19th century, played witness to some of the most significant, impressive, and important events in Irish history. With outside rule, tumultuous acts of forced reform, and significant rebellion, Stoker lived through some of the most historically extraordinary times not only in Ireland, but in the world. His exposure to the times and their issues would naturally leave an author with a significant basis for reflection on which to create his work.

When readers study Stoker’s work intently, they will discover the nuances of the symbolism of Irish history that take over the novel. We begin to see characters take on the
personas of prominent Irish figures. Acts link themselves to battles. Significant events pervade the symbolic undertones of the novel. Each action and aspect can be attributed to the many different facets of Irish culture and history. When we take a look at the history of vampire culture and the Irish traditions themselves it becomes obvious that this piece of literature provides very little correlation to Transylvanian culture or tradition. Through the use of literary symbolism depicting historical events, it becomes obvious that Stoker’s novel is truly a reflection of Irish history rooted in Irish legends.

The History of 19th Century Ireland

The Act of Union

The history of Ireland is one full of persecution, unrest, desperation, and passion. From 1801 to 1922 the island was considered a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and was ruled by London parliament, nearly 300 miles away from the Irish capital of Dublin. This time of foreign rule became known as the Act of Union. Ireland opened the nineteenth century still swimming in the aftermath of a rebellion executed by the Irish in 1798 (Cronin 225-40). The Act of Union was viewed as a way to redress the problems that led up to that rising. However, it failed miserably.

The two kingdoms, Ireland and England, merged together, and in the process abolished the Irish legislature. All governing of Ireland was now done through the English parliament by appointed authorities. A lord lieutenant was appointed by the king, and the chief secretary of Ireland was appointed by the British prime minister. However, the British parliament soon took over from the monarch, becoming head of both the executive and legislative branches of government. This, therefore, made the role of chief secretary more important, and demoted the status of lord lieutenant to a mere symbol. The Irish parliament branch was abolished and a British administration was presented in Ireland, which consisted primarily of Protestants. Much unrest existed between active members of the Protestant and Catholic religions, making the presence of Protestant rule an issue in the primarily Catholic country (225-40).

This act, however, did not dissolve the hopes of Irish Catholics. The British population’s chief hatred of these people rested in their religion, something the invading presence felt needed to be eradicated. The Union’s leaning towards the abolishment of penal laws—penalties put in place for simply being Catholic—and inclination towards Catholic Emancipation, gave the
natives a new hope. Up until this point, the English seldom considered the needs of the country, but rather viewed it as a source of income. In the process, Ireland’s people were stripped of their rights, and forced to suffer over a century’s worth of economic destruction, famine, cultural deterioration, and civil unrest (Ross). The English saw the natives as lazy, incestuous, inadequate people with crazy religious beliefs. They attempted to strip the Irish of their primitive ways and instill their own culture upon them. They forced the Irish out of political positions, and gave them next to no say in their government (Cronin 225-40).

Since the occupation by the English in earlier centuries, the native Catholics were forced to fight for their long standing rights, and battle the Protestants for not only their land, but their freedom. To say that the English Protestants simply disliked the Catholics is a gross understatement. Not only did the Protestants find their religion absurd, but they thought the Irish were ridiculous to participate in it. They felt no rational human being could succumb to such ways of life, such as their religious practice or cultural tendencies, and found it necessary to dispose of those habits. Ridiculous charges were brought against the native citizens in an effort to deport them. English Protestants thought the country would be better without her natives, and therefore sought out reasons to deport citizens to Australia (Cronin 270). The Protestants viewed the state of the land as a reflection of the Catholics character. Therefore, it was only natural that the Catholics would be enraged upon learning that King George III was adamant on blocking their right to emancipation, for in his view he was under oath to defend the Anglican church (Cronin 225-40).

However, the Irish were not content on giving up yet. Daniel O’Connell, an Irish lawyer and politician, fought for the right of emancipation. This fight resulted in the conceding of emancipation, which now allowed Catholics to sit in parliament. O’Connell next continued his peaceful rebellions with an attempt to disband the Act of Union, and create a free Irish self-government (Massie 111-122). However his attempts were largely ineffective, and despite his desire for peaceful operations, the peace seemed to stop with him.

Violence broke out throughout the land, particularly in rural areas. There were abundant hostilities and frequent displays of violence demonstrated between Catholic and Protestant groups. Catholic farmers became outraged at their prosperous, absent, and seemingly lazy landlords. While the Protestants whittled time away in England, the Catholics were expected to pay exorbitant rent and live by ridiculous rules. They were given small plots of land to work for
themselves, so small that it was only logical to grow one or two crops. They were also not allowed to hunt, fish, or take any advantage out of their landlord’s property. While living in poverty, ruin, and starvation, the Catholics were forced to watch their rich landlords prosper in their business deals and neglect every essence of their tenants’ being. Not only did the landlords force their tenants to live in this squalor, but they most often caused it, particularly with their tithes, which Catholic tenants were forced to pay to the Protestant Church of Ireland—a church made up of Englishmen. Religion and politics mixed, putting British Protestants against Irish Catholics (Cronin 240-256). This attitude led to secret societies formed by the Catholic farmers, and these outraged citizens directed their violence towards their Protestant landlords at every moment.

**The Great Hunger**

These Protestant landlords perpetuated their cruel control, resulting in even further devastation for the Irish. The island that is Ireland played host to several different famines throughout its history, but none so devastating as The Great Irish Famine from 1845-1849, in which nearly one million people died, and another million emigrated (Cronin 258).

Many different factors contributed to this horrific time period. For example, economic highs and lows occurred throughout the century. During the Napoleonic Wars Ireland was blessed with a vast economic boom, however, after these wars their economy took extreme downturns in the following years (Cronin 225-40). Still, the group that caused the most distress and created such hardships, was none other than the Protestant landlords and the neglect of the English nation.

When the Act of Union took place, the British government did very little to help the Irish citizens. They viewed the Irish peasantry as the lowest form of humanity, a class not worth their time. They made no improvements to the country and essentially destined the natives to this dire state. The infrastructure for this particular area was seemingly nonexistent (Massie 123-34). There was no way to transport crops or supplies, farmers could not make money selling their crops, and people could not receive goods they required. Everyone was forced to live solely off of what they could provide themselves, which was very little thanks to the landlords’ presence. Tenants, as well as their families and future generations, became slaves to their land. The already small landholdings diminished as generations passed with the sons inheriting portions of
the property. As the population increased, families became larger, and landholdings began to diminish greatly. Plots became so small that it was only possible to grow one crop: the potato.

Landlords paid no attention to this. Not only did they not help the problem, but they perpetuated it further. The Protestant landlords were rarely seen on their land, and were completely unaware of the problem. Yet, not recognizing or acknowledging this aspect is only the beginning of their torment towards the tenants. The landlords were so greedy and so oblivious that they heavily mortgaged their land, not only leaving their tenants with inadequate living space, but also leaving them in heavy debt. When the landlords acquired their land, they leased it out to their tenants at extremely high prices for exceptionally small landholdings. The tenants were incapable of paying the exorbitant rent prices, and were forced into debt by their landlord’s cruel requirements (Cronin 225-240).

When the British government finally realized they had to take notice of this condition, Charles Trevelyan the assistant secretary to the treasury was largely responsible for their response. However, Trevelyan, like much of the British population, saw the Irish as too low class to even matter. He decided that it was not worth intervening in their dilemma, and allowed it to run its course. While much of the Irish population was left without food, due to the mass failing of their sole crop, the British government was in a period where they exercised a strong belief in the laissez-faire form of government; they never adhered to it more strictly than in this case. Soon public work systems were put into place, but the problem was too far gone, and the plan proved ineffective (Massie 123-134). The British government, with its lack of interference, turned a problem to into a catastrophe.

Cholera, typhoid, and dysentery epidemics broke out and no relief seemed possible for the Irish. The famine results in the first mass emigration to the United States. Other citizens fled to Australia, Canada, Scotland, and even England (Cronin 240-256). Situations were dire, families were becoming extinct, and the only option, other than death, seemed to be emigration. The country lost millions of people due to these two causes. But there were a few who still found it necessary to fight for their country and for their rights. Public and political tensions grew, and soon the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), also known as the Fenians, was founded as a secret society dedicated to win back the country through armed rebellion.
Land Agitation and Agrarian Resurgence

The desire for home rule and better rights was never so strong as after the devastation of the famine. An entire class, farm laborers, was nearly wiped out completely, and the withstanding of such treatment was no longer an option among the peasantry, or any other proud, devoted Irishmen. A campaign began for better rights for farmers and for re-distribution of land. This period became known as the Land War (Massie 145-154).

The Land War addressed both social and nationalist issues. The Irish believed that the land owning class, comprised of Protestant settlers with British identity, should be forced to give the land back to the Catholic natives. Catholics believed that since the land was stripped from their ancestors by the invading British Protestants, it was only right that modern day “Irish” Protestants returned the land to its rightful owners, the original family inhabitants (Cronin 257-276).

In order to agitate this idea, the Irish took an active position. The Irish National Land League was created to execute the ideas of fair rent, free sale, and fixity of tenure, then known as the Three F’s (Cronin 273). In order to achieve this desire, the Land League developed plans of action to win back their rights as people and citizens of Ireland. Boycotts began throughout the rural regions of the country. During these boycotts farmers and citizens alike ostracized unpopular landlords. Members of the Land League used violence against not only the unfair landlords, but their property also. Violence was seen as the only capable means of acquiring their desires, and when landlords tried to evict their tenants for how they treated them, the landlords were often met with armed confrontation by their tenants. The violence soon escalated out of control and the British prime minister was forced to put Ireland under a form of martial law known as Coercion to control the violence. Under this law, Land League leaders, Charles Parnell, Michael Davitt, William O’Brien, and others, were imprisoned. The British government blamed them for the cause of this violence, and used the leaders to issue a threat.

Eventually, settlements were made under a series of Irish Land Acts. In these acts, rights were given to farmers, allowing them to purchase their land from their landlords. The result of these acts was a creation of a small class of property owners, and also the dissolution of power among the Anglo-Irish landlords and a spread of power to Irish landowners. The power of Irish landowners and their right to control their own local rural affairs was seen as the biggest, most encouraging change made possible by these land acts (Cronin 257-276).
After the farming class received this taste of accomplishment, it was only a matter of time until the country decided to fight to the end for home rule. Isaac Butt, a former Orangemen turned nationalist, campaigned for home rule and helped establish the Home Rule League. After Butt’s death, two Irish radicals, William Shaw and Charles Stewart Parnell, turned the Home Rule League, and the movement in general—now referred to as the Irish Parliament Party (IPP)—into a major political force. It soon dominated Irish politics, and grew considerable electoral seats (Cronin 277-294). Parnell’s movement not only seemed to be successful, but it grew to include supporters from the conservative party to the Land League members and everyone in between.

Where Parnell’s movement differed from the desires of years ago was his definition of home rule. While in the early years of the century Ireland campaigned for independent rule, and a complete dissolution of the Act of Union, Parnell simply campaigned for a right to govern themselves as an area within the United Kingdom. This issue divided Ireland. A large percentage of Unionists—mostly Protestants in Ulster—feared that the granting of home rule would give too much power to the Catholics, who would in turn seek revenge (Cronin 277-294). Ulster, being the center of industry, would have suffered greatly should the Catholics impose tariffs.

Even the Irish Party was eventually split when a scandal hit the spotlight. When it became public that Parnell was having an affair, and seeking a divorce, the Catholic nation did not know what to do. In essence, divorce was considered wrong, and the citizens were forced to make a decision between their beliefs and their country. Religious nonconformists in Britain forced leader W.E. Gladstone to revoke support until another leader replaced Parnell in the IPP. Although Parnell was removed, the country was still split, and the citizens were considered either pro- or anti- Parnellites (Cronin 277-294). The country lost sight of the cause, and began fighting each other, rather than their true enemy, the British Parliament.

However, the country was finally reunited under John Redmond. With this new leader in place the IPP grew, eventually reaching its peak of power. During the year 1912, a new Home Rule Bill was introduced but once again defeated in the House of Lords. Yet, the House could only delay the bill for two years; it no longer had the power to veto it. But during these two years, civil unrest grew and the threat of a civil war hung over the entire country. Unionists
formed a party, the Unionist Ulster Volunteers (UVF), in hopes of defeating the possibility of a Home Rule Bill. In response, the Irish Volunteers, which would later become the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was formed to support the bill (Cronin 277-294). The groups - Protestant versus Catholic, “British” versus Irish, unionist versus nationalist - armed themselves and prepared for battle.

Unionists signed a document called the “Ulster Covenant,” stating they would do anything for the cause against home rule. Thousands of rifles and rounds of ammunition were imported from Germany by both sides of the civil disagreement. Eventually, the Home Rule Bill was passed, yet the civil conflict between the two groups led to a complete disagreement of terms (Cronin 277-294). The constant postponement of the bill led to nationalist distress, and the group quickly resorted to physical violence. The British were dangling the dream of independence in front of the Irish people’s faces, and the Irish could take it no more. The Irish Volunteers and IRB organized a rebellion in 1916.

**Easter Rising 1916**

On Easter, in the year 1916, nationalist rebels and rebel groups participated in a rebellion that has come to be known as the Easter Rising. Occurring in Dublin, the rebellion consisted of a week’s fighting before it was put down. At first, nationalists throughout the country condemned their acts. However, after the extreme handling from the government, consisting of the execution of rebels, the public began to sympathize with the rebels’ actions (Cronin 313-24).

Initially, the political party Sinn Fein was blamed for the acts, however this charge was completely wrong. Due to this, survivors of the rebellion returning from imprisonment joined the party in hopes of riding the publicity. They took over the party and radicalized their image and political position. Originally, Sinn Fein had campaigned for an independent government under the shared monarchy of the British king. However, as the rebel survivors took over, it now stood for the creation of an independent republic (Cronin 313-324).

Sinn Fein and the IPP were now in a tight battle for electoral seats. Sinn Fein eventually won this battle when the government tried to force conscription in the country. The public was enraged, and the IPP, to show their rage and disapproval, removed their Members of Parliament from the British Parliament. While this led to the winning of seats for Sinn Fein, they refused to sit in the British House of Commons, and created their own assembly, Teachta Dala (TD) in
Dublin at the Mansion House. A revolutionary Irish Parliament, Dail Eireann, was formed, and they declared themselves an Irish Republic (Cronin 313-324). But the British government would not stand for this, and the Irish Republic would have years of civil and foreign unrest, resulting in a war of independence, and a civil war between unionists and nationalists. This civil war would last two years, but the political tensions continue to last to this day.

The Role of Women in the Struggle for an Independent Ireland

The act of fighting for one’s country was not restricted to the male population however. Women were tired of being restrained to their designated social roles, and felt it time that they deserved equal rights. At first, a movement was formed to address the issue of equal rights, primarily within education. There was a desire to draw attention to the state of ignorance in which society was keeping women. The only way to battle ignorance was through education. Quickly, groups were formed to fight for equal education rights for women, not only in primary schooling, but in university also. Women also felt that the land issue was appalling. At the time, women were not allowed to hold property in their name unless there were single. Women did not even have a right to what was already theirs. Once a woman married, all of her property was transferred to her husband (Hartnett). However, it was not only the minor social roles women fought for. They also had a great interest in politics and their country. Many women looked past their seemingly insignificant existence in society and decided to fight not only for their rights, but also for their home.

The primary catalyst and accomplishment towards women’s role in society was the establishment of the Ladies Land League. After members and leaders of the Land League were imprisoned, and the legality of the league was undermined, the women took it upon themselves to take over the Land League’s work. The Ladies Land League fell outside the terms of the newly established Coercion Act, and they were able to continue the land campaign. They operated in difficult times during an upsurge of evictions and participated in the No Rent Manifesto Campaign, a strike urging renters to withhold payment from their corrupt landlords. Yet they did not simply stop at campaigning. These women also helped those in desperate need. Those who were evicted were often provided with houses built by the league in order to care for the dispossessed. Even detailed records on Eviction Forms were kept. The Ladies Land League
knew everything that was going on and all that needed to be done (Janis). Some ladies in particular made major contributions.

Fueled by not only the times, but the ideas of their brother, Charles Stewart Parnell, the Parnell sisters were at the forefront of female revolutionaries. Anna Catherine Parnell helped found and lead the Ladies Land League and had involvement in the formation of the New York Ladies Land League. She acknowledged every contribution made, took care of the league’s finances, and made sure all the money went to the right place. She also helped develop the famine relief office, making sure that as many people as possible affected by the famine were given care (The Parnell Sisters and the Ladies Land League).

Fanny Parnell took a great interest in politics herself. She attended trials of Fenians and protested for the cause. Her form of protest came through well-known rebel poetry and controversial submissions to newspapers. She took her cause to New York, and eventually founded the Famine Relief Committee there (The Parnell Sisters and the Ladies Land League).

One of the most influential and greatest revolutionaries was Maud Gonne. This woman was greatly influenced by her French husband’s radical political views. Seeing his intense devotion helped Gonne to fight for Ireland’s cause. She campaigned to aid evicted tenants, and helped build huts, raise funds, and influence the public through her writings in newspapers. She even joined the secret group of the Irish Republic Brotherhood. While in the brotherhood, she attracted police attention through her protests against both eviction and the celebration of Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee. She also founded a revolutionary group called the Daughters of Erin. She continued her protests through editing a monthly journal that promoted Irish independence, and further campaigned against conscription of Irish soldiers into the British Army (Maud Gonne).

Gonne was eventually arrested for her revolutionary behavior, and sent to Holloway prison in England. After she was released, she collected first-hand evidence of army and police atrocities in Cork and Kerry. Upon this revelation, she formed the Women’s Prisoner’s Defense League, a group fighting for the protection and defense of Irish rebels. While she acted within the law, British rule could not allow her insurgent behavior to continue and she was imprisoned once again, this time without charge. As an act of rebellion to this atrocity, she was one of 91 women who went on a hunger strike in order to be released (Maud Gonne).
Women, although thought of as inferior and useless, refused to let their men and country go on without help. They made a huge difference in the political attacks promoted by Irish nationalists. Their contributions through campaign, reform, and official duties helped promote the cause and made a generous impact on the outcome. They proved that these actions were not simply men’s work, and made the statement that women could help win the battle. Without their equal participation, Ireland may have seen a severely different outcome.

**The Presence of Irish History throughout Dracula**

*Dracula as an Absentee Landlord*

Perhaps the most controversial act on part of the British was not necessarily the idea that they felt entitled to rule the small island, but rather their deed of invading it. When the English Protestant class came over to Ireland, their lack of knowledge in the ways of the land and culture crippled the Irish society and people in many ways. Their cultural impositions rendered the Irish helpless and defenseless. The Irish people no longer had their way of life, and were now forced to enter a period of mass suffering. The role of the absentee landlord was merely the beginning of tumultuous events and rebellions. Stoker notes this idea, and perpetuates its importance through his use of Dracula as the embodiment of the Protestant landlord.

The landlords triggered an era of hardship and devastation for the Irish citizens. They came over to the small country instilled with the idea that they were better, which was instigated through their sense of pride in heritage and culture. Not only did the British feel entitled to claim this land as their own, but also that they attempted to instill their culture and ways on the population, thinking that their own customs were the best. The average landlord was of upper-class English descent. They took extreme pride in who they were and where they came from. They had little knowledge of, or concern for the culture and people of Ireland. The idea of living on the island was far less attractive than owning land on it and ruling the peasants. This thought becomes obvious through the fact that the British tried to bring their country over with them. They felt that their identity was so great, that they overwhelmed the Irish culture, stripping the Irish people of language, religion, and tradition, and trying to remake the country in Britain’s image. The British population had a reputation for demonstrating what they believed to be their elitism. Through their history of colonization and invasion, this suggestion becomes obvious.
The British’s invasion of Ireland did not cease with trying to abolish the Irish people’s culture, however. They placed extreme restrictions on the people who worked for them, and were more concerned with themselves and their money than with any of the natives. They saw themselves as “saviors,” people who were indeed improving the quality of Ireland through their presence there. Yet, they had little participation in their new homes except through their authority. They stripped the Irish of their land, essentially forced them to starve or leave their home country, and neglected to aid in any situation. Stoker’s Dracula symbolizes the Irish view of their absentee landlords.

The most obvious connection between Dracula and the absentee landlord is Dracula’s pride and obsession with his own lineage. He, like the landlords in Irish history, was passionate about where he came from and his persona as a result of this fact. We see Dracula himself expressing his pleasure in his ancestry when he delivers his family story to Jonathan Harker. His history, his blood, is linked to Norse Gods, Attila, and great warriors. He starts off the tale with the expression that “we Szekelys have a right to be proud.” He continues for pages about the “brave races,” many battles, and inspired leaders (59). He notes that 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 Romanoff’s can never reach” (61). Dracula relates a “passionate account of his family’s history,” leaving himself “open to charges of pure egoism and opportunism” (Ingelbien 1098). He believes, much like the British, that he is greater than the rest of the races out there, and that it is his right to claim those people as his own. Not only does he note his pride in his ancestry, but also his pride in country. The list of battles, accomplishments, and struggles is relevant to that of the British sense and dignity. The years of colonization, conquest, and battle that litter Britain’s history, are the same that encompass Dracula’s and Transylvania’s. The Count speaks of how his family came to be the great power they were. There are tales of defeating invaders and heritage lines that only include the best and bravest. In mention of this Dracula states, “Is it a wonder that we were a conquering race; that we were proud; that when the Magyar, the Lombard, the Avar, the Bulgar, or the Turk poured his thousands on our frontiers, we drove them back?” (60). Dracula is relating his pride and accomplishment. He is proving his strength. Much like the British, the relatives of Dracula were a dominating power in the world. It becomes obvious that these two identities, landlord and Dracula, become one in the same.
This idea of an elite race continues further with the thought of spreading oneself across a country. The Protestant landlords felt the need to encompass Ireland as a whole. They inhabited many areas and tried to impose their culture throughout the country. We see this trait active in Dracula’s character as well. Not only does Dracula need to bring his customs with him to England, but he also needs to spread his culture throughout the country. Through the distribution of his customs and beliefs, Dracula can more easily take over the population he so desires to make like himself. Instilling his culture will make it easier to control his new race of vampires as they begin to think like and believe in the same things as him. Like the absentee landlord, who tried to instill British culture among the Irish people as a means of improvement and a desire for more civilized behavior, Dracula deems that he must attack the country from all sides, in all ways, in order to achieve his desired result. His actions have a rippling effect, starting in the center and branching out as far as possible. He knows that if he starts in the heart of the population, the effects will expand out and he will be able to control an impressive amount of area. It becomes quite evident, as author Maude Newton suggests, that “Stoker’s Dracula is the most obvious of villains, an absentee landlord, who leaves his Transylvania castle to buy up property in London.”

Not only does Dracula make the move to a country he deems conquerable, but he also brings his own country with him, and determines to take over the city. The British landlords and government went into Ireland with the notion that they would be an easy people to overthrow. Their identity as colonizers perpetuated their desire and they set their eyes on the small island, with every intention of making it their own. Dracula soon exhibits this same notion towards London. It is impossible for the Count to rest in any place that does not contain dirt from his home land. Therefore, while the British brought their land to Ireland through their ideas and customs, Dracula literally brings Transylvania to London through the boxes full of dirt he has shipped there. However, one box is not enough. Dracula populates the city from all corners with his surplus of boxes. Each section of London is known for different social or economical areas. For example, he plants his roots at the center of the financial district, as well as both upper and lower class sections. Dracula, much like the Protestant landlord, wishes to overtake the city in its entirety. By invading all sections he is solidifying his domination. His presence in the financial district leaves him capable of crippling the foundation on which the city survives on. His attendance in both upper and lower class sections of the city allow him to attack from all
levels, leaving no one immune to his influence, and allowing no room for failure. He leaves no section uncovered, no stone unturned. His desire, to make the English people into vampires, is much like the English’s desire to rid Ireland of its inferior culture and transform it into a society of Brits. Dracula exudes the same bias as the British, that these people are nothing without his influence. The British viewed the Irish as an inferior and helpless society, and Dracula viewed his ways and beliefs as something that should be permeated through every civilization. He found his race and kind to be so unique and completely superior, that it was necessary to spread his kind throughout the world. Much as the English were trying to weed the Irish and their culture out of the Ireland, Dracula is trying to press his identity upon the city of London. Both groups viewed their victims as helpless peasants, and as Dracula himself stated, “what good are peasants without a leader?” (61).

This idea of superiority, however, lends a great hand to the tendency for greed. Both Dracula and the British could never have enough power or possession. Britain refused Home Rule Bills, imposed more restrictions, and imprisoned citizens that posed the smallest of threats. They did everything to sustain their power and obtain more when possible. By introducing countless landlords on Irish soil, the British guaranteed their control over the Irish people. Dracula guarantees control over his victims by sucking their blood. He is literally removing a piece of their identity and instilling portions of his own. This greedy need to become a ruler leads to many negative effects. Most notably is the essential greed for money and possession. Neither the British nor Dracula could achieve enough of either of these elements. The British sought to reap benefits from their land, land the tenants worked. Even Dracula had his financial obsessions. He is infatuated with the idea of how many residences he can possess. Maud Newton takes note of this, expressing that “Dracula is a material ghoul, much preoccupied with leases and title deeds.” She also makes mention of the obvious connection in the scene “when Dracula is slashed with a knife” and “banknotes, not blood, spill from his breast” (Newton). He literally bleeds money, signifying the importance that material goods and possessions play in his life. Like the English’s need to impose landlords to control the society, Dracula must also buy up land to place his Transylvanian earth. With this act, he can conquer the city from all sides, speeding up his desired results. The effects of his process are very similar to that of the British landlords. The British state imposed a sense of imprisonment and rule. They confined the people to their land, divided up plots into unlivable sizes, instructed them to care more about
their landlord’s needs than that of their own, and caused the Irish to suffer because of their own land’s limitations, imprisoning them in a state of failure.

Dracula relies strongly on this idea of imprisonment. Shortly after we meet Dracula’s character, he has already imprisoned Harker. He has confined him to the castle itself, and has instructed him not to leave his room. While initially this threat is only exercised at night, the time when Dracula is executing his plans of vampiric colonization, it eventually leads to an unending, all day imprisonment. Dracula threatens Harker, stating, “Let me advise you, my dear young friend—nay, let me warn you with all seriousness, that should you leave these rooms you will not by any chance go to sleep in any other part of the castle.” Dracula restricts Harker to the confines of his room, and warns him that, should Harker disobey him, there will be dire consequences. Harker notes the extremity of the situation, stating, “I felt I was indeed in a prison” (61-62). This reflects not only the literal imprisonment of many Irish rebels, but also the metaphorical imprisonment of the peasants and tenants. These people were restricted to their land, told what to do, and forced to act out their landlord’s wishes. Harker is now placed in a situation that, should he disobey the Count, penalties will ensue.

This status and idea of imprisonment leads to the notion of an outside authoritative ruler. The British felt entitled to the Irish land. Their imbedded identity characteristics of power, their desire to colonize, and a sense of superiority aided in this belief. They wished to obtain this country as their own, and rule it as a part of the British Empire. Dracula also became a ruler of the people. We see this most notably through the characters of Lucy, Renfield, and Mina. In these characters, Dracula instilled a sense of obedience and powerlessness. Through Renfield’s psychiatric episodes and obsession with consuming a chain of animals, we see Dracula’s domination. Lucy’s need to come when Dracula calls her shows a sense of subordination on her part. The power he exerts over Mina is most obvious in the fact that he forces her to drink his own blood, which results in her becoming a part of him, something that is Dracula’s ultimate desire.

The notion of Dracula as a ruler furthers with the obvious presence of his greed accompanied with authority. Much like the landlords in Ireland, Dracula demonstrates a sense that he is more important than his subjects are. The Irish took care of their Protestant rulers’ lands, but their own plots were too small and the rent too high, resulting in poor crops and even starvation. Regardless of this fact, the Protestant landlords refused to let their tenants fish in
their ponds, hunt their game, or eat their crops. Dracula demonstrates a similar trait. First, we notice his claim for choice “meat.” When the female vampires try to prey upon Harker in the castle, Dracula expresses his disdain and refusal, shouting, “How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes upon him when I have forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me! Beware how you meddle with him, or you’ll have to deal with me” (70). Dracula has restricted these women from having anything that belongs to him. He makes very clear what he possesses, and states that there will be consequences. Like the Protestant landlords, he has refused nourishment to the weaker peoples, and instilled a fear of consequences through the threat of imprisonment.

This idea of greedy landlord is further exemplified through Dracula’s appearance. When Harker escapes his room and lays eyes on Dracula in his coffin, Harker notes, “It seems as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood” (83). Much like the nourished landlords, Dracula was full of life and health. The excess amount of blood relates to the plentiful food the landlords had. We even see the exact effect take place with the victims of this excess. The tenants in Ireland had their food taken away from them. They had little nourishment, and suffered disease and starvation as a part of it. They were, in essence, killed by their landlord’s lack of compassion. Dracula literally takes the life out of his victims’ bodies by feeding on their blood. This vampire, the representation of an absentee landlord, kills his victims in the same way the landlords ultimately did.

Throughout the novel, we see Dracula take on many aspects of the absentee landlord. He exudes his power, greed, and rule on a people that he deems inferior, and wishes to create a society of beings like himself. Stoker notes that the presence of Protestant landlords caused much upheaval and dismay in the land. Realizing what an impact they had on history, Stoker makes his title character take on a similar identity, and ultimately causes him to produce the same effects. The results of the landlord’s rule did not end on the farm; rather they produced catastrophic outcomes and results throughout the country. Stoker’s Dracula provides the same catalyst, and allows the book to continue to pan out as a true reflection of Irish history.
The Representation of The Great Famine

The neglect and greed of the Protestant landlords left the Irish tenants in a dire state. Not only did they force ridiculous restrictions on them, but they also charged astronomical rents and forced the families to live on perpetually diminishing lots, both in size and quality. But the Irish were left with little choice except to pay and suffer. The unfortunate conditions took a severe toll on the land and her people, and sparked one of the most catastrophic events in Irish history: The Great Famine. This event was responsible for the emigration of millions and death of millions more. The famine had a huge influence on the people, history, and literature of the Irish nation. An entire genre of famine writing came out of the situation, and many "writers…[described] a starving child, or…emaciated inhabitants" (Nineteenth Century Literary Criticism). Stoker appears to have realized the significance that this event held in history, and, through the use of description and symbolic events, brought this tragedy into the forefront of his novel.

The physical characteristics of the Dracula’s victims themselves strongly relate to, and suggest, the effects of the great famine. The emaciated appearance and personal habits of those whom Dracula has conquered all express examples of suffering during this particular period. When the Count obtains new victims we see similar qualities happen to them all. Dracula literally takes the life out of them. This can most notably be seen through the example of Lucy. When Dracula begins to claim Lucy as one of his own she begins to demonstrate signs of lifelessness and defeat. She is later described as looking “more horribly white and wan-looking than ever. Even the lips were white, and the gums seemed to have shrunken back from the teeth, as we sometimes see in a corpse after a prolonged illness” (163). Dracula, as the absentee landlord, is forcing his victims into a state of lifelessness, and instigates the arrival of death. He exercises control in every way possible on his account. Lucy, as well as Dracula’s other victims, is the epitome of the starving tenants and citizens during the famine. She is obviously suffering the effects of a lifeless existence, and symbolizes the lifeless bodies of the sufferers of disease and malnutrition during the famine. We can further see Dracula’s affect on these people through his own physical description. He himself is described as having ruddy lips of vitality (48). Dracula’s lips are stained red from the blood he consumes. The traces of his sustenance remain permanently on his physique. He is living off of those that he victimizes. Like the landlords
who force their tenants to work their land, and strip the tenants of a viable plot of soil, Dracula is surviving off the life of others.

The novel further represents this devastating period through its illustration of the island’s cholera epidemic. During this time in Irish history people were pushed into large graves, and “were literally buried alive” (More Irish than Transylvanian?). Dracula instills this notion through his victims resting place. These colonized vampires, rest in coffins while they nourish themselves on the blood they just consumed. They sit in a pile of dirt and are also literally buried alive. It is no coincidence that these creatures suffer from the same effects that the British inflicted on the Irish. It is obvious that Count Dracula’s “gaunt haunted figures” and sufferers were “straight out of Ireland’s Great Famine?” (More Irish than Transylvanian?). Yet, the connections do no stop here.

There are many references to not only the physical effects of the period, but also the oppression placed on the tenants by their landlords. For example, there is a strong reference to the lack of food and the landlords’ greed as well as the neglect of the Irish people. With the landlord’s restrictions, the tenants were not able to take anything from their ruler’s land. While forced to work their small tracts of land they were also, as a result of high rents and debt, unable to produce anything. Their small plots resulted in overworked soil, and crops were doomed to fail. Yet the Protestant landlords refused to compensate their tenants for their hard work. This can be noted in Dracula’s interaction with the three female vampires. When we first meet the set of female vampires they are in a state of hunger and desperation. Dracula, the representation of the Protestant landlord, refuses to let the women have Harker; he deems this man to be his meal. The girls, who essentially lured Harker to this position, asked “Are we to have nothing tonight?” (71). Dracula, in an attempt to please them, allows them to share the meager meal of a small child. This situation clearly represents Dracula as the landlord delighting in his large feast, while the three women vampires, seemingly guests in his castle and victims of his race, are forced to share the small meal amongst themselves, much like the tenants. This idea is also evident when we once again look at the description of Dracula as “gorged with blood” with “a mocking smile on [his] bloated face” (83-84). Dracula clearly has the nourishment a Protestant landlord deserves, and is basking in his delight while lacking in any sympathy towards the starving tenants.
Symbolism can also be noted in the character and behavior of Renfield. Dracula persuades this inmate to consume as much blood as possible. This prisoner feeds flies to spiders, spiders to birds, and then eats the birds himself. Each animal is engorged with the life of its nourishment, and the final stage resides in Renfield’s own stomach. He is literally taking the lives of many animals. Dr. Seward describes him as having qualities of “selfishness, secrecy, and purpose” as well as “a settled scheme of his own” (101). Renfield demonstrates the selfish tendencies of the British in the sense that he can never get enough food; he can never consume enough lives. The British thought strictly of themselves when it came to their nourishment. Furthermore, it can be suggested that since the British found the Irish to be uncivil and inferior, they had a secret plan with the purpose of eliminating as much as the Irish race as possible. This is supported by the fact that they sent as many people as feasible to Australia. Renfield’s obsession with consuming lives links him very strongly to the British acts of the time. He consumes lives in an ascending order of size, much like the way the British eliminated the Irish. The Irish were removed according to the class system. It was the peasants and tenants that first suffered, while the wealthier and better-off citizens were either spared time or could afford to emigrate. Renfield demonstrates this in his acts of feeding flies to spiders, and the spiders to the birds, in an ultimate desire to consume the last animal himself. He is a “(life-eating) maniac” who desires “to absorb as many lives as he can, and he has laid himself out to achieve it in a cumulative way” (103). Renfield, like the British, is getting rid of his prey and wishes to take as many lives as possible. This is where the symbolism behind suffering turns to the representation of death during the atrocity. We no longer see the emaciated figures fighting the situation imposed on them by their landlords, but rather the final result of those restrictions and conditions.

The situation and story behind Lucy’s character is the primary example of what the famine’s most horrific and final effect was: death. Lucy battles for her life and many measures are taken to prevent her demise. Several blood transfusions are preformed, precautionary measures, such as garlic placement, are taken, and she is constantly watched. However, no matter how hard her devoted friends try to save this young girl’s life, it is obvious that without the nourishment of life, she will not survive. She eventually becomes somewhat bloodless, and suffers the consequences right before the readers’ eyes. We see her go through several encounters with Dracula. As this occurs, Lucy becomes more and more lifeless, reaping the
effects of Dracula’s claim over her body. Even when the men try to save her, it is obvious that Dracula will have her as one of his own. Lucy encompasses the struggle during, as well as the ultimate destiny of, the famine.

Stoker makes note of how much worse the famine and its effects became as the time went by. When Harker and Van Helsing venture to Lucy’s grave, in an attempt to save her undead soul, Harker makes reference to the fact that “as [they] went further, [they] met fewer and fewer people” (234). Like the famine, there are fewer and fewer people out there that are not affected. Yet, those that have been grow rapidly in number, and the task of trying to save them is daunting. As the famine progressed, more and more people died and emigrated, leaving the country with only a fraction of its population. This did not phase the British, and it even gave them more strength to accomplish what they set out to do, conquer the country of Ireland and claim it as their own. As the Irish population diminished the British were met with less resistance. While the famine continued, the suffering escalated and it became so bad that death was actually beginning to look attractive. The fact that these men meet fewer and fewer people on their journey symbolizes the fact that the further they advance, the more lives Dracula has claimed. As Dracula claimed more lives he was closer to achieving his own goal of conquest. Obviously, many of these people would rather die than suffer Dracula’s influence. Stoker represents this through Harker’s encounter with the vampire women. While being confined to the castle for some time, Harker, feeling like he was residing in a prison, decides to try to figure a way out of this predicament. When he is met with the physical representation of the famine he has a strong desire for the women to “kiss [him] with those red lips” (69). Harker’s journey of trials and tribulations was starting to take a toll on him, and the idea of ending it all was beginning to look alluring.

Possibly the most horrible of atrocities during this time, however, was the absolute neglect of the British to either acknowledge the situation or take responsibility for it. While the situation was taking place, the British state found it unnecessary to help, intervene, or take the blame on themselves. They dismissed the situation, determined it would fix itself, and relinquished any thought of participation. Stoker notes this plentifully throughout his work. The first mention of this historical occurrence in the novel is a direct ploy to cover and dismiss the situation, to act like it did not exist, and to divert the attention of others. When Harker is held captive in Dracula’s castle and learns of Dracula’s ultimate plan to kill him, we soon see the
Count take preliminary measures to disguise his plan and distract the local townspeople from the situation. Dracula dresses in Harker’s clothing and roams about the city so he can be seen by the inhabitants who will think it is the owner of the garments himself venturing through the streets. Harker realizes this plot and comments,

This then is his new scheme of evil: that he will allow others to see me, as they think, so that he may both leave evidence that I have been seen in the towns or villages…and that any wickedness which he may do shall by the local people be attributed to me. (76)

Dracula is displacing the blame from the atrocities he is about to commit. The British, with their lack of acknowledgement and claim of responsibility did the same thing. They felt it was the Irish’s own fault and that, with the British’s laissez-faire system of government, it was not their job to correct any effects or help the small nation.

The act of denying the situation’s existence is further perpetuated by Stoker through the use of Renfield and his zoophagous nature. While this man was originally seen consuming as much life as possible, we later notice him denying any influence or participation he had in the situation. While Renfield temporarily ceased to perpetuate his chain of life, he soon regresses, and begins his digestive tendencies from the beginning again. The answer why is soon clear. Dr. Seward, when checking on his patient saw him

beginning his fly-catching again…[Seward] looked around for [Renfield’s] birds, and not seeing them, asked him where they were. He replied, without turning around, that they had flown away. There were a few feathers about the room and on his pillow a drop of blood. (103)

Renfield obviously knows the act he has committed, and know he is the cause of the situation, but, much like the British, refuses to acknowledge his participation. He dismisses the circumstances and comes up with a weak excuse in an effort to abdicate responsibility for his actions.

Throughout the novel Stoker presents readers with many descriptions and characteristics that obviously link to the consequences of the Great Famine. Stoker notes the significance of this devastating time, realizing the impact it had on history and provides a strong correlation between the two events in his novel. The author’s decisions and actions provide the same
catalyst for despair and upheaval as did the famine during that important time in history, making it an essential part of his novel, and an obvious reflection of Irish times and troubles.

Irish Rebels in *Dracula*

As the country was physically and politically attacked, invaded, and colonized most inhabitants were astounded and shocked. Yet, while many were upset, only a few were committed enough to put their lives on the line for the freedom of their country. Stoker appears to have realized that these groups contributed greatly to the fight for freedom, and recognizing that it would have been impossible without them, made this aspect a central theme in his book. Through the characters of Harker, Seward, Godalming, Quincey, and Van Helsing, Stoker incorporates the Irish rebel groups standing up for Irish independence. Their fight becomes symbolic of the fight for Ireland and the resistance against the British regime.

It becomes obvious that without the IRB, the Land League, or any of the subsequent rebel groups, peace and home rule in Ireland would have been a much longer, much more rigorous journey. Stoker represents this idea throughout the novel in many instances. Therefore, we see this fight for a cause throughout the pages of *Dracula*. The group of men is on a mission to destroy an outsider, Dracula, and keep him from taking over their possessions. While historically this refers to the overtaking of a nation’s land, in *Dracula* this relation is made through Dracula’s conquest of their women, and ultimately, their civilization.

Stoker creates his own rebel group with the characters of Harker, Seward, Van Helsing, Lord Godalming, Quincey, and Mina. These characters are on a quest to defeat Dracula and everything he stands for. They are trying to reclaim their civilization, and force the Count out of his authoritative position, and destroy his control. With their encounter with, and battle against this vampire we see a strong connection between this group of rebellious citizens and the ones of 19th century Ireland. Their desire to destroy Dracula parallels the Irish citizens’ desire to overthrow the British.

We see these men take a similar journey as those seen throughout Irish history. During British rule, Irish rebels such as Parnell were often imprisoned for their actions and demonstrations which caused unrest in the community. This idea of imprisonment is obviously seen in the character of Harker. After being some time in the Count’s presence and establishment, Harker realizes that “the castle is a veritable prison, and [he is] a prisoner!”
He is literally imprisoned in Dracula’s castle while the vampire is out preparing his course of action. Dracula kept Harker out of the way much like the British kept the rebels under control while the British thought of a way to resolve the situation. However, this imprisonment can also be attributed to the idea that the Irish were imprisoned in a horrific situation, under the careless rule of a foreign parliament, and stuck in situations that no one seemed capable of fixing. The famine, desire for home rule, and British force all left Ireland in a suspended state of disillusion and frustration. They were stuck in a seemingly inescapable situation, an imprisonment of trouble and tragedy.

Yet, Harker soon escapes the clutches of the symbolic British elite, and sets out to find a way to stop the cruel course of action. As he climbs down that wall and escapes the castle, Harker represents the departure of rebels from prison and embodies their elevated desire to win back what rightfully belongs to them. The characters throughout the novel form their own version of a rebel group in a fight to save Lucy and free citizens from the harm that Dracula threatens to commit. As a way to bring things back to the way they once were we historically see the formation of rebel groups such as the Land League and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Dracula is no stranger to this action either.

When these Irish rebel groups first started, they acted in a sense of secrecy and concealment. They were devised as a way to catch the British off guard and achieve the greatest amount of success possible. Secret meetings took place, they devised plans of action and exercised the crucial element of surprise. The crew in Dracula operated in the same way. When Lucy is taken ill and all become concerned, Godalming, in an effort to save the one he loves, writes to Seward, “I am filled with anxiety, and want to consult with you alone…”(145). Godalming is anxious about the girl who means so much to him, and in an effort to save her, desires a secret meeting to devise a plan. In this act it is easy to view Lucy as Ireland and these two men are beginning to form a group to protect her and bring her back to what she once was. She needs to be saved in the same way Ireland and her people do.

Due to Dracula’s many minions and the inability to be certain who is on this his side, the novel’s rebel group continues to hold several more secret meetings. When the crew moves to Dr. Seward’s residence, many meetings take place. The group researches, discusses courses of action, and plans how to go about dismissing the crisis. They inconspicuously obtain information about Dracula’s residences, whereabouts, boxes, and much more information to help
them achieve what they need to. This secrecy is perpetuated further in the novel when Van Helsing, realizing what is actually happening to Lucy, confides in Dr. Seward and states, “You and I shall keep as yet what we know here, and here,” pointing to Seward’s heart and forehead. He continues, “I have for myself thoughts at present. Later I shall unfold to you” (155). Van Helsing and Dr. Seward are keeping their meeting and knowledge a secret. Also, Van Helsing obviously has a planned course of action. He presents all the typical qualities of an Irish rebel.

The next step for these groups was to devise their plans and put them into action. The historical rebels arranged and participated in boycotts, riots, demonstrations, and tactical maneuvers. They were aggressive, defiant, and not above using weapons and violence. In the beginning, most rebellions were demonstrations or political movements - peaceful displays of disapproval. However, as the situations in Ireland worsened - famine, death, emigration, and corrupt rule - and became grimmer, these men acquired weapons in a final and drastic attempt to achieve their goal of driving the invading force out of their native land. Stoker’s rebel group portrays the same qualities. Throughout the novel they are equipped with garlic, crosses, rosaries, and religion. This group is also armed, however, it is not until the end of the novel, the final battle, that we see these men acquire weapons.

It can even be noted that Stoker’s rebels executed a sense of force much like their Irish counterparts. When the men attempt to save Lucy from her destruction, Van Helsing and Seward come upon a locked up house. Van Helsing notes that “if there be no way open to get in, [they] must make one” (183). Van Helsing is meeting desire with force. His desire to save someone who is in so much trouble is so strong that he is willing to do anything. The Irish were willing to do anything to save themselves and their beloved country. Through their protests, riots, political demonstrations, and fearless attitude towards punishment and consequences, noted in their many imprisonments yet continued participation, it becomes obvious that Ireland meant everything to her inhabitants, paralleling this novels ragtag rebels’ attitudes towards saving what means everything to them.

Furthermore, escalating the similarities, the group executes additional plans, linking themselves to participation in the battle against Dracula. As the years went on, and progress was not made, the Irish became more and more frustrated with their lack of results. Soon, what used to be a battle of words and demonstrations became a battle of weapons and force. Stoker’s rebels embark on a similar path. They go onto the vampire’s property, into his residence, and try to
find out more information about the situation, in order to rid the country of him. It is here that the first face-to-face battle takes place. When Dracula enters the house, the crew is equipped with defenses and takes action against him. Additionally, they set out to prepare all the wooden boxes with the communion host so that Dracula cannot return. In essence, they are removing Dracula from their territory. They are extinguishing his presence and reclaiming their land as their own. Later, we see the characters participate in their epic final battle. All their hard work, effort, research, desire, and persistence has paid off when these men finally achieve what they set out to accomplish for so long. This final battle institutes the use of weapons, much like the Irish’s final efforts to accomplish their mission. Much like the Irish, The rebel group in *Dracula* initiated their plans with symbolic means of protection: crucifixes and hosts. Yet, as progress was not made, the final plan included weapons and a strong desire for success. Throughout these battles, plans, and executions, these characters are symbolically fighting the landlord and regime that has forced this trouble and hardship on their lives. They are fighting for the memory of Lucy, or the memory of what Ireland used to be, and for the assurance that this cruelty will continue no longer. Their fight becomes symbolic of the fight for Ireland and their desire to rid their country of the British establishment.

Readers even see the involvement of America through the character of Quincey. While there was little American involvement directly in the country of Ireland, many groups and organizations were created to support the foreign cause. Through mass emigrations and the resultant ethnic loyalty, many people in America felt a strong connection to the issue. We can note the importance of American involvement through the inclusion of Quincey, however, we also note the amount of effect the country had on this foreign issue with how this character is presented.

Quincey is ultimately presented as a source of outside help. We notice that while this American cowboy may have played a vital role, it was not necessarily dominant. Quincey is not given the opportunity to write a journal. Those who are at the center of the fight, who have the most direct involvement, all have the opportunity to express their ideas and relay what is going on, and what they have experienced. Quincey, however, is an outsider who is called upon when needed, and generally takes a back-seat approach; he is not given the opportunity to express his experiences because those incidences are not the most prevalent or most important. This shows that while America aided strongly in the effort, she was not on the frontlines of the issue.
We can see the aid that Quincey gives in many ways. He embodies the participation of the American people through his contributions and actions. When Lucy is in trouble, and all precautions must take place to ensure her safety, we find Quincey in the act of “patrol[ing] round and round the house” (189). The American is taking an outside approach to the situation. He is in a sense surveying the perimeter, much like the American nation did. With their development of support organizations, Americans helped arrange awareness and funds. Rarely did Americans have direct experiences with the cause in Ireland. Quincey symbolizes this through his involvement on the outside, away from the direct cause. We further see this idea when the group of men and Mina return to Dr. Seward’s accommodations. During their stay these people engage in several meetings. On one of these nights, Quincey notices a threat and leaves the room. Seconds later we hear a pistol shot and a claim from Quincey that he shot a bat on the windowsill, in fear that it was Dracula himself (280-81). Once again he is taking action from the outside. He is leaving the direct cause symbolized through the meeting, and ventures outside the political circle to help defend those that are most involved with the cause.

The presence of guns is another symbol of Quincey’s role. He not only equips himself with a gun, but he also provides weapons for everyone when the group sets out to find Dracula and destroy him. Once again we see this man aiding with supplies and effort, but not being a direct part of the war. However, we cannot underestimate the importance that Quincey, and America, played in the effort. At the end of the novel, during the final battle, it is Quincey who dies in the fight to save everyone from Dracula. Here we can note that he played an important role, and provided great aid, but now his job is done. The monster has been defeated. Without his support this would not have been possible, but now his help is no longer needed.

Quincey, along with every one of these members, banded together to achieve a result they felt necessary. They executed plans and demanded results to obtain an outcome that they had no intention of abandoning, no matter the cost. Their characteristics and actions embody the essence of the Irish rebel groups as they set out to achieve a similar result against a comparable threat. They epitomize the very determination, desire, and pride that made up the rebel groups who fought for the Irish cause.
The Presence of Religion

Throughout Irish history, religion has had a strong and prevalent presence. Catholicism in particular runs rampant through the social, cultural, and political concerns of the nation. Stoker noted this important presence among the people and made it a vital element of his novel. Through the use of religious features and objects Stoker notes the importance of this aspect of Irish culture and makes it as significant an element in his work as it was in their society.

From the very beginning of the book we are confronted with Catholic symbols and practices. When Harker sets out to visit Dracula at his castle, many of the people he comes across confront him with signs of fear and disbelief when they find out his purpose in their country. One woman in particular quickly presents him with a “crucifix from her neck,” knowing that this sacred symbol will protect him from the evils he is about to confront (35). Furthermore, as he makes an exit to proceed with his travels, Harker is met with a “crowd of picturesque figures, all crossing themselves” (37). These signs of religion immediately take on an improtant meaning in the novel, noticed through their abundant presence taking on the role as a means to protect him from evil.

Stoker relays to readers from the beginning that faith will have an important aspect in this work. When confronted with famine, foreign rule, and hardships, the Irish almost always turned to religion as a form of survival. After the effects of the Great Famine many of the nationalists became “devout and faithful practicing Catholics” (Magray). Their lives were consumed with religion. In essence, religion helped them get through this hard time in their life. Much like that of the lives of the Irish, religion becomes a huge part in Harker’s life, not only giving him comfort and a release from fear, but also the protection that he needs to continue to live. With Stoker’s attention to this idea, readers see that he is suggesting religion will help Harker and his friends get through this ordeal.

The importance of religion is further stressed when the peasants leave the carriage, and Harker to travel alone, and present him with gifts. In fear for his life,

One by one several of the passengers offered [him] gifts, which they pressed upon [him] with an earnest which would take no denial;…each was given in simple good faith, with a kindly word, and a blessing,…the sign of the cross and the guard against the evil eye. (39)
All of these inhabitants know the danger that Harker is about to confront. When the townspeople realize that no one can talk him out of it, they know that the only defense he has is religion, specifically Catholicism. After Harker is presented with his gifts, Stoker escalates the importance of faith from a sense of comfort to a means of defense.

Once Harker meets Dracula and begins to get a strange feeling about him and the situation, Harker himself begins to feel threatened. Fear quickly instills itself in the visitor, and the readers, and the execution of religion as a defensive action is soon put into place. When Harker cuts himself shaving, blood trickles down his throat and Dracula’s eyes, upon notice, “blazed with a sort of demonic fury, and he suddenly made a grab at [Harker’s] throat” (56). Harker is put in a harmful situation. However, once the Count’s “hand touched the string of beads which held the crucifix. It made an instant change in him, for the fury passed so quickly that [Harker] could hardly believe it was ever there” (56). Harker’s symbol of the Catholic religion is providing him with a line of defense against the evils of the Count. He is so relieved by this form of security that he even “bless[es] that good, good woman who hung the crucifix round [his] neck! For it is a comfort and strength to [him] whenever [he] touch[es] it” (59). He feels comfort and strength to get through his current situation thanks to religious gifts. He symbolizes the fact that the Irish turned to their religion, finding it all the more necessary in times of trouble. It was a way, and provided a will, to survive. Harker no longer fears this threatening situation to the same extent as he once did, noted when he places the crucifix above his bed and no longer “fears to sleep” (65).

Later we see the idea of Catholicism as a form of defense demonstrated throughout the group that has set out to destroy Dracula. They realize that holy belief can save them from this demon, and they begin to take their Catholic religious symbols and use them in their own favor. They take up defensive arms against the Count, and we see “characters pray constantly for the intercession of the “Almighty God” in their struggles with the demonic; they cross themselves, brandish crucifixes, and invoke the protective powers of communion wafers” (Herbert 100). The group has realized what religion can do for them, and has opted to embrace its defensive powers. Van Helsing knows that “things sacred…to them [Dracula] is nothing, but in their presence he take[s] his place far off and silent with respect” (279). Van Helsing equips his faithful soldiers with a crucifix and portion of the host when they set off on their first crusade to enter Dracula’s
Faith is obviously working when readers see the rebels first confront Dracula. When the vampire jumps into sight, he is quickly met with “the Sacred Wafer…and suddenly stop[s]…and cower[s] back. Further and further back he cower[s], as [they], lifting [their] crucifixes, advanced” (322). Dracula is unable to compete with their religious symbols. His representation as the Protestant landlord makes him weak against the Catholic faith. He fears this religion and is literally repelled by its presence and symbols. These men represent Ireland’s assurance that as long as they put their lives in God’s hands, everything will work out. Van Helsing connects his group to this idea through a statement made when they are at the end of their battle. As he and Mina are crossing into Dracula’s home territory, in a state of fear, the doctor expresses that his “only comfort is that [they] are in the hands of God” (398). He has officially relinquished human control, and placed it into the hands of the divine.

However, this group out to defeat Dracula did not merely sit around waiting for trouble to come to them. They did not stick to a strictly defensive mode. Even in the face of danger, these men used their religious access as a weapon, a means to take an active role in their desire to rid London of this monster. These Catholic symbols, which previously stood as a means of protection, have now taken on another role. The idea of religion as a protective measure is no longer the sole case. Rather, it becomes a means to accomplish their goals. The group becomes assertive with their measures. Crucifixes, hosts, and rosary beads are now used actively to ward off Dracula and ultimately aid in the final battle against him, a battle whose goal is to take Dracula’s life. This offensive nature comes into play initially when Dracula hurts these characters in an unforgivable way. When confronted with Lucy’s abysmal death, Van Helsing and the rest of the men who loved her wished to restore the old and true Lucy. Yet, to achieve this, Van Helsing was forced to use the host as a weapon. In order to prove her current state to the others, he was forced to put the host in her coffin, this way she could not reenter it. The idea of using religion as an offensive tactic is noted when Van Helsing states “we must either capture or kill this monster in his lair; or we must, so to speak, sterilize the earth, so that no more he can seek safety in it” (281). While the group takes comfort in their religious protection, they know that they cannot live the rest of their lives content on the fact that as long as they have their
source of defense everything will be okay. They need to change things for, and protect, the entire city. The only way to do this seems to be through the means of the Catholic religion.

Van Helsing and his band of rebels realize this and therefore attach themselves to a constant state of belief. They hold a strong sense in the faith when they enter their final battle of the war. Van Helsing notes the enormity of the situation, expressing their task as a mission of God. When devising a plan to finish off the beast that is Dracula, Van Helsing notes his faith, stating

Thus we are ministers of God’s own wish: that the world, and men for whom His Son die, will not be given over to monsters, whose very existence would defame Him. He have allowed us to redeem one soul already, and we go out as the old knights of the Cross to redeem more.

(360)

The idea that God has sent them on this mission is in full force. The noble group of warriors sees their situation as something that must be done to save the lives of everyone, not just themselves. They find that the city is entitled to this freedom, an aspect that suggests they should have the right to rule themselves and not succumb to the powerful measures of others, much like the Irish felt they had a right to home rule. Stoker takes the role of religion in Irish society and applies it to novel to equate its importance.

Religion becomes the primary feature of war; it is how all is solved. Essentially, this battle becomes a religious war in itself. Christopher Herbert, in his article, “Vampire Religion,” supports this reading, mentioning that “the battle against the plague of vampirism is a battle specifically on behalf of Jesus Christ.” Not only is the group battling to rid the world of a religious threat, but they are doing it with religious weapons. Not only are all the boxes consecrated with the host to prevent entry, but so are the coffins of the three vampire women. Van Helsing knows that all will not end with Dracula’s destruction itself, but rather that all vampires must be exterminated. This primary weapon, the host, stands for the good that Catholicism represents.

The Irish felt a sense of devotion and love for their religion and country, relying on one to save the other. Stoker knew this, so it would only be natural that the chief form of protection, assault, and achievement would lie in the form of Catholic faith. This facet allows them to save themselves, the city, and the future. With the Irish’s belief and trust in their faith they were able
to do the same and accomplish many of the things they set out to do. Without religion in these
to do the same and accomplish many of the things they set out to do. Without religion in these
people’s, and the characters’ lives, the strength to proceed with their monumental task would
have been one of wavering characteristics, and they would not have been successful in their
endeavor.

The Representation of Women

During this time of tumult and dismay, it was not only the men who made a difference. Women played an important role with strong and plentiful efforts. Without them many of the accomplishments of the cause may never have been possible. Women helped with many duties, and provided support to the fighters that would not have been possible without their involvement. When, in an attempt to stop their riotous behavior and progress the British imprisoned nearly all the members of the Land League and in fact criminalized the organization, the women of Ireland found a way around the law and took over the responsibilities of the men, aiding greatly in the war for their land. These women did everything from raising funds and keeping books to arranging boycotts and even participating in the action. This period in history showed a strong emergence of female participation. With women like the Parnell sisters and Maude Gonne we see the roles women played and the abundant contributions they made in many different areas. Women were no longer sitting on the sidelines cheering for their men without contribution. They were now fighting for the cause, rather than simply supporting it. The support of these women played a strong part in the battle against the British, and without their effort it would have been much more difficult to win the war. Stoker, through the character of Mina Harker, notes the role women played during the time, and demonstrates their significance. Mina’s independence, contributions, and direct involvement in the war against Dracula encompasses all of the aspects of involvement and active roles that women in Ireland played.

Mina has her own job, an adequate education, excellent work ethic, and her own ability to succeed in life. This woman, the only one in the group, immediately distinguishes herself as an independent and promising young female. In a letter to Lucy, we see her express characteristics of diligence and a strong work ethic. She sets herself apart from other women and equates her capabilities with that of a man. She tells her friend that she is “overwhelmed with work,” and that her job, as an assistant schoolmistress, “is sometimes trying” (86). She is so determined to be the best that she can be that she states, “I want to keep up with Jonathan’s studies, and I have
been practicing shorthand very assiduously” (86). She clearly has the desire and capability to be equally as intelligent and hardworking as a man. She equates her abilities with Jonathan’s and obtains the same knowledge as he does. She desires to be useful and refuses to sit by idly and become the stereotypical housewife. There is more to life for Mina than merely standing next to her husband at social events and waiting on him hand and foot. While Mina has her companion’s interest at heart, and may be working so hard as to be a help to him, she is going above and beyond the typical wifely duties and exceeds the expectations, maybe even the assumed capabilities, of the average women. It is ultimately her brain and intellect that lead to Dracula’s defeat and destruction.

Mina, with her clerical skills, intellect, and execution, aids greatly in the defeat of Dracula, much like the Irish women aided in the fight against the British. She is devoted to the cause. This woman not only keeps a detailed journal, noting significant events and details, but she also takes the journals of all the other members, as well as newspaper articles, and arranges them chronologically to make sense of the situation. Seward even comments on what a help this act was when he states, “what a good thing that Mrs. Harker put my cylinders into type! We never could have found the dates otherwise” (264). It was through Mina’s actions and aid that the men are able to make more sense of the Dracula mystery.

In addition to transcribing Dr. Seward’s phonographic journal entries, she also makes duplicate copies of the journals for each member, as well as an extra copy to put into safe keeping. This proves essential when Dracula breaks into Seward’s establishment and destroys what Dracula believes to be all the copies of evidence against him that may aid in his destruction (325). However, Mina’s hard work and wit allow the fight to go on without a hitch. Her generous contributions and skills, as well as their effects, symbolize much of the duties and influences that the Ladies Land League had in Ireland. Mina takes control of the situation, and essentially provides the services that these ladies did.

The woman, adding a different perspective to the group, sees things that the men are incapable of seeing. In preparation for the battle against Dracula, Mina extracts all the pertinent information and presents it in a way that will make it easy for the men to use. While the men are away, Mina provides great support and enables their cause and fight to be successful. Even Van Helsing admits, in reference to her navigational plans, inferences, and discoveries, “Our dear Madam Mina is once more our teacher. Her eyes have seen where we were blinded” (394).
Mina, like her Irish women counterparts, brought a whole new influence and sense of activism to the cause.

Mina’s importance is further supported through the fact that she is the one who knows all of Dracula’s actions and whereabouts. It is the woman who is handed the ultimate knowledge in this scenario. With Dracula’s act of biting Mina, he passes on the knowledge of his whereabouts to this unsuspecting victim. Due to Van Helsing’s ability to hypnotize her, Mina is able to see through Dracula’s eyes and relay all the important information she is capable of collecting. With this ability, Stoker notes the important influence that women had in Ireland’s battle for freedom, and by giving this knowledge and ability to Mina, suggests that Ireland could not have won without their support. The women in Ireland moved from the sidelines to the game. They even went beyond the typical women’s role of remaining in the background. They came to the battle’s frontlines and helped the cause through organizational groups, fundraising, and participation in the cause through demonstrations and riots. Men began to see them as equals, and even fought side by side with a few female enlistees. They were no longer the weaker sex they were once thought to be. Stoker notes this action through the sense of Mina’s active role in the fight, and the men’s full confidence and sense of equality with her.

When Mina first arrives at Dr. Seward’s abode, she is immediately taken into full confidence; she knows everything the men do and there is no attempt to keep anything from her. In an effort to rid the world of the vampire, Seward says to Mina, “We need to have no secrets among us; working together and with absolute trust, we can surely be stronger than if some of us were in the dark…We must keep one another strong for what is before us; we have a cruel and dreadful task” (261). This man immediately deems Mina his equal and suggests that even she deserves to be part of this important battle. He is willing to fight next to this woman for the cause and suggests that she is just as capable of winning the war as he is; there is no difference in strength, intelligence, or perseverance between the sexes.

This is further suggested when we see the group of men decide, before they begin the final battle, that “Mina should be in full confidence; that nothing of any sort—no matter how painful—should be kept from her” (330). They find that Mina is able to handle anything. There is no need, or attempt made, to shelter her from the scary outside world that women were often thought incapable of handling. She is truly deemed an equal when Seward expresses his praise, stating, “I know that she forms conclusions on her own, and from all that has been I guess how
brilliant and how true they must be” (362). This statement also suggests that Mina is capable of coming up with equally intelligent ideas as those formed by men. Full trust and certainty is placed on Mina’s fortitude to persevere, and they do not distinguish themselves from her on account of gender. She, like several Irish women, will be fighting with, and next to them until the end.

Throughout Stoker’s novel Mina is a central character. She aids greatly in the cause and is ultimately a prime reason why they are able to be so successful in their abolishment of the Count. Irish women, like Mina, played a huge role in the fight to reclaim their country. Knowing this, it was only obvious that Stoker would embody the importance of such an aspect through the strong and intelligent figure of Mina Harker.

The Vampire in the British Isles

The tale of Dracula, and its title character, has often been attributed to the legend of Vlad the Impaler, a Transylvanian ruler whose favorite form of punishment was to impale his victim with a stake, and to drink their blood afterward. However, there is much evidence that not only refutes this idea, but that also supports the argument that this novel was based on Irish tradition as well as an original Irish myth.

There are several reasons that strongly support the fact that Stoker would not have based his story on this folktale. Primarily, the author never visited Transylvania or even Eastern Europe at all. Any information he would have received about the region would have been received “entirely [from] travelers’ accounts” (Glass). Stoker would have no direct experience with the area that his novel his based in, and would acquire the accounts and opinions of other travelers. The idea that an author would choose to write about something he knew so little about is absurd. The comparisons between these two figures, Vlad and Dracula, are so slight that it would be ridiculous to note a strong connection between the two. The only possible correlation is the attraction of blood between the two of them. However, the similarities stop there.

Many people note that Dracula contains the favorite forms of punishment enacted by this early ruler. However, in the tale of Vlad, it is Vlad himself who is impaling and beheading criminals and citizens. He is administering the punishment. In the novel, we note that Dracula is defeated by these very means. In order for one to rid the Earth of this monster, Dracula must have a stake driven through his heart, be decapitated, and stuffed with garlic. It cannot it be said
that the character is based on this ruler, when in fact Dracula is having the very atrocities this figure committed preformed on himself. The differences are furthered through the fact that Stoker's vampire...is nowhere near as threatening, nor as sadistic[as Vlad]. Stoker's Dracula is a mysterious, somewhat sensual character who kills and feeds to survive, much like any being in nature. In fact, as much as there is reference to the evil of Dracula, it can be reasoned that all of his actions were motivated by survival. Vlad the Impaler, on the other hand, killed not to feed, but to revel in his own power, and just for the sheer pleasure of seeing the suffering of his numerous victims. (Vlad the Impaler)

Vlad and Dracula had different motives, characteristics, and tendencies. They are merely two different stories with minor coincidental similarities. As Professor Sabina Ispas, director of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore in Bucharest states, “There is no tradition of vampires here (in Romania). Until 10 years ago, we Romanians hadn’t even heard of the Dublin writer or his character, Dracula” (Glass). If Stoker’s tale was truly based on Transylvanian history and myth it would have most likely reached the country it was based on. If Stoker’s piece were in fact a work of Transylvanian influence it would have a far greater impact on, and interest throughout the country. The fact that Transylvania has no tradition of vampires, or relationship with the book, makes the idea of Dracula as Transylvanian a notion with a weak foundation. Yet, if Dracula was not based on this Transylvanian figure, Stoker had to have gotten his inspiration from somewhere.

The word itself, vampire, holds a strong European connection. Although this elusive word is believed to be Transylvanian in origin, actually, “both linguistic studies concerning the etymology of the term vampire and the first recorded occurrences of the word in major European languages indicate that the word is neither Hungarian nor Rumanian” (Wilson). The name and fictional character lay no claim to Transylvanian tradition, therefore refuting the idea that Dracula is indeed based on Transylvanian folklore. Furthermore, the term does not officially become popular until Polidori’s story, The Vamypre in 1813 (Wilson). Polidori popularized the word through his work, perpetuating the fact that the vampire is most definitely a British creation as opposed to a Transylvanian one. Not only does this word vampire hold Western European roots, but even Dracula’s name derives from the Gaelic language. In the native Irish language
there is a word “Droch-fhoula pronounced droc’ola” which can mean “‘bad’ or ‘tainted blood’ and while it is now taken to refer to “blood feuds,” it might have a far older connotation. It might indeed have been the inspiration for the name Dracula” (Glass). The Irish presence, through myth and language, becomes so apparent that the possibility of Stoker attributing his story to Irish roots is far more likely than the idea of the novel basing itself on a small and minor characteristic of a vastly foreign character in a far away culture.

The presence of vampires themselves, however, was plentiful in British culture prior to Stoker’s creation, a culture much closer to home. Lord Byron is often attributed with making the term a common one, and popularizing it throughout the empire. In his poem “Giaour” Byron condemns a character, as a form of punishment, to vampirism:

But first on earth, as Vampyre sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse . . . . (Hoeper)

The author, with his words and imagery, sets a standard for the future of vampires and their character qualities. Author Nina Auerbach notes Byron’s characterization of his vampire as something different than what we know today. She states in her book, *Our Vampires Ourselves*, that

Vampires were not demon lovers or snarling aliens in the early nineteenth century, but singular friends…They were not the specialized creatures we know today, recognizable by distinguishable characteristics—fangs, fruity accents, eccentric clothes—and killable by experts on their limitations. (13)

Vampires were once undetectable. They had little reason to be noticed or discovered. They were only a threat to those that were closest to them. Yet, Byron’s interpretation of vampires soon sparked a new character’s birth.
Byron’s work quickly inspired his traveling physician to write a tale of his own. John Polidori would later become known as the author of the work known as *The Vampyre*. Byron and Polidori traveled together extensively. Their relationship, possibly due to their continued close contact, was one of constant tension, full of dislike and arguments. During their travels, not only did their friendship suffer, but Polidori began noticing strange things about Byron. For example, he would keep strange hours, sleeping during most of the day and staying awake during the night. Also, Byron refused to eat animal food, making Polidori wonder how he did satisfy his hunger (Hoeper). This stressful relationship is credited as the basis for Polidori’s novel. Their difficult friendship transcended both of their works, with both “Byron and Polidori suffus[ing] each other’s vampire tales as indelibly as they had each other’s identities on their unhappy journey” (Auerbach 15-16). But Byron’s influence did not stop with Polidori. Polidori’s main character, Lord Ruthven, shares the same name as Lady Caroline Lamb’s character in *Glenarvon*, a tale of murder, corruption, love, and monstrous deeds. (Auerbach 16). Lady Caroline and Byron had an affair, one so strong that when Byron finally broke it off, Lady Caroline went into a state of hysteria. She was so upset, and so mad at her ex-lover, that she based her novel’s main character on the man who hurt and deceived her (The Lady Caroline Website). Byron, a well known and very influential Englishman, played a strong part in the development of the tale of the vampire, both physically and inspirationally. With the influence within the British empire Stoker would have had an adequate model to base this story on, and coupled with the Irish mythology and political climate, he would be able to “present his fiction with a special identity of his own making” (Glass).

This idea of Irish mythology presents the most obvious proof and support for Dracula being truly based on Irish legend, most distinctly through the story behind Abhartach. Francis Delvin Glass presents the story of the chieftain named Abhartach as a basis for the mystery behind Dracula. According to Glass, in the town of Slaughtaverty there lies the remains of a monument known as the Giant’s Grave, identified as Leacht Abhartach, or Abhartach’s sepulcher. This monument keeps alive the story that has strong connections with Stoker’s novel. In the fifth or sixth century this chieftain had a reputation for sorcery and evil, resulting in the destruction of his townspeople. He terrified his subjects, so they went to a neighboring chieftain, Catha’n, for help. Catha’n came to the subjects’ rescue and slew the evil sorcerer king Abhartach and buried him upright in a grave. However, Catha’n’s efforts did not work, for the
following day, Abhartach returned, this time demanding a bowl of blood from the veins of his subjects in an effort to maintain his corpse. Catha’un executed his efforts again, killing and burying the chieftain for a second time, only to find the seemingly immortal man in front of him the following day, once again demanding his peasants’ blood.

Catha’un, determined to succeed at ridding the Earth of the seemingly immortal Abhartach, went to a local Druid for help. The Druid informed Catha’un that Abhartach was on of the *neamh-mharbh*, or undead, as well as a *dearg-diu’lai’,* or drinker of blood. This Druid stated that Abhartach could not in fact be killed; however, he could be controlled and put under restraint. In order to achieve this, Catha’un needed to impale the sorcerer with a sword made of yew wood, bury him upside down surrounded by thorns and ash twigs, then cover his grave with a heavy stone. Catha’un performed these acts, and the people of the town were never bothered by the evil Abhartach again. The grave to this day remains covered with a giant stone and curled over with a thorn bush (Glass).

The story of Abhartach is far more similar to the story of *Dracula* than is the legend of Vlad the Impaler. Here we have an evil, magical being who scares citizens, demands blood, and cannot be killed in an ordinary way. Dracula relates to the story of Abhartach more so than Vlad the Impaler, and Stoker demonstrates this throughout the book in multiple ways. Dracula is obviously evil, and out to get what he wants, much like Abhartach. Dracula’s evil influences result in the killing of children as well as many other people, much like the chieftain’s sorcery. He furthers this evil through trickery when he disguises himself in Harker’s clothing so that it will appear that the owner of the garments had committed the atrocities himself. In addition, Dracula’s evil pervades through the fact that he is out to take over an entire race. He is trying to convert the human population into a race of vampires. But the similarities between these two figures do not cease here. Dracula also displays the magical characteristics that the figure Abhartach demonstrated. He is capable of shape-shifting. He can change into a bat, wolf, or even fog or mist. His sorcery allows him to terrorize people and make them fear him so much they wish him dead. Dracula also cannot be killed in an ordinary way. Much like the character of Abhartach, he must be impaled with a stake. The similarities between these two characters are numerous and significant. Patrick Weston connected this story to the “Irish vampire tradition” in his own book, *A History of Ireland*, a book that Stoker was highly likely to see and “relish.” This fact, coupled with the notion of Stoker’s childhood experiences leads one to ask: “might
not the legend of the vampire-king, coupled with the strong tradition of blood-drinking Irish chieftains and nobles recounted to him as a child by his Sligo-born mother and the Kerry maids who worked about his Dublin home, have eventually coalesced into the idea of Count Dracula?” (Glass). It is obvious that Stoker knew of this story and had many Irish influences for his creation of Dracula - both novel and character.

The connections and roots that lie within Irish myth and culture make it obvious that Stoker’s novel was most definitely embedded in Irish tradition. Similarities that lie in the legend of Abharatach, as well as the origin of the vampire itself strongly support the idea that Stoker was basing his work on native influence. He would have all this information at the tip of his fingers and obviously Stoker makes use of it. The tradition of Irish storytelling lends itself in Stoker’s work and firmly roots it in this notion of local inspiration. Stoker knew all about being Irish, and it is only natural that he would base his most noted work on the experiences of his life, and the elements that make up his country.

Conclusion

By looking at the history and the politics of the time, it is simple noted that it is more likely that Stoker was relaying a tale of appalling history wrapped in a cloak of mystery and horror. Through his novel and title character Stoker is able to relay the atrocities that were committed against the Irish race, and with his vampire he is truly capable of presenting the British race as the monsters they truly were to those people. Furthermore, he does not cease to present the facts with his atrocious character, but he also relates the heroes and events that played out during that time.

Stoker’s novel undoubtedly places itself on the shelf of the most important Irish novels written in history. This author takes a tragic and traumatic time in Ireland’s past and relays the story with a passion that communicates the magnitude and significance of this particular time. With Dracula he tells of the suffering the people went through as well as the huge tasks they were able to overcome and the enormous sense of pride these people place in their cultural roots. Stoker creates an important and influential work conveying to the world the significance of this time and escalates readers’ understanding and appreciation of the age these Irish citizens lived through.
When we look at the historical events and everything the Irish went through, it becomes obvious that Stoker was truly trying to present an Irish history. This, coupled with the stories and tradition of Irish folklore and story-telling, strongly suggest that Transylvania played little part in this work, and that Stoker was indeed presenting a tale about his native Ireland.
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