For the Dead Travel Fast: Blood, Soil, and Foreign Contagion in Dracula

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Existing as a "dead man made alive" (Stoker, *Notes* 17), Count Dracula reflects Victorian fears of foreignness and illness spreading into the individual bodies of English citizens and the national body of English society. Lorenzo Servitje notes that cholera, in particular, was linked to the understanding of disease as enemy (34). Throughout Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the Count exists as a physical manifestation of this diseased, foreign enemy threatening the safety and civilization of England. Between 1831 and 1866, cholera epidemics in England resulted in the deaths of over a hundred thousand men, women, and children in three waves of contagion (Underwood 173), which served to emphasize and reinforce racial understandings of the disease.

Many scholars have examined the themes of English exceptionalism, nationalism, death, and plague in Victorian texts through the historical context of cholera, yet few have examined the understanding of soil as a metaphor and embodiment of lineage in connection to reverse colonization, foreign invasion, and foreign contagion. These fears and connected, radicalized understandings of disease create an understanding of Englishness as "pure," "human," and "natural," against the foreign, colonized other in the Victorian Era, an anxiety reflected in *Dracula*. Although Marion McGarry suggests Stoker owes his influence for cholera in *Dracula* to his mother, Charlotte Stoker's, accounts of the illness in Sligo, Ireland (27-28), I argue the multilayered text reflects a deeper link to fears of invasion, nationhood, and English identity through the importance of soil and purity in the novel. I argue the representations of soil, blood, and nationhood in *Dracula* symbolize not only the direct threat of cholera but also a symbolic threat: the plague as the threat of the "other," specifically an animalistic, foreign entity entering under suspicious and questionable methods. Vampirism represents a contagious pathogen and an

invading nationality attacking its host, equating Dracula's foreign identity with a direct threat to England and Englishness—a living, animal embodiment of national fears of contagion and infection.

Nearly exclusively connected with foreignness, cholera was closely associated with the martial metaphor of medicine as war against disease (Servitje 34), with the colonial and military language serving to heighten fears being infected with foreignness through disease. Primarily encountered in India by British soldiers, cholera became intertwined with understandings of India as "the source of disease, in the dirty brown bodies of the colonized natives" (Prashad 243). This association resulted in cholera being considered foreign, often including the modifier "Asiatic" before it was dropped by the first quarter of the twentieth century, being understood as "almost exclusively (if temporarily) Asian" (Hamlin 8). I argue Stoker draws on three major understandings of disease—contagion, miasma theory, and contingent contagionism—and the earlier, proto-germ theory of animalism, to dehumanize the foreign count and emphasize the unknown, unpredictable threat of the foreign. Stoker's use of three different theories of disease etiology reflects the biopolitical logic and imperatives of the nineteenth century to suggest that regardless of how disease made one sick, it was the foreign that introduced and transmitted it. Contagionist theories, imbued with colonial and nationalist logics, highlight the threat of the Count's entry into England as akin to a foreign other entering the body, thereby threatening English lineage (Hamlin 3, Gilbert 19). Miasma theory posited that disease emanates from decay or filth in an impure population; the Count, then, threatens to bring "vampirism" to England or else illness, i.e. cholera, from his native country, thereby reflecting the understanding of "cholera in Britain [as] a national emergency brought about by national sin" (Gilbert 27). Contingent contagionism mixed contagionist and miasma theories to emphasize that individuals from impure environments

could, in turn, infect those they came into contact with (Servitje 123). The Count reflects all three theories, highlighting his threat not only to individual bodies but also to the body politic at large through the fear of his infection becoming a form of reverse colonization.

Stoker goes beyond these three nineteenth-century disease etiologies, drawing on animalculism to suggest the foreign count is less a person from an "impure environment" and more a being closer to an animal. Animalculism was the belief that small "disease-causing animalcules" were a method of contagion (Wilkinson 133). Writing in *A General History of Animalcules* (1843), Andrew Pritchard describes these tiny creatures as existing in "freshwater[,] … salt water of the ocean; and some live in the astringent solutions … They are found in fluids produced by animal secretions; moist earth, too" (62). These "living enemies" were linked to animals, first discovered in 1676, and capable of growing in various conditions (Porter 265), echoing the Count's adaptability and ability to survive. These "tiny creatures" did not spontaneously generate life, but rather were believed to require a parent to be created (Gaynes 73). The movement of the Count echoes these depictions as he crosses over water while encased in earth, and often takes the form of an animal. As a "living enemy" the Count threatens the lineage of England by introducing disease not only through his direct contact, but through more insidious modes of infecting the very earth itself.

The mixing of modes of contagion combines understandings of disease with folklore to suggest these animal-like, foreign enemies from impure and/or inferior environments could spread illness to the "superior" and civilized English, thereby creating a reverse colonization. Stoker utilizes all three to emphasize the threat of foreign contagion, with a focus on lineage. Dracula's threat is not only what he can do in this lifetime, but throughout time by destroying English bloodlines. As Macy Todd points out, the Count's link to the past is in the soil, because he is

"helpless without the earth that is enriched by history" (378). The power of soil becomes twofold: existing as the literal soil by which he travels and infects, and metaphorically as the history and lineage his infection threatens. He threatens the men by saying, "My revenge has just begun! I spread it over centuries and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine" (282). He is capable of this contagion in two ways: firstly, through the contagion of direct contact with English girls, thereby contaminating English bloodlines, and through the contamination of death in the soil, contaminating the very land of England itself.

Contaminated, corrupted soil, then, becomes representative of nationhood and lineage—a threat to the living. The attempts by Van Helsing to "sterilise the earth" are a part of what Todd describes as larger "genocidal projects of mass sterilization. It is not enough that Dracula be killed, not enough that he be prevented from reproducing" (378). Given Stoker's emphasis on the four modes of disease contagion, I argue the hunting party must go beyond killing Dracula directly and also destroy his lineage (namely, Lucy) and later his connection to the soil to prevent the further spread of disease. The understanding that soil could pass disease appears in a letter from Charles Pearson, Chairman of the City of London Board of Health, concerning the burial grounds of those who had died from cholera in 1832, in which he notes:

> This disease has now unfortunately established itself in this city in a form of increased malignity and brutality and the Board over which I have the honor to preside [has] acknowledged [the] fact that emanations from bodies of persons who have died of infectious diseases are calculated to spread contagion even years after the decease of the subject … If the victims of cholera be permitted to be interred within the confines of this densely populated city, I feel the greatest apprehension that the seeds for its reproduction

> will be sown amongst its inhabitants and that long after it may be supposed that the calamity has passed over our heads posterity may have to censure our negligence and imprudence in thus bequeathing them this dreadful malady. (Pearson nationalarchives.gov.uk)

The concern of the Board of Health was that the "seeds of reproduction" would be sown through the soil, through association with the diseased dead. Dracula requires soil to travel, effectively transporting the soil of his native land into England, and thus contaminating the purity of English earth. An association with the soil in Dracula has been linked to what Ross G. Forman calls "ideas of death, rottenness, plague, and the perversion of tropes in growth and planting" (937). The Count's ability to travel through soil, along with his connection to his heritage as a foreign entity, entails the '"blood and soil' discourse that underlies many modern conceptions of nation and citizenship" (937) that was used to naturalize and villanize different groups. That is to say, Dracula is directly connected to his country, and constitutes an invasion by the other in Britain. The understanding of the danger of soil as contagion, as reflected in the Board of Health letter, is reinforced through the link between Dracula as "undead" and requiring soil to travel. When arriving in Transylvania, one of Harker's companions misquotes Gottfried August Burger's 1774 folk Ballad "Leonor," saying, "For the dead travel fast" (20). The poem tells the story of a soldier who has died, yet his wife fears that "it will yet be as late that his cold corpse creeps from the grim grave's gate … what if in distant Hungary he clasp another bride" (Burger 4). The allusion to the poem highlights two fears: firstly, the spread of contagion from beyond the grave through soil, and secondly, the fear of English blood mixing with foreign blood to reproduce.

The association between soil as lineage and nationhood is reflected by Dracula's requirement to sleep and travel in coffins filled with soil. As the Board of Health had feared in 1832, the soil allows for the dead—in this case the Undead—to "plant" the "seeds of

reproduction," that is to say, to spread the foreign contagion through English soil, thus tainting the nation. This reflects the miasmatic theory of the "sickly earth" poisoning the body (Prashad 246). Stoker uses the seed and soil metaphor of the germ using the body to parasitically infect the empire to "articulate the anxieties of reverse colonization through a modern scientific understanding of a primitive life-form emerging from imperial encounters" (Servitje 141). The sickly earth represents the foreign as opposed to the "natural" English soil. As the Board of Health feared, burying cholera victims did spread cholera, furthering the contagion. Because cholera was seen as endemic during Victorian times, the view of the disease shifted from "Asiatic" cholera to merely cholera, due to the widespread acceptance of it *as* Asian (Hamlin 8), with India, after 1832, becoming known as "the natural home of cholera" and the "ultimate … source of disease" (Prashad 243). As a foreign entity entering England, the Count is a manifestation of these fears. Deeply linked to the soil and violence of his country, he becomes a "source of disease" capable of reproducing through English soil and blood. The focus on the foreign as the "source of disease" creates an understanding of Englishness as superior but also as *susceptible*, whereby England must be protected against a reverse colonization through this illness.

The fear of contamination by blood and soil is highlighted by the Count's travel in "earth boxes" (283), by which he directly brings foreign soil to England. In this way, the Count echoes the depiction of animalcules existing in the fresh "moist earth" (Pritchard 62), while also reinforcing his continuous connection to his heritage, thereby remaining "pure" in his foreignness. As Harker becomes aware of Dracula's true nature, he discovers the Count "in one of the great boxes, of which there were fifty in all, on a pile of newly dug fresh earth" (55). This fresh earth indicates a constant reaffirmation of his heritage.

Ensconced in the "fresh earth," the Count is at once alive and dead, possessing the characteristics of a man buried alive. Harker notes his host was "either dead or asleep. I could not say which— for the eyes were open and stony, but without the glassiness of death—and the cheeks had the warmth of life through all their pallor, and the lips were as red as ever" (55). The pallor of his face and stony eyes are reminiscent of early Board of Health notices warning of the "alarming approach" of "Indian Cholera" which listed symptoms such as "slow pulse … change of color to a leaden blue, purple, black or brown; the skin is dreadfully cold" (Hamlin 69). His recognition that he may be either "dead or asleep" fuels his check for "any sign of life," echoing concerns that cholera patients were sometimes "buried before they were really dead, in the haste to dispose of the bodies" given that "persons attacked with this fatal disorder are, in some instances, in a state of lethargy, which may be easily compounded with death" (*London Morning Herald*, July 31, 1832, 6). Harker notes "there was no sign of movement, no pulse, no breath, no beating of the heart. I bent over him, and tried to find any sign of life, but in vain" (55). The depiction of a lack of movement and breath mirrors the *Morning Herald*'s depiction of victims who die of suffocation after being buried alive:

> In cases of this nature the whole chain of phenomena of the disorder, of which the termination is necessarily death, has been closely watched, and the most common cause of death in these cases found to be suffocation. It sometimes happens that without going through this progressive augmentation of the symptoms, the patient suddenly falls into a state of absolute immovability, and dares not breathe, or the breath is scarcely perceptible, without any pulse, and becomes like ice, and, in short, is apparently dead. (6)

By laying in a coffin while seemingly dead, the Count's description is reminiscent of a cholera victim buried before death. This "undead" moment, which resulted in the death of nearly all

victims, was still a moment of contagion as cholera was contagious through the soil, as the letter from the Board of Health advised. The "fresh earth" becomes a link between the contagious nature of cholera itself and foreign soil, which represents the threat of foreign contagion. The smell of the earth furthers this contagion through the understanding of miasma as the point of transmission given Harker's understanding that Dracula "could not have lain there long, for the earthy smell would have passed away in a few hours" (55). This understanding that the smell would pass away—thereby limiting the exposure to contagion—was, in part, one of the reasons why there was a hurry to bury cholera victims (Chadwick 2) despite the understanding from others, such as in the aforementioned Board of Health letter, that the internment of cholera victims in the soil could spread the contagion.

The spread of cholera through soil links miasma to a threat of foreignness that evokes the sense of bringing "bad airs" from foreign places, particularly eastern geographies south of the equator, such as India—places that by the writing of *Dracula* would become the jurisdiction of tropical medicine (Taylor-Brown 17-18). These airs were deemed impure, given that, as David Arnold records, the "emergent discipline of 'tropical medicine' gave scientific credence to the idea of a tropical world as a primitive and dangerous environment in contradistinction to an increasingly safe and sanitized temperate world" (10), but the soil gives Dracula an opportunity to arrive and flourish in England. The sense of foreignness threatens the imagined community of nationhood within and outside of the novel, as Victorian writers, Stoker especially, "mapped the contours of empire with reference to parasitic disease, triangulating a kind of imperial nationhood that valorized British geopolitical dominance through medicine" (Taylor-Pirie 14). Transylvania represents this dangerous world, in comparison with the ordered and seemingly safe world of England the Count wishes to change.

The elimination of the Count's national identity and its potential to spread into the community of England is of tantamount importance to the Crew of Light, who view their task as critical to society as a whole. After arriving in England, Harker and his associates hope to eradicate Dracula's influences by breaking into his home. Harker admits that they "were prepared for some unpleasantness, for as we were opening the door a faint, malodorous air seemed to exhale through the gaps, but none of us ever expected an odor such as we encountered" (234). That the air is "malodorous" reflects the association between the illness and bad odors. Harker admits there is a difference between the Count's well-kept crypt and his London home, suggesting London homes are unequipped for the "natural" state of illness of the foreign country. Here Stoker directly notes miasma theory as Harker notices "the place was small and close, and long disuse had made the air stagnant and foul. There was an earthly smell, as of some dry miasma, which came through the fouler air" (234). The "dry miasma" is linked to the spread of cholera: "it was not alone that it was comprised of all the ills of mortality and with the pungent, acrid smell of blood, but it seemed as though corruption itself had become corrupt" (234). The focus on corruption emphasizes understandings of cholera through continent contagionism, which was predicated on the understanding of English exceptionalism preventing the spread of cholera from the "corrupt" foreigners to the morally and physically superior English. The emphasis on the smell being from the "earth" and the "dust in extraordinary proportions" (236), which has been disturbed by the Count's boxes of earth, highlights the threat of the soil as the cause of the miasma—that is, it has stirred up this contagion. It is here the Count's threat manifests as rats, reinforcing the Count's association with disease-carrying animals.

These corrupt influences would allow the foreign influence to contaminate the purity of English soil, nationhood, and lineage. Jonathan's earliest task is to find Dracula a house in London,

as Dracula entreats him: "Come, tell me of London and of the house which you have procured for me" (31). Entering the home, he realizes the Count has a remarkable number of maps and books on England and English culture. Harker praises him for knowing and speaking English "so excellently," (29) suggesting a parallel to the "learned elite" of India at the time, who were educated by Thomas Macaulay in 1885. The intention was to create a group of Indians who could help with administration in India. They were to be, as Michael Mann says, "English in taste, in opinion, in morals and intellect [and embody the] imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and laws" (20). Jonathan's praise stands at odds with the Count's understanding of his own presumed inferiority: "I thank you, my friend, for your all too flattering estimate, but yet I fear that I am but a little way on the road I would travel. True, I know the grammar and the words, but yet I know not how to speak them" (29). The Count recognizes his inability to fully be accepted despite understanding "the grammar and words" of English.

His recognition, and Jonathan's praise, suggest that foreignness was accepted only to the extent that it was useful to the English; in essence, a false "Englishness." The Count explains that he will always be viewed as foreign, despite this knowledge: "I know that, did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger" (29-30). The emphasis on his difference and inability to be accepted as English reinforces the fear of the other, as well as the supposed English exceptionalism the Count cannot meet. Understanding this, the Count admits, "I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that it is" (29). While the Count longs to a part of the "rush of humanity," he is denied this possibility due to his foreignness. Before he becomes "un-dead" and thus loses all traces of humanity to the remaining characters of the novel, "he was in life a most wonderful man. Soldier, statesman, and alchemist—which latter was

the highest development of the science-knowledge of his time" (278). Despite this praise, which echoes Harker's approval of his command over the English language, he is called a "child … [with a] big child brain" (278). Only after he wishes to truly be a part of England outside of this role does he become un-dead. His entrance into England represents creating a new order, returning to fears of the foreign destroying the purity of English nationhood and lineage.

The Count, by embodying these four different modes of infection, is a manifestation of the threat of the foreign. He becomes, a "living" or rather "un-dead" enemy—failing to be considered "living" given his inability to join the "rush of humanity" that is English civilization. The British anxiety of, as Marie Kolkenbrock says, "becoming infected with otherness" (157) plagues the novel, with the Crew of Light's anxiety regarding not only the Count's current infectious behavior, but his ability to be the parent of new "living enemies" within England. The Professor explains Dracula's threat resides in how he may be "the father or furtherer of a new order of beings, whose road must lead through Death, not Life" (278). As the Count himself notes, he wishes to be a part of the "change" of London. The greatest fear of these men is not death but that "we become as him; that we henceforward become foul things of the night like him—without heart or conscience" (222). The understanding of "heart or conscience" returns to the imagery of English exceptionalism—of morals only mattering if they are English. The fear of Dracula's contagion is, like cholera, difficult to uncover given his ability to "grow and become small; he can at times vanish and come unknown" (222), akin to the patterns of cholera.

Cholera was at once a fear and a true contagion. As medical historian Christopher Hamlin explains, it was experienced not only by the individual victim but by communities as a whole, existing as a disaster that threatened to "destroy both material and communal bases of society, uproot faith in any cosmic order" (Hamlin 3). The Crew of Light fears Dracula, representative of

cholera, and his ability to uproot the typical order of things, thus changing England into something else. They do not fear death, admitting, as Van Helsing does, that "to fail here, is not mere life or death" (222), but rather the erasure of English identity. While English identity is linked to life, literature, and law, the foreign Dracula is linked to death and inhumanity. Dracula's ability to change the "natural" order of life in England is through his association with "savageness." An 1831 *Lancet* article noted "no rank escapes its attack … civilized nations are changed to savage hordes, and, in short, when it exceeds a certain point, all grades and bonds of social organization disappear" (241). The bonds of social organization require Dracula to always be seen as a stranger, as he first notes to Harker. His foreign identity is codified through animal comparisons and associations, reflecting earlier understandings of contagion.

The connection between the supernatural, animals, and medicine was linked to Giovanni Cosimo Bonomo's research on scabies in 1697. His belief in "disease-causing animalcules [being] … living enemies" was mocked as "little better than ancient superstitions about elf-shot, worms, and flying venom" (Melville 157). This understanding of living bacteria linked the supernatural, animals, and contagion in a manner paralleled by Dracula himself. The Count's connection to the past, along with his connection to older modes of disease theory such as animalculism is jutxatposed against the the more modern understanding of illness—miasma, contagionism, and anti-contagionism—demonstrated by his enemies. Only when the Crew of Light destroys this reverse colonization does the modern triumph and the Count's supernatural and infectious contagion is ended by "the Anglo-British colonizers overtaking the threat of reverse colonization … purging English territory and identity from vampiric infection" (Servitje 15). Foiled by modern science and colonization, Dracula's "not full man," "child-brain," "not of man stature" (Stoker

312) intelligence is thus capable of being colonized, but not of succeeding in reverse colonization, thereby serving to reinforce the presumed superiority of the English over the foreign other.

Embodying fears of the supernatural and contagion, Dracula is repeatedly linked to animals to reinforce his lack of humanity and otherness. Relegated to the realm of the supernatural, Dracula's connection to animals begins with Harker's arrival in Transylvania. Dracula's association with death begins when a dog howls somewhere in a farmhouse down the road—"a long, agonized wailing, as if from fear" (21). This episode indicates Dracula's connection to the dead as the "dog, according to Romanian folklore, was known for its power of giving warning of approaching death by unnatural howling" (Browning and Skal 21). The approaching death is not Harker's, but the potential for the death of the English way. The death of the English way is through the contamination of the English lineage as Dracula is, as Van Helsing calls him, "brute and more than brute" (222). The lack of humanity serves to highlight the differences between the "civilized" English and the "uncivilized" foreigners.

Representing a "living enemy," Dracula is capable of spreading contagion not only through blood, but through his association with animals, who are similarly inhuman and other. His ability to command "all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat—the moth, and the fox, and the wolf" (222), reinforces his contagion; that is, the rat was linked to the plague in 1894 (Getz 285), while the vampire bat was identified in 1832 by Charles Darwin, who in *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1839) describes it as a creature that is "often the cause of much trouble" yet "the whole circumstance has lately been doubted in England" (25). Dracula, similarly, is described by Van Helsing as something that was doubted: "For in this enlightened age, when men believe not even what they see, the doubting of wise men would be his greatest strength" (294). Dracula's strength lies in the doubt that he is able to spread this contagion, despite his close association with it, leading

to only a few men, as Van Helsing says, "willing to peril even our own souls for the safety of one we love—for the good of mankind" (294). The association with an owl further marks Dracula as a threat against mankind given the long-standing belief, still present in Victorian times, that owls are evil. As an element of contagion, represented by the rat, Dracula is a "sad omen" for the purity of England through the reverse colonization of contagion through the soil and direct interchange of blood through his parasitic vampirism, similar to the bat. Thriving in the filth of modernity and emblematizing "dirt and filth" (Servitje 137), rats reinforce the association not only with illness, but with the past. Modern progress is set against the threat of regression as "both rats and vampires are toothy throwbacks signifying the resurgence of the primitive: rats are associated with medieval plague, vampires with medieval feudalism" (Ellman 19). The Count's danger lies in his ability to conquer England, returning it to an uncivilized, pre-modern state.

Dracula's association with animals reinforces his lack of inhumanity and his danger through a deeper connection to death and direct action against England. The moth, similar to the owl, was understood as an omen of death. These associations reinforce both Dracula's danger and his connection with the foreign as he is described by Van Helsing as a man-eating tiger: "Your man eater, as they of India call the tiger who has once tasted the blood of the human, care no more for other prey, but prowl unceasing till he get him" (294). This simile shows how Van Helsing fears Dracula will never stop seeking his prey. This is further emphasized by Seward's description of Dracula in England: "There was something so panther-like in the movement—something so unhuman" about him, that the men are immediately frightened by his "lion-like disdain" (281). Directly establishing Dracula as "unhuman" he is marked as other—an inhuman and animal force that must be eliminated if it cannot be civilized and utilized for a purpose.

Dracula's inhumanity and otherness allow him to, as Van Helsing says, "flourish in the midst of diseases that kill off whole peoples" (294) and mark him as a harbinger of death and disease. During his approach to the castle, Jonathan sees a "a faint flickering blue flame" (22), that is later revealed to indicate the presence of treasure, immediately after the howling of the dogs. The blue flame reinforces the motif of death and miasma, given that "In medieval folklore, the blue flam (*ignis fatuus)* rises from the plague dead, but it acquires mystical properties in its association with St. George's Eve, the April 23 commemoration of the Christian knight and dragon slayer" (Browning and Skal 22). Given that the howling of dogs symbolize death, the presence of the flame suggests Jonathan is approaching the danger of the contagion. This belief is linked to the superstitious past, at odds with the later scientific focus of the Crew of Light, indicating the Count's connection with the medieval rather than the modern. The driver, presumably Dracula himself, stands between the flame and Harker, yet "he did not obstruct it, for I could see its ghostly flicker all the same" (22), suggesting that Dracula stands between the "savage" and the civilized at this moment. Harker cannot comprehend this phenomenon, and chooses instead to ignore it, admitting "This startled me, but as the effect was only momentary, I took it that my eyes deceived me straining through the darkness" (22).

When Dracula opens the door, Harker describes him as "a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and clad in black from head to foot, without a single speck of color about him anywhere" (24). According to Browning and Skal (22), Stoker based this depiction on actor Henry Irving's role as Hamlet, noting the importance of Hamlet's lines on the novel: "'Tis now the very witching time of night/When churchyards yawn and hell itself breaks out/Contagion to this world. Now I could drink hot blood'" (III.ii.359-61). The direct link to contagion reinforces Dracula's otherness, establishing him as immediately different from the English Harker. This

otherness is compounded with the emphasis of "Blood is life" (139) During his invasion, Dracula drinks English blood to assert dominance, mixing his blood with theirs, thus contaminating English bloodlines.

Stoker's repeated use of the understanding of "Blood is the life" highlights the fear of reverse colonization as well as parasitism. He repeatedly notes the superiority of his blood and lineage, explaining, "we of the Dracula blood were amongst their leaders, for our spirit would not brook that we were not free" (39). Revealing his "leadership," the Count foreshadows his desire to conquer England in a reverse colonization to allow them greater freedom, returning to his admission of always being a stranger in England, despite his ability to speak English so easily. His identity will always be linked to his heritage, revealing the Szekelys "can boast a record that mushroom growths like the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs can never reach" (39). The focus on a "mushroom growth" emphasizes the imagery of contagion spread through the soil. Mushrooms indicate organic material in soil, highlighting the transfer of organic matter between the dead in the soil and the creation of this infectious new life, carrying both scientific and supernatural connotations of the Devil, elves, and fairies (Kane 44). The imagery of a mushroom growth associates Dracula with not only the Devil, but also with contagion, given that the Victorian idea of fairies as "kidnappers and bringers of illness and death was clearly linked to the concept that they were, themselves, the dead" (Silver 171). In this way, the lineage of the Szekelys, and the "Dracula at their heart's blood, their brains, and their swords" (39), are capable of spreading their lineage through the soil, illness, and death in ways these "mushroom growth" kingdoms are incapable of doing. Stoker suggests the Englishness of spreading across the land, yet the "mushroom growth" kingdoms are unable to grow vertically, lacking a true heritage and past the Szekelys' record demonstrates. By spreading across the land, the Dracula lineage is capable of this

growth, thereby eliminating what he views as "lesser" nations; however, despite this ability for vertical growth stretching across bloodlines and soils, Dracula's pride is viewed by the English as a part of his inferiority—his inability to accept this threatens the established order. Due to Dracula's failure to recognize English superiority, he is viewed as possessing an animalistic "child-brain." For the Crew of Light, this poses a direct threat to England's social order.

The Count's association with illness and death links together with his status as a foreign national. That is, by establishing himself as the "heart's blood" of the nation, Dracula becomes symbolic of the entire nation entering England. He emphasizes the importance of his blood, telling Harker: "We Szekeleys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship" (37). This fight for "lordship" connects to the fear of reverse colonization in which the foreign identity holds power. The animalistic depiction—"as the lion fights"— highlights the violence and lack of true civilization in the eyes of the English. Dracula reveals that "we were a conquering race" (38), hinting at his plans for England, as "we throughout the Four Nations received the 'bloody sword,'" (38) which symbolizes "national emergency" (Browning and Skal 38). The emergency is the lack of freedom as he reveals, "our spirit would not brook that we were not free" (39). Yet instead of outright war, Dracula intends to subvert bloodlines because "Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonorable peace" (39). The phrase "dishonorable peace" alludes to the Crimean War of 1853-1856, in which the sentiment of "dishonorable peace" was expressed by Lord Crowley over the conclusion of the war (Conacher 44). During the Crimean War, the British aided the Ottoman Empire against Russia, and a majority of soldiers' deaths was caused by disease. There was, as Huang et al note, a "high death rate from disease at 212 per thousand—one third of which was due to cholera" (336). In this symbolic representation of cholera, Dracula is a foreign force enacting a reverse colonization not

through actions seen in "warlike days [that are] over" (39) but through disease transmitted by blood and soil to damage English bloodlines and health.

The soil of Transylvania has been fought over "for centuries by the Wallachian, the Saxon, and the Turk" (31), recalling the historical importance of how the movement of English soldiers across India spread disease. The link between conquest and disease is emphasized as Dracula continues: "why, there is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders" (31). Dracula notes the region can be considered a "treasure" unseen by "most men" despite it being "ground fought over" (31). The locations of the buried treasure are only visible on a night "when all evil spirits are supposed to have unchecked sway" (31). The "evil" is associated with the men who fought over it, with the invaders finding "but little, for whatever there was had been sheltered in friendly soil" (31) when he was triumphant. The imagery of the soil reinforces the disease in the soil given its "friendly" nature. The blood of invaders has "enriched" and changed the "friendly soil," as Dracula seeks to do in England. This change is further emphasized by the understanding of soil as the treasure of the land; that is, the invaders seek the "friendly" or fertile soil, without recognizing the value of the country itself. Dracula contemptuously notes men lack the ability to see the treasure—the value of the country beyond the soil—"Because *your* peasant is at heart a coward and a fool!" (31; emphasis added). The treasure—marked by the blue flame associated with plague death—is visible only on this evil night, and sought only by invaders, as the Count reveals, on "that night no man of this land will, if he can help it, stir without his doors" (31). The native inhabitants know better than to seek a false treasure in "friendly soil" that would spread plague, reflecting the belief that Indians lived with cholera for quite some time, but that it was English trade routes that spread it to the rest of the world.

Dracula's role in spreading contagion, coupled with his identity as a foreigner, echoes English understandings of cholera in India, where "evidently, people lived and died by different rules" (Hamlin 13). For Victorian physicians, "cholera was an Indian disease, but a European concept, a product (and vindication) of observation" (Hamlin 44). According to a nineteenth-century physician, John Macpherson, the answer for cholera for the natives was faith in a Hindu cholera deity rather than medical science (Hamlin 43). Emphasizing that no man would willingly seek treasure associated with plague death, Dracula suggests the natives know how to avoid the contagion in ways the invaders are unable to understand, echoing differences in understanding cholera between colonized and colonizer in India during this period. For Dracula's peasants, cholera has become a way of life; the treasure above the plague graves reveals itself as dangerous. In *A Treatise on the Epidemic Cholera, as it has Prevailed in India* (1832), the English surgeon Frederick Corbyn notes "Bodies of troops in motion have been attacked, have retained the disease, while it was unknown to the fixed inhabitants of the country through which they passed" (72). Dracula tells Jonathan that "even the peasant that you tell me of who marked the place of the flame would not know where to look in daylight even for his own work" (31), with Jonathan himself agreeing he could not find it, either. Framing his peasants as smart enough to avoid the contagion in the soil, Dracula suggests the superiority of the natives over the English, not only in the potential to avoid it, but in the ability to contaminate and infect the blood and soil in England without the English initially recognizing it.

The representations of the blue flame above the soil in combination with Dracula's repeated explanations of the superiority of his nation creates a direct threat to England and Englishness, an embodiment of national fears of contagion and infection. By revealing that the ground has been saturated in blood, Stoker returns to the imagery of contagion through mass cholera burials. This

suggests a fear that contagion could spread through the soil itself, namely through "invaders" whose blood could stay in the soil even after death, thus adulterating the country itself. As Dracula admits, "We Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may be amongst the common dead" (33), and he suggests that time will turn the English soil into more friendly conditions. He notes that the country "cannot be made habitable in a day; and after all, how few days make up a century" (33) to emphasize the slow reverse colonization he will enact while doubting men are unaware of his presence.

Blood and soil, as well as Dracula's inhumanity, are crucial for this slow colonization, as they are the modes of contagion. To travel, Dracula requires "earth boxes" (283), bringing the contagious, blood-soaked soil of his homeland to mix with the symbolically pure and "productive soils of Europe" (Prashad 11). Understanding this importance, the men pursuing Dracula realize, as Van Helsing says, they "must trace each of these boxes; and when we are ready, … we must, so to speak, sterilise the earth, so that no more he can sake safety in it" (226). The need to "sterilise the earth" highlights the danger of this contaminated soil entering into the soil of England, thus making it less pure.

By same manner in which the Count's contaminated soil seeks to ruin the purity of the English nation through an "undead" contagion, Dracula seeks to take English lives through a parasitic blood transfusion that changes pure English blood into mixed, impure blood in an act that kills the host. In introducing Dracula's identity, Stoker repeatedly highlights the connection with blood as a nationalistic identifier to contrast foreign blood with the "purity" of English blood. Mina embodies the proper English citizen: loyal to England, vehemently opposed to the foreign, and capable of continuing English lineage through "proper" reproduction. It is, as Van Helsing says, "for her sake" (344) the men must eradicate Dracula's contagion. Throughout the novel, the phrase

"blood is life" is repeated, with Renfield admitting his belief that "by consuming a multitude of live things, no matter how low in the scale of creation, one might indefinitely prolong life" (219). Dracula's life is prolonged in this way by taking English lives and national identity as he takes blood, relying, of course, upon the scriptural phrase, 'For the blood is the life'" (219). Dracula's contagion, then, lies in his ability to take life and replace it with an "un-dead" life.

The fear of mixing blood and bloodlines demonstrates Victorian "[a]nxieties about … changing geopolitical relations (vide reverse colonization, damaging imperial skirmishes in places like the Sudan, and renewed imperial self-doubt)" (Forman 929). When Lucy first becomes sick, Seward describes the effect of the illness in terms of contagion: "It is something like the way Dame Nature gathers round a foreign body an envelope of some insensitive tissue which can protect from evil that which it would otherwise harm by contact" (121). "Nature" here represents England protecting itself from foreign individuals—a sense that there would be harm from contact as the portrayal of "wild/ uncivilized land" that needs to be charted then overtaken. As Stephan Arata suggests, Dracula demonstrates the Victorian fear that "the 'civilized' world is on the verge of being colonized by 'primitive forces'" (623). Harker notes that Dracula lives in "the extreme east of the country… one of the wildest and least known parts of Europe" with "no maps" (12) available, directly at odds with the well-mapped, and thus civilized, England. The land, which Dracula envisions as a treasure, is described by Van Helsing as "very different from yours or mine" (310), and Harker describes their journey into Transylvania as a drive "into unknown places and unknown ways; into a whole world of dark and dreadful things" (326). These men cast a colonial gaze upon Transylvania, in response to the fear of reverse colonization by Dracula's entrance into England. Nature, embodied by the soil, is unable to protect itself from evil as Dracula's soil mixes with that of England's, thus spreading his contamination.

Dracula's ability as a foreign body to penetrate nature's defenses and infect Lucy serves to emphasize his danger as a contagious force. By transfusing foreign blood with the blood of Englishwomen, first Lucy and then Mina, Dracula seeks to subvert English bloodlines to colonize England in a parasitic manner threatening all class levels. Lucy is a young, engaged Englishwoman whose sleepwalking casts her in a negative light, marking her as less morally strong than Mina, and thus lacking the ability to protect herself from contact with Dracula. There is, as Forman says, a distinct connection between "the withdrawal of blood and the inauguration of social sickness" (929), as the death of the purity of an Englishwoman—the death of her ability to reproduce English lineage and bloodlines—can result in a less pure nature were it to continue on a larger scale. Lucy's death is described by Seward as being caused by "nervous prostration following on great loss or waste of blood" (182). Stoker's use of the word "waste" reinforces it is a waste for its Englishness as Lucy requires the blood of three Englishmen (and an American) in a transfusion that ultimately fails. Dracula's earlier mention to Jonathan of the "dishonorable peace" suggests his desire to return to the "glories of the great races" (39) by taking England for himself through a blood colonization.

Only after Lucy's English blood has been "wasted" and she has been laid to rest does her "un-dead" state begin, returning to direct imagery of cholera patients. Van Helsing says that "For it is not the least of its terrors that this evil thing is rooted deep in all good; in soil barren of holy memories it cannot rest" (226), and Seward asserts that they must "restore Lucy to us as a holy, and not unholy memory" (203). To do this, they use a wooden stake. For Stoker, however, it represents a method of sterilizing the earth, and thus preventing her from spreading contagion. Once staked, Seward records that "the body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a

crimson foam" (204). This description marks a shift from Lucy, to "The Thing" and "the body" (204), effectively stripping her of her humanity, while echoing descriptions of cholera patients. As Hamlin says, cholera "took hold, drawing out the body's heat, twisting muscles into spasms and cramps, producing insatiable thirst but taking away voice" (3). Lucy's death includes these harsh spasms, yet her killing prevents an insatiable thirst. As Van Helsing explains, those affected "cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims … for all that die from the preying of the Un-Dead become themselves Un-dead" (203) in an endless cycle, reflecting the Board of Health's fear that unsanitary burial practices would result in the disease spreading years after the victim's death.

Stoker's use of four disease etiologies to characterize the Count's vampirisim as metaphor for not only cholera, but a diseased, foreign enemy threatening the blood and soil of England serves to comment on the close association between literature and medicine during the Victorian Era. The blood and soil metaphor aims to unsettle the presumed safety and superiority of the English by suggesting reverse colonization is only possible through an incursion into the past *vis-à-vis* the superstitions, bodies, and infectious diseases of the colonized. The triumph of the English colonizers through science and medicine demonstrates the push towards modernity over the past, emphasizing that the only true threat to England is itself; its continued success lies in its ability to recognize and destroy threats to its individual and political bodies.

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