

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES



**THE GENEALOGY OF BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA: AN
EVOLUTIONARY LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE VAMPIRE IN
LITERATURE AS A MEME**

THESIS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original to this thesis.

Ahmet Anıl AYGÜN

To my beloved wife,

FOREWORD

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Assist. Prof. Timuçin Buğra EDMAN who has supported me with his profound knowledge and thank him for the valuable advice with which he provided me as my supervisor. I am also grateful for my mother, Mediha AYGÜN, that never gives up supporting me. I am indebted to İdil Gülnihal YAZICI for all the help and support she offered. Last but not least, I would like to thank my beloved wife, Meltem GÜNEŞ AYGÜN for her endless support, encouragement, patience, and guidance. Without them, it would be impossible for me to finish this work.

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BRAM STOKER'IN DRACULA ROMANINDA VAMPİRİN SOYAĞACI: VAMPİRİN BİR GOTİK KORKU MEMİ OLARAK EVRİMSEL EDEBİ ANALİZİ

ÖZET

İrlanda asıllı Britanyalı yazar Bram Stoker'ın korku romanı Drakula ilk kez on yedinci yüzyıl şiiriyle ortaya çıkan vampir yazınının en bilinen ve sevilen örneğidir. Bu tez çalışmasında İngiliz evrimsel biyolog Richard Dawkins tarafından ortaya atılan ve kabaca bir kültür içerisinde bireyden bireye sözlü, yazılı, görsel iletişim yöntem ve araçlarıyla aktarılan, kendini kopyalayabilen, değişim geçiren, seçilimsel zorluklara tepki veren düşünce, sembol ve uygulamalar olarak tanımlanabilecek” “mem” kavramı ve Profesör Joseph Carroll tarafından kuramlaştırılan Evrimsel Edebiyat Eleştirisi ışığında romantik edebiyat baladlarında ve Viktorya edebiyatı korku kurmacalarında vampirin Bram Stoker'ın Drakula karakterine memetik evrimi incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda Drakula meminin Bram Stoker'ın yaşamından ve kendisinden önce yazılmış olan vampir kurmacalarından memetik kalıtım yoluyla miras aldığı vampir fenotipine ait özellikler ile kurgusal paralellikler, mekân ve olay örgüsü analiz edilmiş ve doğal seçim içerisinde edebiyattaki öncülü vampirlerin Bram Stoker'ın Drakula eserindeki Transilvanyalı, soylu, baştan çıkarıcı stereotipik vampir memine izlediği evrimsel süreç ele alınmıştır. Drakula vampir meminin eserin yazılmasının üzerinden geçen yüz yılı aşkın süreye ve seçim baskısına rağmen günümüzde hala güçlü olarak hayatta kaldığını ve kendisini kopyalayarak varlığını devam ettirdiğini göstermek amacıyla eserin öncesinde ve sonrasında yaşananları anlatan başka yazarlarca yazılmış romanlar ile Drakula'dan türetilen ikincil romanlar ekte listelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bram Stoker, Drakula, vampir, Darwin, evrim, mem, memetik*

THE GENEALOGY OF BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA: A DARWINIAN LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE VAMPIRE IN LITERATURE AS A MEME

ABSTRACT

British author of Irish origin, Bram Stoker's horror novel, *Dracula* is the most reputed and popular example of the vampire literature that first emerged in seventeenth-century poetry. The first of the two key concepts that this thesis analyzes is the concept of "meme", which was coined by the British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, that can be defined as a thought, symbol or application transmitted from one individual to another via oral, written and visual methods and means of communication within a culture, replicates itself, transforms, responds to selective pressures, and the second concept is the memetic evolution of the vampire into the character, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker in Romantic ballads and Victorian horror narratives within the context of Evolutionary Literary Criticism which was theorized by Professor Joseph Carroll. In this regard, the qualities of the vampire phenotype that the *Dracula* meme inherited some qualities from its antecedent works of vampire fiction through memetic heredity, setting and plot are examined, and the evolutionary process that literary vampire predecessor had undergone towards the Transylvanian, aristocratic, seductive, stereotypical vampire. Finally, in the appendix, the prequels, sequels, and spin-offs of *Dracula* to demonstrate that the *Dracula* meme has survived and thrived notwithstanding over a century after its first publication and the selective pressures, and subsist by copying itself.

Key Words: *Bram Stoker, Dracula, vampire, evolution, meme*

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to provide an in-depth analysis of the evolution of vampires in literature as a *meme* from the perspective of Evolutionary Literary Criticism, focusing on Bram Stoker's seminal Gothic horror novel *Dracula*. Bram Stoker wrote a total of 13 novels in his lifetime (Skal, 2016), yet his other works are not as renowned as *Dracula*; it has never been out of print (Florescu & McNally, 1994, p. 159). It is an example of the vampire literature which is originated from the Vampire Craze of the early eighteenth century (Welkins, 2011, p. 29). Vampire Craze of the 1720s transferred the Balkan superstitions of blood-drinking undead creatures to literature. In addition, *Dracula* was not the first vampire story in the English language. It had some well-known predecessors such as *Vampyre*, *Varney the Vampire*, and *Carmilla*. A detailed list of the Antecedent vampire texts in English literature is presented in Appendix A.

This thesis does not aim to discuss the originality of *Dracula*. Though it consists of many naturally selected vampire memes, Stoker's vampire novel is an original meme all by itself. It inherits memetic material from the earlier vampire works of fiction, just like a baby inherits genetic material from its parents. This fact does not cause anyone to question the originality of the baby. It is the same for memes and *Dracula*.

Moreover, *Dracula* is one of the most influential vampire narratives in literature. There are a total of 2691 book entries in Goodreads, a website for readers, and book recommendations on *Dracula*; however, for those three preceding vampire texts, the total number of entries is just 270. Similarly, a search on the IMDB website (International Movie Database) gives the result of 347 movie titles for *Dracula*; however, the combined number of the other three earlier vampires is merely 10. It can be understood from these figures that *Dracula* is more successful and inspirational than *Varney the Vampire*, *Vampyre*, and *Carmilla*. So, this thesis seeks answers to these questions; What makes *Dracula* more

influential than the other vampire narratives? Why was *Dracula* more successful than the other vampire works of fiction? How was Vampire Literature affected by *Dracula*?

It might be claimed that Bram Stoker was infected by a meme, a “virus of the mind” (Dawkins, 1993) called vampire and *Dracula* is the result of this infection. Vampire memes that have passed from folklore to literature and from earlier literary work on vampires to Stoker and replicated themselves, evolved to adapt the selective forces of the cultural environment, and mutated absorbing new memetic material from Stoker himself, creating a new hybrid strain of literary vampire. So this thesis claims that *Dracula* is a successful and influential vampire narrative because it is the result of some fit for survival memes infected Stoker’s mind like viruses and *Dracula*’s success and its influence as well as the characters and events depicted in the novel can be explained in evolutionary terms. For this purpose, the basic concepts of evolutionary theory, the notion of Literary Darwinism, and the term *meme* were examined as the theoretical background of the thesis. The thesis examines the evolution of literary vampires as a meme. While focusing on a close analysis of the origin of the blood-drinking revenant, the traits of literary vampires, and the evolution of vampire fiction extending as far as *Dracula*, the study also takes a glance at vampire meme in the contemporary literature as a fit for survival meme.

Then, the emergence of the concept of vampire and the early influential vampire narratives in British literature were explored. Moreover, the evolution of the vampire meme throughout Romantic and Victorian literary works up to Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* are analysed in order to identify the evolutionary changes that the vampire meme had gone through in the course of time to evolve into *Dracula*. To achieve this goal, in addition to the romantic ballads and Victorian vampire fictions, Bram Stoker’s working notes for *Dracula* were investigated, as well.

The vampire is a meme in terms of evolutionary literary theory, which originates from the preternatural beings commonly consume blood as sustenance in ancient myths, and folkloric revenants in various cultures around the world. As James Frazer explains in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*,

cultures pass over three evolutionary stages in time; magic, religion, and science (1890, p. 237). This is true for vampires, as well. Vampires first became a figure of English literature in the Romantic ballads following the vampire epidemics in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Europe which were sparked by the publication of official documents, news reports, and treatises, and then it had evolved into a literary figure of prose fiction in Victorian literature, among which Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is the definitive one by virtue of the vampiric tropes and the phenotypic traits that were inherited from its antecedents. As a result of the aforementioned memetic heritage, the Victorian vampire meme embodied in the form of *Dracula* survived the natural selection process, which Darwin defines as "descent with modification" (1859, p. 344) transcended the boundaries of Victorian-era and Europe, invading new cultural habitats and forcing inferior undead species into extinction. As a result, *Dracula* has survived and thrived for over a century, proving its evolutionary fitness.

In the Victorian era, vampire fictions such as John William Polidori's *Vampyre*, James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest's *Varney the Vampire*, Sheridan le Fanu's *Carmilla* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* were all very popular. Although the notion of revenants and imaginary creatures that feed on human blood are ancient and universal, southeast Europe is the point of origin for the great vampire epidemics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which sparked the Romantic and Victorian literary interest on the undead. Montague Summers states on vampires that they are the most terrible, dreaded, and abhorred undead beings, but they are also fascinating. (1928, p. 2).

The origins of the literary vampires date back to prehistoric times. Revenants can be found in Mesopotamia, China, Egypt, India, Africa, Scandinavia, Greece, and Rome. As Summers puts it:

The origins of a belief in vampirism, although, of course, very shadowy, unformed and unrelated, may probably be said to go back to the earliest times when primitive man observed the mysterious relations between soul and body. The division of an individual into these two parts must have been suggested to man by his observation, however crude and rough, of the phenomenon of unconsciousness, as exhibited in sleep and more particularly in death. (1928, p. 9)

These early mythological and folkloric vampires oozed into literature via news reports of the events in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The report written by the

military surgeons of the Habsburg army is shared with the public in 1732. The publication of news based on the vampire activity on this report called *Visum et Repertum* created a surge of interest in Germany, France, and Britain. These stories flourished in the writings of many famous authors. Men of letters as famous as Bürger, Goethe, Coleridge, and Byron created literary works concerning vampires. This was the true birth of the vampire meme in literature.

By becoming a literary meme which originates from the preternatural beings commonly consume blood as sustenance in ancient myths, and folkloric revenants throughout various cultures around the world and evolving into a literary figure in the form of Romantic ballads following the vampire “epidemics” in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe vampires had flourished as the subject matter of Victorian prose fiction, among which Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* was the definitive one thanks to the vampiric tropes and the phenotypic traits that were inherited from the antecedent vampire fiction such as *Varney the Vampire*, *Carmilla*, and *The Vampyre*.

As the ultimate evolutionary stage of the literary vampire in Victorian English literature, *Dracula*’s transformation from an about to become extinct Eastern European monster to a relentless predator that feeds on human beings in various parts of England, solely preying on women such as Wilhelmina Murray and Lucy Westenra is solid proof that Stoker’s vampire count is a highly adaptable creature and a good example of the evolutionary principle of *the survival of the fittest*. *Dracula* achieves his aim of settling into a new habitat unnoticed in order to continue his existence. So, it can be claimed that the Victorian vampire meme embodied in the form of *Dracula* had survived both the natural and cultural selection processes as a meme and being, transcended the boundaries of Victorian-era and Europe, invading new cultural habitats and forcing inferior undead species into extinction. To this day, *Dracula* adaptations in various media have outnumbered the adaptations of the earlier vampires such as *Varney*, *Carmilla*, and *Ruthven*. Since memes are units of culture transmitted from person to person and replicating, multiplying, adapting, mutating in the process of evolution just like a living organism, the memes of the literary vampire figures are endangered species, whereas genus *Dracula* shows steady growth.

This study comprises four chapters. The first chapter, *Introduction*, provides the subject, aim, importance, and background of the story. The introductory chapter Proto-vampire entities in myths and folktales around the globe, as well as early vampire narratives in European literature, are also going to be mentioned in this chapter. *Chapter II*, Theoretical Background, addresses Darwinian literary criticism first theorized by Professor Joseph Carroll, the term *meme* coined by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, and the characters and plot of Dracula in accordance with the Theory of Evolution. *Chapter III*, An Evolutionary Literary Analysis of The Vampire as A Meme in Dracula by Bram Stoker, analyses Bram Stoker's epistolary horror novel, Dracula, within the context of vampire, as a meme; hereditary informational units passed through generations of culture. In *Chapter IV*, Conclusion, Dracula as the vampire meme that has inspired numerous literary work and other cultural entities. Dracula has survived and thrived for over a century, proving its fitness.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Evolutionary Theory

This section aims to provide the reader with the necessary basic information about the Theory of Evolution and evolutionary mechanisms such as the Natural Selection to better understand the analysis of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* from an evolutionary perspective.

With the publication of *The Descent of Man* in 1871, humanity's divine state as the magnum opus of the Almighty God was challenged by the fact that humans are merely another species of mammalian that was descended from apes. Darwin states, "man is the co-descendent with the species of some ancient, lower, and extinct form" (1874, p. 3). Rather than privileged beings created in God's own image and superior to any other life form on Earth, Darwin's study meant that humans are merely a primate species that inherited a series of genetic traits randomly which means that humankind may devolve into a state of primitive ape, or another primate species might randomly evolve into a superior species than humans.

In the late nineteenth century, the Empire of Great Britain was mighty. Britain was experiencing the Industrial Revolution, powered by steam engines and cities were crowded with people coming to work in factories. As commonly known, it was an "empire on which the sun never sets," and the Victorians were enjoying the technological inventions, some of which, like the stenograph, the typewriter, and repeating rifles are mentioned in *Dracula*. It was an age of technological wonders; trains, telegram, street lighting, and many other innovations were the heralds of the triumph of the human intellect over nature. It was that intelligence that made men superior to other living creatures, but Darwin's Theory of Evolution demolished the traditional Chain of Being, and *Fin de Siecle* British society was familiar with that. Humans were not positioned over the animals and plants on the top third step of the ladder, slightly inferior

to celestial beings called angels in the presence of an omnipotent God, but instead, they were only hairless, tailless, and bipedal apes. Hoelzli states, “Dracula symbolized the Victorian fear that man was not a divine creature formed by the hands of a Supreme Being” (2003, p. 27). The existence of evolution makes devolution a possibility: if men descended to the position it possesses through a process of natural selection, the same selective forces might cause its ascension to a primitive state in the same manner.

Scientific work on skeletal remains of hominin also shows that there used to be other archaic human species that had gone extinct in time, such as the Neanderthals, Homo Floresiensis, Homo Naledi and Denisovans (Giddings, 2019). The possibility of the existence of a competing and superior human subspecies would be a significant threat against the very existence of Homo Sapiens and their apex predator position as the species at the top of the food chain. As Matthias Clasen names them, *Homo Sapiens Vampiris*, as a hypothetical subspecies of Homo Sapiens, feeds on human blood (Clasen, 2010). Thus, it is possible that Dracula is a member of a near-extinct vampire species which predated on humans, and in order to avoid extinction, Dracula decides to relocate to a new biotope; he even leaves his harem and ancestral stronghold behind to move to England.

Dracula’s decision to emigrate from his native soil of Transylvania is a good call since it is not favourable for vampires any longer, and vampires may thrive in a country that is ripe for invasion. There are four revealed vampires that live in Castle Dracula. Dracula and his three brides are the only Transylvanian vampires in the novel, and Dracula decides to emigrate to London for a more suitable habitat for himself and his vampire offspring. The rationale behind his decision to move to London is to relocate to a better hunting ground and to augment vampires. In his Transylvanian castle, instead of feeding on adults, Dracula abducts human babies and feeds his brides with them as the alpha male of the vampire coven. At the beginning of the novel, it is understood that the local population has an idea of what Dracula really is and they try to stay away from him and his lands. The innkeeper warns Harker about Dracula. While the local townsfolk were bidding farewell to Harker, they cross themselves, point two fingers to ward off the evil eye, and wear crucifixes around their necks.

Also, they refuse to travel on Saint George's Day since it is perilous. The cautiousness of the local population and the means they took against vampires causes Dracula and the brides suffer from lack of nutrition. When Harker first met Dracula, he depicts the vampire as a "tall old man, clean-shaven save for a long white mustache [*sic*]" (1997, p. 21). When Harker saw Dracula again in Hyde Park Corner, he looked rejuvenated. Mina describes Dracula as a "tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black mustache [*sic*] and pointed beard (1997, p. 155). After feeding on Lucy's blood numerous times, Dracula transforms from a white-haired old man into a younger man.

Even though Harker is not sure about the exact location of the Castle Dracula since he arrives Castle Dracula under cover of darkness at night, disoriented due to "going over and over the same ground again" (1997, p.18) the whereabouts of Castle Dracula is not a mystery for the locals. For instance, a mother whose baby is taken by Dracula bangs the castle door shouting at the vampire to give her baby back. Harker narrates the incident as:

As I sat I heard a sound in the courtyard without - the agonized cry of a woman. I rushed to the window, and throwing it up, peered out between the bars. There, indeed, was a woman with dishevelled [*sic*] hair, holding her hands over her heart as one distressed with running. She was leaning against a corner of the gateway. When she saw my face at the window she threw herself forward, and shouted in a voice laden with menace:-

Monster, give me my child!

She threw herself on her knees, and raising up her hands, cried the same words in tones which wrung my heart. Then she tore her hair and beat her breast, and abandoned herself to all the violences [*sic*] of extravagant emotion. Finally, she threw herself forward, and, though I could not see her, I could hear the beating of her naked hands against the door. (1997, p. 48)

This scene reveals that Castle Dracula is vulnerable to a human attack if it were not for the wolves that protect the castle on Dracula's command. The locals could probably pass the lupine guardians of Dracula if they had the repeating rifles that Godalming and Quincey possess. Dracula possesses supernatural powers like controlling the weather and animals, shapeshifting into a dog or bat, transforming into the mist, and mesmerism, but these powers can only be used at night. As Van Helsing states, Dracula is "so strong in twenty person as twenty men" yet during day time, he is so weak that Stoker was able to hit him with a spade on the forehead alone and the old Van Helsing managed to give true death to all three of Dracula's brides all by himself during the day. As a

result, Transylvania was not a suitable habitat for vampires anymore. On the other hand, London ‘with its teeming millions’ offers a suitable environment for Dracula to spread his infectious evil, and since the local population does not believe in the ancient superstitions anymore, they are prone to the attack of the vampire Count and its minions.

To conclude, Stoker’s novel, as it can be seen in the examples given above, is consistent with the evolutionary mechanism of Natural Selection, and elements of plot, the motivation of characters and vampire as a Hominin subspecies struggling to survive the changing living conditions can be explained through evolutionary terms.

2.2 Literary Darwinism and The Meme

In this section, the application of the broader Theory of Evolution to literature under the heading of Literary Darwinism is going to be discussed, and the term “meme” coined by British biologist Richard Dawkins is going to be briefly explained.

Literary Darwinism is a theory that integrates literary criticism with biology, evolutionary epistemology, evolutionary psychology, and a wide range of other disciplines that are assimilated into the matrix of evolutionary theory. In the introduction of his foundational book *Evolution and Literary Theory*, Joseph Carroll argues “for the view that knowledge is a biological phenomenon, that literature is a form of knowledge, and literature is thus itself a biological phenomenon” (1995, p. 1). Carroll disagrees with the views that biology and literature, or other biological phenomena, are inapprehensive and irrelevant. In order to show the relevance of evolutionary theory and literary theory, Carroll identifies “four largest biological concepts” (1995, pp. 1-3).

The first of these concepts is the relationship between the organism and its environment. For Carroll, this relationship is a matrix structural complex which is superior to every other concept and “is the necessary presupposition for the principles of personal psychology, sexual and family relations, social organization, cognition, and linguistic representation” (1995, p. 2). The relationship of Dracula with its environment as a member of the vampire species

is not very successful in Transylvania since the food resources around his tiny coven have become scarce in time, and the Transylvanians seem to adapt to living with a deadly vampire in their vicinity.

The second biological concept that regulates Carroll's standpoint is "the idea that innate psychological structures have evolved through an adaptive process of natural selection" and they "regulate the mental and emotional life of all living organisms, including human beings" This concept opposes the idea of human beings are blank slates, the structure of motivations and cognition can be freely shaped, and language or culture procure all qualitative content and structure for human experience (1995, p. 2).

"The idea that all 'proximate causes' or immediate human motives are regulated by the principles of inclusive fitness as 'ultimate cause' is Carroll's third biological concept. He elaborates on this by explaining that not all organisms, including human beings, but "all innate human psychological structures have, in ancestral environments, evolved under the regulative power of reproductive success" and they "remain fully active at the present" (1995, p. 2). Possibly, one crucial consequence of this principle in terms of literary analysis is that reproductive success is central to literary works, providing an organizing principle that is possible to repress but impossible to ignore.

The fourth and last biological concept is that literary representation is a form of cognitive mapping. Carroll postulates that representation "is an extension of the organism's adaptive orientation" to a spatial and physical environment but rather than being only a metaphor for abstract cognitive activity, the concept of mapping is "an extension of the primary cognitive function that locates the organism within its concrete, physical environment" (1995, pp 2-3). Carroll utilizes cognitive mapping to refer to literary representation, which integrates rational, emotional, and sensory functions. For him, literature's primary function is to represent the subjective quality of experience. Carroll adds that "cognitive and linguistic categories have evolved in adaptive relation to the environment" (1995, p. 3).

The common overtone in the aforementioned four biological concepts is that works of literature reflect and express human interests from an evolutionary perspective. Carroll argues that "innate biological characteristics provide the

basis for all individual identity and all social organization, that authors exercise originary power in the construction of literary figurations, and that literature represents objects that exist independently of language” (1995, p. 3).

Carroll explains the co-evolution of genes and culture by stating that humans have a genetic tendency to create a culture

Evolutionists in the humanities have been making increasingly effective arguments that forms of imaginative culture — the arts, religions, ideologies — are integral parts of the human adaptive repertory. Those arguments converge with the now rapidly developing concept of “gene-culture coevolution” — the idea that humans are genetically disposed to produce culture, and that over evolutionary time culture alters the human genome. (1995, p.)

So, it can be claimed that the urge to create products of culture is in the genes of Homo Sapiens. As humans change the qualities of the created culture changes in accordance with the relationship with the culture. Culture creation can be considered an act of survival coded in human DNA. Mating, seeking shelter, and fight or flight are selected qualities of humans in the process of evolution, and Homo Sapiens are just biological machines ruled by the survival instinct of their genes (Dawkins, 2006).

Moreover, Dawkins’ theory of memes takes this creative process a step further by making humans simple meme machines. In the glossary of his book *The Extended Phenotype*, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins defines the term meme as “a unit of cultural inheritance, hypothesized as analogous to the particulate gene, and as naturally selected by virtue of its ‘phenotypic’ consequences on its own survival and replication in the cultural environment” (1982, p. 290). This study aims to show that Bram Stoker’s epistolary novel *Dracula* inherited various memetic traits from its antecedent vampire narratives, survived the selective forces of the literary and cultural habitat for over a hundred and twenty years since its first publication in 1897, and replicated itself in various forms such as prequel, sequel, and spin-off novels, translations, localizations, theatre, film and television adaptations. Keeping in mind that the term *phenotype* means “the bodily manifestation of a gene” (Dawkins, 2006: 235), like green eyes or red hair for a person, *Dracula* manifests a variety of vampire qualities such as targeting young women, feeding on human blood, possessing the ability to control wild animals and so on from its predecessors and inherit some of its phenotypic qualities to its successors. Thus, the thesis

claims *Dracula* fits well in the concept of *meme* coined by Dawkins. The disposition of the evolutionary theory in humanities led to the usage of evolutionary theory in this field of research.

3. AN EVOLUTIONARY LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE VAMPIRE AS A MEME IN DRACULA BY BRAM STOKER

3.1 The Origins of Vampires: Mythological and Folkloric Vampires

Throughout history, vampire-like creatures have existed in mythologies and folklore of many cultures in the form of gods, demigods, and demonic entities. In *Dracula*, Van Helsing identifies the vampire as a global phenomenon:

He is known everywhere that men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourish in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chersonese, and in China, so far from us in all ways, there even is he, and the people fear him at this day. He have [sic] follow the wake of the berserker Icelander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slav, the Saxon, the Magyar. (1997, p. 211)

These early vampiric creatures were born as a result of the enigma of life and death. Montague Summers asserts in his authoritative book *The Vampire- His Kith and Kin* that the origins of a belief in vampirism probably dates back to the earliest times when primitive humans observed the mysterious relations between body and soul (Summers, 1928). Despite some differences in nomenclature and appearance, vampires around the world share one common quality; they feed on the vitality of the mortals. There were various kinds of mythological monsters that made people and their livestock perish, killed new-born babies and their mothers, consumed the energy of the living, and even drank blood. In those old ages, when the reason could not provide answers, those terrible fiends were probably needed to offer an explanation to unexpected and unexplainable human and animal deaths, communicable diseases, natural disasters, crop failings, premature burial survivors, the natural process of decomposition. Then-irremediable maladies like rabies, tuberculosis, cholera used to claim family members and neighbours one by one, visiting homesteads, farms, villages, towns, and cities at intervals.

Some of the ancient vampiric monsters that constitute the include Babylonian Utukku/Ekimmu, Indian Rakhshasa, Chinese Jiangshi, Mayan Camatzotz, West African Obayifo, Egyptian Sekhmet, Greek Empusa, Roman Strix, Romanian

Strigoi, Hungarian Nosferatu, Arabian ghouls (Summers, 1928). As a result, “vampire accounts exist in completely separate civilizations, e-where any direct borrowing would not have been possible” (McNally & Florescu, 1994). Deities, demigods, and demons that possess vampiric qualities from various cultures around the world and historical periods are going to be scrutinized as the aboriginal prototypes of modern literary vampire meme. Oxford English Dictionary offers the following definition for the word vampire; “in European folklore, a corpse supposed to leave its grave at night to drink the blood of the living by biting their necks with long pointed canine teeth”. Merriam-Webster English Dictionary defines the word vampire as follows: “the reanimated body of a dead person believed to come from the grave at night and suck the blood of persons asleep.” Brian Frost defines vampire in his 1989 book *The Monster with a Thousand Faces* as “fundamentally a parasitic force or being, malevolent and self-seeking by nature, whose paramount desire is to absorb the life-force or to ingest the vital fluids of a living organism in order to sate its perverse hunger and to perpetuate its unnatural existence” (p. 27). Even though this basic definition covers the concept of “vampire” in general terms, the vampire is both a dateless, boundless and ever-changing phenomenon. Undead creatures that haunt the living and feed on their vitality are mentioned in ancient legends and lore, and they can be seen on ancient pottery drawings.

The journey of vampires started in the East, and then they travelled further west. From Eastern Europe to Great Britain, from the old world into the new world. The vampire is now a global phenomenon. As the great horror fiction author, Howard Philips Lovecraft puts it in the very first sentence of his 1927 essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. “(t)he oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.” Humanity’s never-fading curiosity about the afterlife and fear of death has been a rich source of fictional narratives through the aeons. Tales of terror have sprung out from the greatest mystery of all times; the phenomenon of death, regardless of culture, faith and geography. Human ancestors, lacking the modern scientific knowledge, utilized supernatural stories to map the unknown shores beyond Styx.

As human brains and human social and cognitive skills evolve over time, the stories have got more and more complex. They told stories of eternal life, soul, gods, and demons, of heaven and hell, of celestial beings and monsters. Thanks to those myths, sagas, legends, and folktales they eased their minds about the mysteries of death and what lies beyond. But they were unable to explain it all. The unexplained has haunted people as the devil, ghosts, witches, ghouls, and revenants.

The idea of the vampire, an undead creature that feeds on the living, has been an increasingly popular cultural invention. It was born as a monster in the minds of human ancestors, and it has undergone some highly notable changes through the flow of time, just like the bodies and minds of humans. It was the reason behind the mysterious plagues that sicken people and eventually knock them down by the dozen. It was the explanation of the uncanny, morbid changes that can be observed on some disinterred corpses. It has vaguely mentioned in the primeval legends and rumoured in folktales. They are in books, on TVs, but they predate modern literary traditions. Nightmarish monsters that suck the life energy out of living things may be found almost in all cultures throughout the world.

According to Melton, Leo Allatius's *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus*, printed in 1645, was the first modern treatment of vampires (1999, p. xxxii) and *Relation de ce qui s'est passe a Sant-Erini Isle de l'archipel* by Fr. Françoise Richard linked witchcraft and vampirism for the first time (qtd. in Melton, 1999). The emergence of proto vampires in such religious treatises shows that for the medieval people, vampires are a normal part of daily life-threatening the lives and afterlives of the ones who come in contact with them.

3.2 Analysis of the Ancestral Vampire Fictions and Their Memetic Heritage on Dracula's Vampiric Phenotype

The memetic mutations that vampires had gone through towards *Dracula* are one of the key concepts. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* inherits many qualities of its Romantic and Gothic predecessors. Ballads like Bürger's *Lenore*, Byron's *Giaour*, and works of fiction like le Fanu's *Carmilla*, Rymer and Prest's *Varney*

the Vampyre, and Polidori's *Vampyre* transferred memetic material to *Dracula*. In *Dracula*, a passenger in the coach en route to Bukovina cites the line "Denn die toden reiten schnell" (the dead ride fast) from Gottfried August Bürger's 1776 poem *Lenore*. In *Dracula*, the English translation is provided by Stoker as "the dead travel fast." This exact translation of Bürger's verse was used by Stoker in his short story *Dracula's Guest*. This line is one of many other inherited memetic references

Another romantic ballad that *Dracula* inherited memetic qualities is Byron's *The Giaour*. Written in 1813, Byron's poem is about a "vengeful vampire". In this work the cause of vampirism is a curse:

But ghostly first, on earth as vampire sent,
Thy corpse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then 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 corpse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know thy demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are withered on the stem
(1813, lines 757-768)

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Lucy turns into a vampire after repeated attacks of *Dracula* and a series of blood transfusions practiced by Van Helsing and Seward. A report on Westminster Gazette titled 'The Hampstead Horror' alarms Van Helsing about the dark faith of Lucy (1897, p.160). Little children are found unconscious and injured with puncture wounds on their throats. The abducted and attacked children identify their assailant as a 'bloofer lady'. According to Urban Dictionary, the meaning of the word 'bloofer' is beautiful in childish slang. Describing Lucy's corpse, Stoker utilizes another literary reference to Byron's *The Giaour*; "All Lucy's loveliness has come back to her in death, and the hours that had passed, instead of leaving traces of 'decay's effacing fingers,' had but restored the beauty of life, till positively I could not

believe my eyes that I was looking at a corpse” (1897, pp. 148-149). Thus, along with Bürger’s *Lenore*, Byron’s *The Giaour* becomes the second romantic ballad that inherits some memetic literary trait to Stoker’s *Dracula*.

As Twitchell states, Robert Southey’s *Thalaba the Destroyer* is an epic poem that a vampire is mentioned for the first time. In his epic poem, *Thalaba* confronts a vampire that poses as his deceased wife. The description of this early vampire has a striking resemblance with vampire Lucy in *Dracula*:

The Cryer from the Minaret
Proclaimed the midnight hour;
“Now! now!” cried Thalaba,
And o’er the chamber of the tomb
There spread a lurid gleam
Like the reflection of a sulphur fire,
And in that hideous light
Oneiza stood before them, it was She,
Her very lineaments, and such as death
Had changed them, livid cheeks, and lips of blue.
But in her eyes there dwelt
Brightness more terrible
Than all the loathsomeness of death.
“Still art thou living, wretch?”
In hollow tones she cried to Thalaba,
“And must I nightly leave my grave
“To tell thee, still in vain,
“God has abandoned thee?”

The emergence of *Thalaba*’s wife from her crypt at midnight shares an uncanny similarity with the scene in *Dracula* where Lucy, Godalming’s wife-to-be, rose from death.

“This is not she!” the Old Man exclaimed,
“A Fiend! a manifest Fiend!”
And to the youth he held his lance,
“Strike and deliver thyself!”
“Strike her!” cried Thalaba,
And palsied of all powers
Gazed fixedly upon the dreadful form.

“Yea! strike her!” cried a voice whose tones
Flowed with such sudden healing thro’ his soul,
As when the desert shower
From death delivered him.
But unobedient to that well-known voice
His eye was seeking it,
When Moath firm of heart,
Performed the bidding; thro’ the vampire corpse
He thrust his lance; it fell,
And howling with the wound
Its demon tenant fled.
A sapphire light fell on them,
And garmented with glory, in their sight
Oneiza’s Spirit stood (Southey, 1801).

In the footnotes of *Thalaba the Destroyer*, Southey recounts the vampire incidents of Petar Blagojevic, as an incident in Kisilova without mentioning the suspected vampire’s name, and Arnold Paul in detail. Southey recites another vampire incident on the island of Mykonos narrated by French botanist Tournefort in his travel book.

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort was a French botanist who travelled to many Aegean islands and Asia Minor to collect plant samples. In his book “*Relation d'un voyage du Levant*”, which is translated into English as “*A Voyage into the Levant*” and published in 1718, de Tournefort scribed about the vampire (*vroucalacas*) superstitions that he witnessed on the island of Mykonos (Mycone in the text). He states that the locals of the island believed that an ill-natured and quarrelsome peasant came to life after his interment. The man was the victim of a murder which was committed by an unknown assailant, and the peasant’s corpse was found in the fields. Two days later, some of the townsfolk claimed that they saw the dead man walking around “with great haste” at night. They also claimed that the deceased “*tumbled about Peoples Goods, put out their Lamps, and griped them behind [sic]*” de Tournefort (1718, pp. 103-107). On the tenth day, a mass was held at the chapel where the dead man was buried. The mass was held so as to cast out the demonic entity which was believed to possess the corpse. Then, a butcher took the heart out of the dead body and

boiled it. The islanders then drive first a sword, then a sabre through the dead body. Finally, they burned the body on a deserted islet and restored the order.

Tournefort is not alone witnessing the vampire superstition among the Greek subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Lord Byron visited Greece during his “Grand Tour” between the years 1810 and 1811. In his working notes on *The Giaour*, Byron corroborates Greek vampire superstition narrated previously by Tournefort scribing:

The Vampire superstition is still general in the Levant. Honest Tournefort tells a long story about these 'Vroucolachas', as he calls them. The Romaic term is 'Vardoulacha'. I recollect a whole family being terrified by the scream of a child, which they imagined must proceed from such a visitation. The Greeks never mention the word without horror. I find that 'Broucolokas' is an old legitimate Hellenic appellation—the moderns, however, use the word I mention. The stories told in Hungary and Greece of these foul feeders are singular, and some of them most incredibly attested. (2013, p. 36)

Medieval ecclesiastical and judiciary texts on the occurrences of suggested undead infestations are going to be worked on.

Matthew Beresford asserts in *From Demons to Dracula* that;

Although the idea of vampires, or entities with vampiric qualities, can be traced back through time, it is not until the eighteenth century that any notable obsession with vampires can be witnessed, and it may be this fact that leads many vampire works to concentrate on this period onwards and, to some degree, to neglect what came before. Exactly what caused phenomenon is difficult to fathom but the course of the vampire was changed forever from the eighteenth century, and it is difficult to see significant changes in the vampiric being that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or to imagine its changing into another form in the future, a notion supported by the processes of modern technology, television, and the internet. (2008, p. 13)

As it is discussed in the previous chapters, what was born as the universal blood-drinking gods, demigods and demons of mythologies, and the folkloric tales and superstitious beliefs about the revenants, the vampire meme had evolved into a subject of art in the eighteenth-century Europe as a result of the vampire craze caused by the reports on vampire outbreaks in Eastern Europe published in the Western European newspapers and magazines. Niels K. Petersen informs that one of the most noteworthy sources of vampire history is Fluckinger's *Visum et repertum*. It was written and witnessed by Austro-Hungarian army surgeons in Serbia on 26 January 1732. The report was sent to the authorities in both Belgrade and Vienna. Then, it was copied by foreign service officers of various nations. Though an original copy of the report is in

the state archives, several printed versions of the report had been circulated in newspapers, magazines, and scientific periodicals in Europe throughout 1732. These publications caused much sensation not only among the scientific circles but also ordinary people (Petersen, 2008).

Fluckinger's report on a suspected vampire activity had an interesting historical background. Following the Treaty of Passarowitz between the Austro-Hungarian Habsburgs and the Ottoman Turks in 1718, some parts of Bosnia and contemporary Romania, as well as northern Serbia, fell under Habsburg control. The residents of the newly acquired land, whose numbers had been diminished due to war and epidemics, were a mixture of different ethnicities and beliefs. The deadly 1679 Vienna epidemic and the small-scale epidemic of 1713 resulted in Austro-Hungarians utilize the Ottoman military border both as a buffer zone and a quarantine zone. Thus, Austrian military physicians and surgeons were on a state of alarm against inexplicable cases of death. (Petersen, 2008)

The commander of the Imperial Army in Jagodina, colonel-lieutenant Senezzer got a report from the residents of a Serbian town called Medveyga in the fall of 1731. As Rosemary Guiley states, "the word vampire made its first appearance in French literature and correspondence in the late 17th century. The French publication of *Mercure Galant* reported vampire cases in 1693 and 1694 in Poland and Russia. The term also was used in 1737 in *Lettres Juives*" (Jewish Letters), an epistolary novel by Jean Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens. (2005, p. 288). In addition to the reports in *Mercure Galant* (later *Mercure de France*) "there were notices in journals such as the *Mercure Historique et Politique* and *Gleaner Historique* (Groom, 2018). Following these publications, many artists and writers throughout Europe produced works with vampires as the subject matter. Previously mentioned in some travelogues and ecclesiastical treatises, vampires then became a popular sensation.

The stories of the vampires terrorizing the Balkan villages triggered the beginning of the Vampire Literature in Britain, but they were not the first blood-thirsty revenants on the island. The history of the vampire in Britain goes back as far as to the twelfth century. *De Nagis Curialium* of Walter Map and the *Chronicles* of William of Newburgh records several stories of vampire-like

beings in England. According to Wilson, the history of the word vampire in the English language dates back to the first publication of *Travels of 3 English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg, Being the Grand Tour of Germany in 1734* in *Harleian Miscellany* in 1810 and it is the first serious explanation of the vampire phenomenon (Wilson, 1985). Undead creatures that drink human blood is not an original literary concept invented by Bram Stoker, nor *Dracula* is the first vampire in English literature. There are many earlier vampire poems and ballads about male and female undead such as Heinrich August Ossenfelder's *The Vampire* (1748), Gottfried August Bürger's *Lenore* (1774), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Bride of Corinth* (1797), Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), Lord Byron's *The Giaour* (1813). Not only works of poetry but also works of prose chooses vampires as their subjects such as Johann Ludvig Tieck's *Wake not the Dead* (1823) John Polidori's *Vampyre* (1819), James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampyre* (1845-1847), and Sheridan le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872).

3.3 The Influence of Stoker's Life on the Vampire Meme

Irish cleric, drama critic, theatre manager, and author Bram Stoker's personal experiences had an effect on the evolution of the literary vampire to *Dracula* meme. Two people in Stoker's life had a profound effect on *Dracula* meme; the first one was his mother Charlotte, and the second one was his boss and friend Henry Irving.

To begin with, Bram's childhood was haunted by a mysterious illness that kept him bedridden for a long time (Senf, 2010). Her mother, Charlotte Stoker, had told him terrifying tales of the cholera epidemic she experienced when she was a child in her hometown of Sligo in Ireland. Charlotte writes down her experiences upon his son's request. Her description of the plague somewhat resembles the terror *Dracula* inflicts on his victims:

In the days of my early youth the world was shaken with the dread of a new and terrible plague which was desolating all land as it passed through them, and so regular was its march that men could tell where next it would appear and almost the day when it might be expected. It was the cholera, which for the first time appeared in Western Europe. Its bitter strange kiss, and man's want of experience or knowledge of its nature, or how best to resist its attacks, added, if anything could, to its horrors. (*Dracula*, 2003)

The emergence of cholera for the first time in Western Europe shares a similarity with Count Dracula's arrival to England on a Russian schooner called Demeter as a new form of alien threat to plague the inflated population of England. When the Count's true identity is revealed as a vampire, Harker expresses his shock and regret as follows:

Then I stopped and looked at the Count. There was a mocking smile on the bloated face which seemed to drive me mad. This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, among its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. (Dracula, 1997)

Upon his arrival to England, Dracula starts his killing spree by savaging first a half-breed mastiff, probably in the form of a big black dog, then breaking Mr. Swales' neck in Whitby, and afterward, he begins feeding on Lucy and all the men who donated their blood to Lucy. Once Lucy is dead and turns into a vampire, she keeps spreading the plague of vampirism to little children by biting their throats and feeding on them. Moreover, Dracula is seen by Jonathan and Mina in Hyde Park, observing and stalking "a very beautiful girl in a big cartwheel hat sitting in a victoria outside Giuliano's" (1897, p. 155). It appears so that Dracula is after other prey while he was feeding on Lucy Westenra. Mina realizes the potential threat Dracula poses against all people in London like a contagious disease. After seeing him with her own eyes and learns what kind of a monster Dracula is from Jonathan "that fearful Count was coming to London, with its teeming millions" she decides to be prepared for her solemn duty to stop Dracula. (Dracula, 1997 p 161). Mina expresses her state of shock following Van Helsing's confirmation about the existence of the monster in her husband's story. She states; "if it be [*sic*] true, what terrible things there are in the world, and what an awful thing if that man, that monster, be really in London" (Dracula, 1997 p. 167). Van Helsing explains what that monster can do to millions of Londoners in detail:

Before we do anything, let me tell you this; it is out of the lore and experience of the ancients and all of those who have studied the powers of the Un-Dead. When they become such, there comes with the change the curse of immortality; they cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world; for all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-Dead, and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever widening like as [*sic*] the ripples from a stone thrown in the water. (1997, p. 190)

Van Helsing's depiction of the Un-Dead holds many similarities with a communicable disease. It is understood from this passage that if vampire Lucy had not been staked and decapitated, all the children who had been attacked by her would have turned into vampires and attacked the people thus turning them to vampires. As a result, this notion of vampirism as a transmitted disease can be considered a memetic trait inherited by Charlotte Stoker's cholera epidemic recollection passed to Bram Stoker.

Secondly, the professional relationship between Bram Stoker and actor Henry Irving led Stoker to model Irving while creating his undead character. In the introduction of Penguin Classics edition of *Dracula*, scholar Maurice Hindle asserts that Stoker's respect with Irving was not limited to his 'biting' theatrical performance, "for the figure of Dracula himself would be modelled on the forceful personality of Irving" (2003, p. xxv). As Louis S. Warren states,

Scholars have long agreed that keys to the Dracula tale's origin and meaning lie in the manager's relationship with Irving in the 1880s [...] There is virtual unanimity on the point that the figure of Dracula- which Stoker began to write notes for in 1890- was inspired by Henry Irving himself. Stoker originally intended the work as a play, with the tragedian in the leading role. (2002, p. 1131)

As the quote above shows, Dracula, as a character, was the combination of all the successful memetic vampire traits of the earlier English vampires and the charismatic actor Irving. Just like Polidori conjoining the horrible undead with Byronic charm, Stoker amalgamated the terrifying revenant with the acclaimed Victorian theatre superstar making it more sympathetic to the reader and more adaptable thus more dangerous for the peoples of Britain.

Nina Auerbach also supports the idea that Irving inspired Stoker while creating his vampire as a theatrical tuxedo and cape figure. "The Svengali-like Irving was mannered to the point of grotesquerie [*sic*], his intensely self-obsessed performance, onstage and off, moved his adoring assistant Bram Stoker to create the lordly vampire Dracula" (1985, pp. 269-270).

As a result, Charlotte Stoker and Henry Irving were the two key figures who memetically inspired the pestiferous quality of the Un-Dead and the theatrical tone of the appearance and character of Count Dracula in the process of the literary vampire's evolution

3.4 Dracula as The Vampire Meme

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is about an old Eastern European aristocrat called Dracula who wants to buy some estates in London. For that purpose, Count Dracula contacts Mr. Peter Hawkins from Exeter to act as an estate agent on his behalf. Jonathan Harker, a young solicitor, working at Mr. Hawkins' firm, is sent to Transylvania to take care of the paperwork for the purchase of Carfax Abbey in Purfleet, London. Harker travels to Bistritz by train and continues by Bukovina stagecoach to Borgo Pass to meet Dracula's carriage. At the hotel, he receives a message from Dracula welcoming him to the Carpathians (Stoker, 1897). According to the working notes of Bram Stoker, the original location chosen as the setting of the novel is not Transylvania but Styria. When this is reviewed from an evolutionary literary perspective, it can be said that the selection of both of these places is associated with some literary texts that predate *Dracula*. Sheridan le Fanu's *Carmilla* sets in Styria. Frayling acknowledges that in Bram Stoker's working papers, the earlier drafts of the novel is quite different. Dracula is called Count Wampyr, and he lives in Styria (1991, p. 303). As it is stated in *Dracula Norton Critical Edition*, which is edited by Nina Auerbach and David J. Skall, Bram Stoker only changed it to Transylvania after he had read Emily Gerard's travelogue *The Land Beyond the Forest* (1997, p. 9).

The setting of the novel *Dracula* was later changed to Transylvania. Jules Verne's *Le Chateau des Carpathes* (The Carpathian Castle) printed in 1892 sets in Transylvania, as well. The book is about a castle on the Carpathian Mountains. The local villagers believe that Chort (the Devil) lives in the castle. This naming is interesting because Dracula lives in a castle on the Carpathian Mountains, too.

Moreover, one of the alleged meanings of the word Dracula is the devil. Another similarity is that in Verne's story, the castle is inhabited by the last member of an old aristocratic family, like the Draculești family, called Baron Rodolphe de Gortz. Baron Gortz lives in the castle in solitude accompanied only by his loyal aide Orfanik who is also a scientist and an inventor. Together, using some technological devices such as the phonograph, telephone, projectors, magnets, and electricity, they created the illusion that the castle is haunted to

keep the locals away. Similarly, in *Dracula*, some then state-of-the-art technological devices are used to overcome Dracula such as a typewriter, stenograph, and Winchester repeating rifles, so not only Verne's work both also Stoker's novel has a science-fiction element in it.

Another literary work that *Dracula* inherited some memetic material is *Mysterious Stranger*. This short story was first published in *Chambers's Repository* in 1853 and reprinted in *Odds and Ends* in 1860 (Browning, 2011). It was a translation of the 1844 story *Der Fremde* by Karl Adolf von Wachsman (Scivalli, 2015). The story opens with the journey of a German noble and his family. The Knight of Fahnenberg, his daughter Franziska von Fahnenberg, the Knight's nephew Baron Franz von Kronstein, and Franziska's friend and the Knight's niece Bertha are travelling to the newly inherited estates of the Knight in the Carpathian Mountains, where Dracula's castle is also located near the Borgo Pass, when they are attacked by a pack of wolves. The party is saved by a mysterious stranger who apparently can control the wolves. Dracula also has the ability to control wolves, and he praises their howling by saying, "After their miraculous deliverance, they head for the nearest village. Later, they visited the haunted ruins of the Klatka castle. There, inside the family vault under the chapel, they find the coffin of Ezzelin von Klatka, the ill-famed last inhabitant of the castle Klatka. One of the stewards in the Knight of Fahnenberg's new castle describe Ezzelin as follows:

The last owner of the castle, which at that time was a sort of robber's den, and the headquarters of all depredators in the neighbourhood" answered the old man. "They say this man was of superhuman strength, and was feared not only on account of his passionate temper, but of his treaties with the Turkish hordes. Any young woman, too, in the neighbourhood to whom he took a fancy, was carried off to his tower and never heard of more. When the measure of his iniquity was full, the whole neighbourhood rose in a mass, besieged his stronghold, and at length he was slain on the spot where the huge oak-tree now stands (Chambers's, 1854).

After sunset, they meet the mysterious stranger who saved them from the wolves the previous night. He introduces himself as Azzo von Klatka. Browning emphasizes that Azzo, just like Dracula, is about forty years old, tall, thin, and pale, with penetrating grey eyes and dark hair. Azzo refuses to eat and drink with The Knight of Fahnenberg and the family whenever he visits the family's castle.

Azzo gets into Franziska's room in the form of mist. This is an attribute that Dracula possesses too. Dracula enters Mina's bedrooms in the form of a mist. When Bertha notices the bitemark on Franziska's neck, Franziska assumed that she somehow must have hurt herself. Similarly, when Mina saw the scar on Lucy's neck, she thought she must have pierced it with a safety pin while she was trying to fasten a shawl around Lucy with a safety pin.

Let me tell you, he is known everywhere that men have been. In old Greece, in old Rome; he flourished in Germany all over, in France, in India, even in the Chersonese; and in China, so far from us in all ways. He have follow [sic] the wake of the berserker Iclander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slav, the Saxon, the Magyar (1897, p.211).

As it is showcased above with various examples, *The Mysterious Stranger* transfers quite a lot of memetic material to *Dracula*. According to Browning, "numerous theatrical and film adaptations to *Dracula* have bolstered more direct references to" *The Mysterious Stranger* and "in some cases lines are lifted nearly word for word" (Encyclopedia, 2011). Stoker's vampire not only inherits from works of fiction but also non-fiction. In her *The Land Beyond the Forest*, Emily Gerard explains the folkloric method of killing a vampire, which is also performed on Lucy, as follows:

More decidedly evil, however, is the vampire Nosferatu, in whom every Romanian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven or hell. The very person killed by a nosferatu becomes likewise a vampire after death, and will suck the blood of other innocent people till the spirit has been exorcised...by opening the grave of the person suspected and driving a stake through the corpse... In very obstinate cases it is further recommended to cut off the head and replace it in the coffin with the mouth filled with garlic or to extract the heart and burn it, strewing the ashes over the grave. (1840, p. 142)

Another folkloric element that Stoker borrowed from Gerard is about the magical powers Dracula possesses:

They learned the secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due... I may as well mention the Scholomance, or school supposed to exist somewhere in the heart of the mountains, and were all the secrets of nature, the language of animals, and all imaginable magic spells and charms are taught by the devil in person. Only ten scholars are admitted at a time and when the course of learning has expired and nine of them are released to return to their homes, the tenth scholar is detained by the devil as payment (1840, p. 136).

This excerpt from Emily Gerard's *The Land Beyond the Forest* resonates in *Dracula* as follows:

The Draculas were, says Arminius, a great and noble race, though now and again were scions who were held by their coevals to had dealings with the Evil one. They learned his secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over, Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due (1840, p.212).

In addition to Transylvanian superstitions and Dracula's demonic schooling, Saint George 's Day as a witches' Sabbath is derived from Gerard. In an early version of *Dracula* titled *Dracula's Guest*, Stoker utilizes Walpurgisnacht, a Germanic feast that is associated with witches, to highlight the significance of Harker's ill-fated departure to Borgo Pass.

The most important day in the year is the feast day of Saint George, 23rd of April, the eve of witches still frequently kept by occult meetings taking place at night in lonely caverns or within ruined walls, and where all the ceremonies usual to the celebration of a witches' Sabbath are put into practice... This same night is the best for finding treasures... On the night of Saint George's day (so say the legends) all these treasures begin to burn, or to speak in mystic language, to 'bloom' in the bosom of the earth, and the light they give forth, described as a bluish flame resembling the color of lighted spirits of wine, serves to guide favoured mortals to their place of concealment (Notes, p. 134).

Bram Stoker depicts his vampire villain as a count from a historical Eastern European region called Transylvania. Surrounded by the Carpathian mountain ranges in the East, South, and West, this remote area was historically a buffer zone between two great powers of the time, The Holy Roman Empire / Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. In the novel, Harker notes to his diary that the Hospodars did not use to repair the roads in order not to provoke the Turks for war. Today, thanks to *Dracula*, it is common knowledge that Transylvania is the native land of vampires.

Vampires or vampire fiction in literature is not an original invention of Bram Stoker. *Dracula* has many vampiric predecessors both in European literature and English literature like *The Mysterious Stranger*, *The Vampyre*, *Carmilla*, *Varney the Vampyre*, to name a few. It can be claimed that *Dracula* is the offspring of the cumulative vampiric tropes, all of which are minor memes, that were used in earlier vampire works of fiction, fused into a single meme. In this chapter, the aforementioned vampiric qualities are going to be discussed in the order that Stoker introduces them in his gothic horror novel.

As it is already stated above, Stoker benefits from previous works of vampire literature as inspiration, and he utilizes inheritable memetic traits to create *Dracula*.

To illustrate, the very beginning part of the novel starts giving these memetic references. The homeland of vampires is the first aspect that Stoker borrowed from the preceding vampire texts. In his *A Voyage into the Levant*, French botanist Joseph Pitton De Tournefort writes about a vampire incident he witnessed on the Greek island of Mykonos. A scientific report narrating an encounter with an actual vampire waked an interest in vampires throughout Europe. Lord Byron's *Giaour* and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Bride of Corinth* are results of the Greek vampires. As a result of the commotion that Fluckinger's report (Petersen), which was mentioned in the previous chapter of this study, caused in Europe, Austro-Hungary and Serbia started to be considered the native land of the vampires. French author Charles Nodier compiled various vampire narratives such as Arnold Paole's in his book *Infernaliana*. Another Irish author, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's vampire masterpiece *Carmilla*, which was written 26 years prior to Stoker's *Dracula*, sets in the Austrian province of Styria (1872). According to Petersen, Le Fanu decided to use Styria as the setting of *Carmilla* after reading the 1836 travel book *Schloss Hainfeld, or Winter in Lower Styria*. Le Fanu's usage of a travelogue as a sourcebook is another shared quality of these two works. Stoker benefited from a travel book titled *The Land Beyond the Forest* by Emily Gerard. In his earlier notes on *Dracula*, Stoker chooses Styria as his then vampire character Count Wampyr but later changes it to Transylvania (2008, p. 87).

During his journey to Castle Dracula on a horse carriage Jonathan Harker and the mysterious carriage man, who later turned out to be Dracula himself, comes across a pack of wolves. The wolves that threaten them are easily shooed away by the carriage-man / Dracula (1997, p. 20). This scene is a memetic reference to the short story *The Mysterious Stranger* that is discussed in the previous chapter. Both the *Mysterious Stranger* and *Dracula* use prairie dogs and wolves as a device to manifest vampires' dominion over lesser life forms. The feral canines act as minions of the vampire as a demonic supernatural entity. For *Dracula*, wolves are nocturnal pets and their howling is sweet music to the vampire's ears. He states

On the scene with the wolves, Dracula is disguised as a carriage-man. Hiding in plain sight without posing a threat to potential prey is an important trait that makes vampires a successful monster meme. "The horses were driven by a tall man, with a long brown beard, and a great black hat" (1997, p. 17). This is how Stoker depicts the carriage man in Harker's words. Obviously, Dracula uses a fake beard and hat to

hide his undead phenotype from his future victim, Harker. What makes vampires superior to other fictional monsters like werewolves and mummies is their ability to blend in with the human population unnoticed. This ability makes them more dangerous than a furry beast or an undead pharaoh wrapped in bandages. When the victims let the vampire in their house, it is usually too late for the prey. Humans do not react to a vampire in their vicinity, presuming it is a mortal man or woman like them. This is how a vampire poses a threat to individuals.

In *Dracula*, vampires cast no shadow and reflection. Harker realizes that Dracula is invisible on his mirror that he uses for shaving. Panicking, he cuts himself (1879, p. 30-31). In addition to that, in the early drafts of Stoker's novel, the vampire count is semi-transparent. This peculiarity with mirrors can be found in Alexandre Dumas' *The Vampire of the Carpathian Mountains* is an earlier novella that has a vampire character without a shadow or a reflection on a mirror. Today, vampires without mirror reflections are a part of the vampire lore. It is a widely accepted phenomenon about vampires. It can be said that "survival of the no mirror on mirrors" meme is one of the minor memes that constitute the essential Dracula meme.

Dracula's curious diet is another inherited meme from *The Mysterious Stranger*. In the anonymous vampire story, vampire Azzo von Klatka explains that he "live(s) entirely on liquids [...] but I neither drink wine nor any cold beverages" and hints at his horrendous preference of beverage (Chambers's, 1854). Similarly, in *Dracula*, the vampire count explains the reason why he does not join Harker for dinner as follows: "I have dined already, and I do not sup" (1997, p. 23)

During one of their nightly meetings, Dracula narrates the fight his ancestors waged against the Turk. This is yet another common point between *Dracula* and *The Mysterious Stranger*. In *The Mysterious Stranger*, knight Woislav goes to war against the Turks. Franziska praises Woislav for going to war against Turks. This is considered to be one of the examples of the repetitive and surviving memes.

As it is stated in the earlier chapter, one of the key mechanisms of evolution is sexual selection. A male organisms' ability to find a mate and reproduce despite all competition. The three brides of Dracula are a key reflection of Dracula's

evolved sexuality. Female vampire trio constitutes the male vampire's harem. As a feudal patriarch, Dracula's polygamy can be considered normal. However, the reproduction of vampires has no resemblance to mortals. Vampires do not reproduce, but instead, they predate; creating a new vampire is the by-product of their predation. Dracula transforms from an ordinary human to a vampire, probably in the mysterious school of wizardry as van Helsing puts it, and vampires do not reproduce sexually like humans. Their asexual reproduction is more of a process of infecting their mate/prey. Also, the act of intercourse can be defined as penetration and exchange of bodily fluids in simple terms. Vampires bite the necks or bosom of their victims, puncture their veins, and drink their blood. It can be inferred from Lucy Westenra's transformation to the Bloofer Lady that the saliva of the vampire spreads a form of viral mutagen. The victim loses considerable portions of blood as a result of the nightly visits of the hematophagous undead. Dracula forces Mina to sip his blood directly from an open wound on his breast to form a form of dominion over Mina. This scene is a parody of breast-feeding. So, it can be stated that, for vampires, feeding is the equivalent of sexual intercourse. In the light of this presumption, the brides' attempt to feed on Harker, is an act of unfaithfulness.

Moving to a suitable habitat under disguise is another minor meme that survived as a part of the larger Dracula meme. Both in Polidori's *Vampyre* and Stoker's *Dracula*, vampire characters travel from east to west. Polidori's Lord Ruthven returns to England from Greece and conceals his true identity as Earl of Marsden to marry a young woman to feed on her. Similarly, Dracula emigrates from Transylvania to Whitby and introduces himself as Count de Ville.

There are various reasons for Dracula to leave Transylvania for England and hide his true nature. Dracula lives as an old man in his time-worn castle without any servants. Her three brides are the only creatures that accompany him in his castle. In Stoker's working notes, a mute servant and an old blind woman as side characters are mentioned. Stoker discarded them later, but he offered Dracula the Szigany and the Slovaks as acolytes. Those are the only people around the Castle who are brave enough to come to the castle and do his bidding. The locals believe in the rumours about the Count, and they stay away from him. Transylvanians are pictured as superstitious and religious people who

refrain from staying out in the Saint George's Night. They wear crucifixes, cross themselves and use certain gestures to protect themselves from the vampire Count (1997, p. 13). Their precautions seem to be effective against vampires since Dracula can only snatch defenseless babies from villagers in the book. Unlike in England, Dracula is unable to lure young and beautiful maidens to his castle or tempt them in their cities, towns, or villages.

Moreover, the residents of the villages around Bukovina, where Castle Dracula is located know that the ruined castle is the lair of the vampires. A mother pounds the castle gate reclaiming his taken baby (1997, p. 48). It is proof that humans in the vicinity of the castle know what kind of a monster they are facing and how to keep it at bay as best as they can. The scarcity of food (human blood) and the inconvenience of safe sheltering (Castle Dracula) forces the Count to immigrate to a new biotope: England.

Dracula does not move to England blindly. He knows that in order to fit in a new habitat, he has to adapt to survive and prosper. Harker compliments Count Dracula's flawless English. He also informs the reader about the wide variety of resources Dracula has about Great Britain (1997, pp. 23-24). In accordance with the Transylvanian superstitions, Dracula readies fifty crates of his native soil to be transported with him. With the help of the Slovaks, those crates are carried and loaded to a Russian cargo ship called Demeter. Dracula hunts down the crewmembers of the ship, who were not suspicious of anything odd because their load was only some earth, one by one in a planned manner so that he reaches the English shore without serious trouble. The whole ship is used by Dracula as a lunchbox. He lands on England at a stormy night in the form of a black dog so that he cloaks his existence as a new invasive species. In England, coherent with his nature, he pesters a young and fair lady. Dracula's preferred prey is women. He does not feed on Harker and kills Mr. Swales, whom Dracula came across in Whitby by breaking his neck (1997, p.85). Dracula's assaults on Lucy Westenra aims to feed on her blood and turn her into a vampire, the first one of many to come. The vampire Count has a broad arsenal of supernatural powers; he can mesmerize his victims and ask them to roam outside. Under the sanguivorous revenant's hypnotic trance, Lucy cannot recall what had happened to her, except a few dream-like visions. Dracula can also transform into a big

bat, a dog, and mist to reach his prey. He can control wild beasts in England with ease. He causes a wolf to escape from a zoo and controls it to enter Lucy's house, evading van Helsing's deterrent measures. The civilized and unsuspecting people of England are not prepared for a vampire attack.

Lastly, the most evident and vital meme transfer among generations of vampire fiction is the appearance and qualities of a vampire, and the powers it possesses. As it is explained in the introductory chapter of this work, vampires originated from folk tales and beliefs. These beliefs were the result of the unexplained deaths caused by various germs and the lack of scientific information about the natural processes of decomposition. These undead creatures that feed on the living are not restricted with only one place or culture, but instead, it is a global phenomenon. There are ancient vampires like Empusa or Lamia. There are Chinese vampires called Xiang-Shi, Indian vampires called Vetala, Jewish vampires called Motetz-Dam. When considered as independent memes, those blood-drinking entities are all eliminated except one: the Eastern European vampire.

The Eastern European vampire returns home from the grave and calls his/her family members out. If they go out, the vampire kills them. The vampire may also ask his/her family or neighbours to let him/her in their house. Sometimes, people see their deceased friends or family members, who died following a period of the disease, in their dream. Then, they get sick and die. There are some historical records of actual people who are accused of being vampires such as Arnold Paole, Peter Blagojevic, Sava Savanovich, and Mercy Brown. The folkloric remedy of vampirism is the exhumation and mutilation of the corpse suspected of vampirism. A stake is run through the belly or heart of the vampire corpse to nail it down to the ground in order to immobilize it in the grave.

As it is explained in the second chapter of this study, the report about the vampires printed in European newspapers caused a vampire craze in Europe in the 1720's and 1730's (Welkins, 2011). The curiosity those news reports caused compiled from the famed *Visum et Repertum* by Fluckinger influenced poets like Bürger, Goethe, and Byron to produce literary texts in the form of poems

about vampires some of which are previously mentioned. Later stories, novellas and penny dreadfuls sets the standards for an established vampire fiction genre.

John William Polidori, Byron's private physician, and his friend published his short work of prose fiction *The Vampyre* in 1816. The creation of this story dates back to a stormy night in Villa Diodati near Lake Geneva in 1816, which is known as "Year Without a Summer." The vast amount of volcanic ashes that blocks the sunlight following the eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora the previous year caused abnormal weather conditions. Consequently, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, and Polidori spent their summer in the villa together. After reading a collection of German horror stories, the group of writers decides to hold a contest of writing horror stories. Mary Shelley's story was the first draft of *Frankenstein*. Byron wrote an unfinished story titled *Fragment of a Novel*. Polidori used Byron's story as a model and wrote his own version of the story.

The Vampyre was an essential step for the evolution of the vampire. Instead of the usual reanimated corpse that feeds on the blood of mortal men, Polidori's vampire, Lord Ruthven, was a Byronic homme fatale. Ruthven is a seductive aristocrat that targets beautiful women like Ianthe, a Greek girl. In a similar fashion with Lord Ruthven, Dracula targets English women. Her first victim was Lucy, then Jonathan and Mina sees Dracula, rejuvenated and eyeing a beautiful girl in the Hyde Park Corner (1897, pp. 42-49). The girl was another possible victim of Dracula, and Stoker did not reveal her face to the reader. It can be seen in Stoker's working notes for Dracula that there is a planned police detective called Cotford (2013, p. 27). The purpose of the detective would probably be adding a detective fiction element focusing on the notorious Whitechapel murders. In 1888, at least five women were killed by a murderer that the press called "Jack the Ripper." It is a possibility that Stoker was planning to use Cotford as the detective investigating the murders committed by Dracula. If this was Stoker's intent, the girl that Dracula was watching might be a victim of the femicidal vampire, and her body would be found severely mutilated by the police. If she is drained by Dracula like Lucy, then it means that there is at least another vampire that is at large in London. Then, there is

Mina. She is attacked by Dracula repeatedly as well, yet she managed to survive thanks to the efforts of van Helsing and his league of extraordinary gentlemen.

Varney the Vampire is the third primary memetic originator of Dracula. This Victorian-era gothic vampire story is serialized in the then-popular “penny dreadful” form. It was published weakly as pulp fiction pamphlets between 1845 and 1847. The story is attributed alternatively to either James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest. As A. Asbjorn Jon states, Varney influenced Dracula in many ways (2001, pp. 97-106). Varney pesters the Bannerworths, a wealthy English family, in the story to sustain blood. He visits the bedchambers of young maidens to drink their blood by coming through a window. Varney has fangs, and he leaves two puncture wounds on his victim’s neck. He possesses the power of hypnotism and superhuman strength. All the vampiric traits explained above can be observed in Dracula, as well. Dracula leaves a similar wound on Lucy’s neck (1997, p. 92). As it is stated previously, Mina thought the wound is the result of an accident with a needle at first, but then van Helsing realized that the never healing wound is a result of repeated vampiric attacks. Lucy writes about a bat flapping outside her bedroom window, and Dracula is caught red-handed in Mina and Jonathan Harker’s bedroom. In sum, Varney is the originator of many vampire tropes Dracula has.

Sheridan Le Fanu’s gothic novella, *Carmilla* is the last memetic source of inspiration for Stoker’s vampire that is discussed in this study. Instead of a man drinking the blood of young and beautiful women, Le Fanu calls a female vampire that preys on women. Le Fanu’s vampire character is called Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, but she introduces herself to people as Carmilla, an anagram of her real name. The story is presented as the casebook of Doctor Hesselius. Doctor Hesselius is a medical doctor with a predisposition towards the occult sciences. It can be stated that Dr. Hesselius is a predecessor to Professor Abraham van Helsing in *Dracula*. Van Helsing is also a renowned Dutch physician who is not unfamiliar with metaphysics. He is the one who reveals it was a vampire that attacked Lucy Westenra. He performs blood transfusion operations, which is groundbreaking for its day. However, he also utilizes a crucifix and garlic flowers to cure Lucy.

The setting of *Carmilla* is the Austrian state of Styria. A rich English widower and his daughter Laura live in a castle in the middle of a forest. The Englishman was a retired officer of the Habsburg Austria. When she was six years old, Laura had a dream about the visit of a beautiful woman and two puncture wounds are found on her breast. This wound turns out to be the mark of the vampire. She was bitten from her breast to suck her blood by Carmilla / Mircalla. The meme of vampire feeding from the victim's breast did not survive. Carmilla's successors have preferred the more traditional form of feeding on the victims' jugular rather than from their breast, yet Dracula makes Mina drink his blood from a cut on his breast. So, a mutant form of breastfeeding can still be observed in *Dracula* even though the original meme went extinct.

4. CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to analyse Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in the context of Evolutionary Literary Theory. *Dracula* is chosen as the subject literary work of this thesis since it is a highly adaptable and influential work of the vampire fiction genre.

As it is stated in *Chapter II*, Evolutionary Literary Theory approaches literature in the context of evolution, interpreting literary texts as a product of the evolved human imagination. Evolutionary Literary Theory integrates literary concepts with an evolutionary understanding of the evolved and adapted characteristics of human nature. Some basic biological needs like survival and reproduction are used to describe the behaviour of the characters in a work of literature. In this thesis, the actions of *Dracula* are interpreted in accordance with the Evolutionary Literary Theory.

The descent of the *Dracula* meme by modification as the superior vampire was not instantaneous. It inherited many traits and qualities from the antecedent literary vampire figures that are near extinct and almost forgotten such as Lord Ruthven, Carmilla, and Sir Francis Varney. Moreover, the *Dracula* meme can still compete well with modern rivals like Anne Rice's Rock star vampire Lestat, Stephenie Meyer's shiny, vegetarian vampire family of the Cullens and Charlaine Harris' artificial blood-drinking and civic-rights-seeking vampires from the American south.

The phylomemetic tree of the undead monster universally known as the vampire is rooted in the gods, goddesses, demigods, and demons of ancient myths as Melton and states, and folkloric revenants and ghosts, as Summers claims. One of these folkloric vampires turned into a successful meme due to the implicit scientific confirmation in the shape of a military medical report. The news coverage on newspapers and magazines had fired the imagination of the Romantic poets like Coleridge and Byron. The vampires depicted in those

poetic vampire fictions were not so different from the aboriginal vampires seen on folk beliefs, yet they managed to transfer the vampire meme to Victorian prose vampire narratives. These Gothic stories of castles, aristocratic or wealthy families, and noble, blood-thirsty vampires were the true progenitors of Count Dracula. The inherited memetic material from those ancestral literary works had been selected and transferred to *Dracula*. When thought in evolutionary terms, the motivations of Dracula's actions are consistent with the evolutionary mechanism of natural selection, and Dracula had inherited vampiric tropes and plot lines from the preceding works of Polidori, Le Fanu, Rymer and Prest, and some other writers. So, Dracula is the progeny of the qualities that it inherited from the preceding vampire texts. In this thesis, all these earlier vampires and the traits they possess are accepted as independent memes.

Today, Stoker's undead creature is still the determinative vampire figure in its epistolary novel, theatrical play, big-screen motion picture, television series, film adaptation, graphic novel, video game forms, and countless other cultural references that are related to the idea of the vampire. All of the points which are discussed about the superiority of Stoker's vampire count over its contemporaries show that what makes Dracula more successful is not only its memetic material inherited from the vampire lore and literature.

In this thesis, Bram Stoker's epistolary vampire novel is analysed from an evolutionary perspective. The rationale behind the selection of Dracula as the subject material is that Dracula is a hybrid of the preceding vampire fiction in English literature, and it proved to be a successful vampire strain in evolutionary terms. Dracula is regarded as a meme to put it in an evolutionary context. As an evolutionary term, a meme is an idea, image, symbol, or practice that is transmitted from person to person in a culture. Memes are cultural analogues to genes. A gene is the basic physical and functional unit of heredity of living organisms.

Similarly, a meme is the fundamental mental unit of heredity of cultural ideas. A meme can be transferred through speech or writing. So, literary works can act as a transmitter of memes.

The idea of a corpse returning to life to feed on the blood of the living came to existence first in mythologies and folklore of many different cultures around the

world. Those early vampire memes transferred mostly orally within a society, and independent vampire memes existed in various cultures. Writing and literature gave memes a better means of spread.

Thanks to literature a meme could reach many people at once rather than one person at a time. Memes travelled long distances in written form, and they were permanently fixed on rock, clay, papyrus, parchment, or paper. The enlightenment, the industrial revolution, literary translations, international journalism, and new communication technologies had allowed memes to become a global contagion. In eighteenth-century Europe, the literacy rate increased, printing press allowed rapid production of written texts, Eastern European folk beliefs were translated to German, French, and English as horror stories spreading the local vampire memes of the Balkans in Western Europe, and thanks to telegraph news of the strange occurrences like vampire activity were able to be published in the West. The result of all of the advances mentioned above was the so-called “Vampire Craze” of the 1720s (Welkins, 2011). It was the first mass hysteria or burst of interest for vampires. Members of clergy and scientist wrote treatises and medical reports on these “real” vampires infesting villages on the far corners of Europe. Vampire sightings were reported on journals, gazettes, and newspapers in Poland, Russia, France, and Britain.

The transformation of the vampire meme had gone through in the west was the result of the selective forces of evolution on it. In order to survive in the new cultural habitat and in an age of science and enlightenment, medieval superstitions that arose to offer an explanation to deaths caused by communicative diseases and the stages a dead body goes through the natural process of decomposition, the illiterate, poor and neglected people of Transylvania and Wallachia hosted the meme of the undead revenant. However, the vampire meme had evolved into a sanguivorous monster with supernatural powers. This new strain of vampire meme sought refuge on the grey area of the scientific understanding bordering the occult in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Dracula is the final stage of the descent of the vampire meme through modification. Bram Stoker combined the folkloric resources about vampires that

he acquired from sources like Sabine Baring-Gould and Emily Gerard. As it is discussed in Chapter III, Stoker also made use of the antecedent Romantic poems that include vampiric themes and characters, and Victorian vampire narratives such as *The Mysterious Stranger*, *The Vampire*, *Varney the Vampire*, and *Carmilla*. In addition to all of the things above, *Dracula* also reflects the fears and anxieties of the Victorians, diminishing them from God's perfect creation to the status of a feral beast in origin. The insight that Darwin's evolutionary theory about the origin of the modern humans lying on the ancestral hominin was as panic-infusing for the Victorians as a blood-thirsty monster lurking on the streets of England and the bedroom of the English ladies.

Dracula is the fittest vampire meme in Victorian English Literature due to many reasons. It was not hard for the Victorians to imagine such horror because the horrible murders that Jack the Ripper committed on the back alleys of Whitechapel was a fresh memory. It helped the vampire meme took a firm hold of the British. The verisimilitude of the details such as legal rules about acquiring estates in Britain and means of transport and the epistolary form of the novel were other shocking aspects of the *Dracula* that adds to its memetic success.

Memes are ideas that spread from person to person within a culture. Memes of vampires such as Sir Francis Varney, *Carmilla*, and Lord Ruthven, and memes of vampiric tropes like fangs, leaving puncture wounds on the victim's neck, and controlling wild beasts are subject to evolutionary selection. In this sense, *Dracula* is a survivor; it is the definitive vampire *meme* that evades the selective forces of nature through mutations and adaptations. The *Dracula* meme has kept evolving after its publication throughout more than a century, and it has prevailed and prospered.

What makes *Dracula* more influential than competing vampire narratives or memes is that Stoker's Transylvanian count has an eerie ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions, it's unholy appeal and charisma. As a result, *Dracula* still continues its memetic lineage. In the twenty-first century, *Dracula* is still a popular novel and it is widely known by the general public. The *Dracula* meme subsists in the modern world through the 2013 American NBC television series starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, 2014 film *Dracula*

Untold starring Luke Ewans, 2017 Netflix animation series titled *Castlevania*, the prequel novel to *Dracula* by Dacre Stoker, Bram Stoker's great-grandnephew, titled *Dracul*, and the 2020 television series from the famous producers of *Sherlock*, Mark Gatiss, and Steven Moffat. The selected contemporary Dracula adaptations listed above and many more in Appendix B prove Dracula's never-ending but ever-evolving effect on vampire literature. It is common knowledge that Transylvania is home to vampires, thanks to Dracula. Biting victims' necks, pointy canines that look longer than they supposed to be, controlling beasts, theriantrophy in the form of turning into a bat or dog, avoiding the flower of garlic, transforming to misty or dust are all trademark vampire qualities that are set by Stoker as memes. So, Dracula affected vampire literature and the vampire meme intensely since its epigones share the same memetic traits as Dracula. To conclude, this thesis proves that the vampire meme that infested Stoker was a thriving strain of memetic virus that had been selected for centuries, it replicated itself in his mind, mutating, adapting and evolving thus becoming the apex predator of the Victorian vampire coven, and it survived for more than a century as a vampire meme and endured the competition of rival vampire memes.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: Vampires in English Before Dracula

APPENDIX II: Dracula in Literature, Film and Popular Culture

APPENDIX I: Vampires in English Before Dracula

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