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ABSTRACT:-

The story of Count Dracula remains a fascination for every one irrespective of age and place. Ever since the publication of Dracula as a novel by Bram Stoker in 1897, it led to tremendous translations in to films, adaptation as children's comic, plays, short story and what not. It is true to say that a literary work of worth with stands the passage of time. Not only the novel of Bram Stoker but the story of the Count Dracula which is also regarded a legend has conquered the world of vampire stories; where Dracula is termed as the King of the vampire world. Though an associate of Satan, at times Dracula finds a place for a romantic hero too. Dracula has enjoyed enormous popularity since its publication and has spawned an extraordinary vampire subculture in the second half of the 20th century. More than 200 films have been made that feature Count Dracula. At the centre of this subculture is the legend of Transylvania, which has become almost synonymous with vampires. The present paper is an attempt to discuss how Dracula was represented in the novel and some film versions of the same. The films focused at are F.W.Murnu's Nosferatu, the Symphony of Horror (1922), Dracula (1931) and Bram Stoker's Dracula 1992) and Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992).



K.Rizwana Sultana

Assistant Professor of English ,
Farook College.

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**VLAD DRACULA, THE PRINCE OF TERROR –THE
UNDYING MONSTER, EVER RECALLED
SINCE 1897 AS AN IMMINENT PRESENCE OF
UNDYING FEAR IN FICTION AND FILM**

INTRODUCTION:

The birth of fear is unknown to man. Say it was born when man was expelled from paradise by God for his disobedience. Does this say you need to fear only when you do something wrong. Does it mean there is always something fearful in life on earth where nothing is perfect or perennial? On earth man has to dwell between binaries- good and bad, evil and virtue, life and death and the like. Humans expressed this horrible emotion of theirs in different forms across time and space. Literary and cinematic expressions deal with the idea of fear as there in dance, folklore, forms of worship, rituals and so on. Terror comes from the fear of the terrible.

Count Dracula, the Prince of Terror, a dreadful vampire, who lived for ages in legends and folktales was etched for the first time in a literary work, a novel titled *Dracula* by Bram Stoker in 1897. The Victorian readers enjoyed it as a good adventure story like many others, but it reached its iconic legendary status only in the 20th century when film versions began to appear. It is said that before writing *Dracula*, Stoker spent seven years researching European folklore and stories of vampires, being most influenced by Emily Gerard's 1885 essay "Transylvania Superstitions". However *Dracula* was not the first horror novel. Still the story of the Count has been variously portrayed in films since *F.W. Murnu's Nosferatu, the Symphony of Horror* to *Gary Shore's Dracula Untold* (2014). "Dracula has enjoyed enormous popularity since its publication and has spawned an extraordinary vampire subculture in the second half of the 20th century. More than 200 films have been made that feature Count Dracula. At the centre of this subculture is the legend of Transylvania, which has become almost synonymous with vampires." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dracula_in_popular_culture). It is interesting to investigate into the different versions of the story with respect to the socio-cultural and historical implications.

According to the folk tales and legends of Transylvania, Vlad Tepes III Dracula was born in 1431 in the Transylvanian fortress of Sighisoara, located in Romania. The Draculas lived in Transylvania, just southeast, in the Romanian independent province of Wallachia. There were constant power struggles between its stronger neighbors, Hungary and Turks. They were held captives by the Turks. Vlad II, Dracula's father with the group, known as the Order of the Dragon fought with the Ottoman Empire to regain their kingdom at Wallachia. The Order of the Dragon, the mythical dragon as their emblem, was created by the Emperor Sigismund to defend the Cross and to war against its enemies, especially the Turks. Later on diabolical associations were not far from the Order by the time when Vlad II regained Wallachia in 1443 at the mercy of the Turkish Sultan. But it was lost again. Meanwhile Vlad III (1431-1476) grew up as a strong and terrifying young man and gained back his kingdom of Wallachia. He was a sadist and horrible monarch for the poor peasants. His pastime was to impale people and watch them die. Punished people for theft, adultery etc by impalement. He invites people for a feast and impales them on the spot and hangs the dead bodies to be eaten by vultures. He was a terror for his people. Dracula wanted to eradicate Wallachia's old boyar class, who were responsible for the undermining and violent overthrowing of his predecessors. Dracula was even paranoid about any internal threats. Hence he replaced the nobles whom he impaled with men from the peasantry and middle class, who proved to be loyal only to him. Fear governs fear. In the words of John Fasulo,

Although history tells the tale of this diabolical Dracula, we are left with Stoker's prevailing fable of an undead garlic-fearing bat. The only element the two Draculas share in common is their obsession with blood; one loves the gory scene of impalement, while the other is infatuated with biting and sucking his victims' necks.

(The Real *Dracula*. <http://www.ithaca.edu/history/journal/papers/sp02dracula.html>. 7/6/14)

This is how *Dracula* is represented in history books. This might have inspired Bram Stoker to depict the story of the Prince of Terror, who was 'blood-thirsty' turned into living dead, a vampire. Stoker's *Dracula* keeps coffins filled with the damp earth of the burial ground to keep him and his women vampires away from sunlight in the Castle which is situated on the top of a steep hill. He invades England to subjugate peace of the place, attempts to make many living-dead, as with Lucy. He tracks Mina, Harker's wife and Lucy her friend. Lucy succumbs to the vampire and dies when Van Helsing and others broke her heart open. The heart of Lucy which was the abode of the evil spirit was taken and destroyed then only Lucy could have the eternal sleep of death. But Dracula towards the end was ridden back to Transylvania where he was killed by the joint venture of Van Helsing, Dr. Seward, Quincy, Harker and Mina. The book closes with a note about Mina's and Jonathan's married life and the birth of their son, whom they name after all four members of the party, but refer to only as Quincy in remembrance of their American friend. In another sense this reflects the fear of the Colonial powers, where the sun never sets, England, if the Empire fights back; invading their realm. The fear of sunlight of Dracula and his servants represents the fear of a bright tomorrow where they are feeble, pathetic and susceptible to destruction and being undone. Hence in the absence of sunlight Dracula tries to expand his kingdom by creating more and more Undead with the bite of his fangs, sucking out all blood of life and vitality. The post colonial reading here is that the colonial power sucks out the vitality of the colonial nations. Threaten them so that they remain their servants ever. As Ashis Nandy says in his mind "The Uncolonized Mind", the colonizer subjugates the mind of the colonized too apart from 'house' and 'land'. That's why the image of vampire Lucy's heart is taken out and destroyed by Van Helsing and his team in almost all versions of the story. However the ending of the novel suggests casting off the imperialist tendency one could live peacefully and happily; as after the destruction of Dracula and his mates Harker, Mina and others could live happily.

The Great War of 1914-18 left the people broken and horrified. The devastation that the War brought was profound in all aspects of life that mattered. The catastrophe was repeated in almost all over Europe and parts of the Middle East.

The American toll in the war, about 105,500 killed, was relatively light. Some twenty million people died in the Great War of 1914-18, and millions more were wounded and maimed physically and emotionally. Not surprisingly, the decade following the war was crucial to the development of the modern horror film. (Rick Worland 43)

Meanwhile in Germany the ground was set for artistic revolution with movements like Expressionism that adorned German theatre in 1910s, in films as well. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was the first film to achieve uniqueness with the design of sets, lighting, costume and performance based on the expressionist technique employed by avant-garde theatre.

Friedrich W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) is the first major vampire film, a visually remarkable rendering of the film. It was found to be an illicit adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with some changes in names of the characters: Count Dracula as Count Orlok, Jonathan Harker as Thomas Hutter and the like. Bram Stoker's widow, Florence, filed a suit for plagiarism and copyright infringement. Even though she won the case, the copies of the film survived. The politics of adaptation of *Nosferatu* is significant both with cinematic and thematic aspects. Unlike the studio bound productions of those days *Nosferatu* is shot on locations including a ruined castle that served as the Vampire's lair. The film was notable for visual effects; expressionist stylization through careful shot composition and lighting and not distorted sets as in contemporary films. The vaulted chamber sequence where Hutter discovers the Count Orlok as a Vampire lying in his coffin, wide eyes staring at him is an example. However Murnau creates an eerie atmosphere with the very appearance of the Vampire on the screen and continues up to the finish. The film serves as a critique of the war stricken world especially Europe where like Murnau, poets like T.S.Eliot also found decadence both in the exterior and interior world of man. Vampire Orlok symbolizes the hatred stricken human hearts that impales and annihilates humanity. Rejection of faith in tradition and religion blindfolds human mind towards truth. Knock, an agent himself of Orlok, commissions Thomas Hutter to go to Transylvania on real estate assignment at the castle. On his way to the Count's castle the villagers warn him of the danger but he proceeds. And he gets entrapped inside the castle. In though the viewers are introduced to the vampire very late the horror of its coming is felt in the beginning itself.

The story begins with Thomas Hutter who lives in the fictitious German city of Wisborg. His employer, Knock, sends Hutter to Transylvania to visit a new client named Count Orlok. Hutter goes to Transylvania entrusting his loving wife Ellen to his good friend Harding and Harding's sister Annie. On the way he stops at an inn for dinner Carpathian Mountains. The villagers were frightened by the mere mention of Orlok's name and discourage him from going to the castle at night, warning of a werewolf. The next morning, Hutter takes a coach to reach the castle. In the mid-way coachmen refuse to take him any further than the bridge as nightfall is approaching. A black-swathed coach appears after Hutter crosses the bridge and the coachman gestures for him to aboard. Hutter is welcomed at a castle by Count Orlok. At dinner Hutter accidentally cuts his thumb, Orlok tries to suck the blood out, but his repulsed guest pulls his hand away.

Hutter wakes up to a deserted castle the morning after and notices two holes on his neck, which he attributes to mosquitoes or spiders. That night, Orlok signs the documents to purchase the house opposite to Hutter's own home. Hutter writes a letter to his wife and gets a coachman to send it. Reading a book about vampires that he took from the local inn, Hutter starts to suspect that Orlok is *Nosferatu*, the "Un Dead." Meanwhile Orlok sails towards Wisbog with his coffin with rats in the rotten earth, in a coffin he himself rests. All on the ship die by the time it reaches Winsborg. Orlok leaves unobserved, carrying one of his coffins, to the house he purchased. The arrival of Orlok plague spreads. People die enormously. While Hutter was away to fetch Professor Bulwer Orlok arrives. Ellen makes engrossed in drinking her blood so that he forgets about sun rise. When a rooster crows, Orlok vanishes in a puff of smoke as he tries to flee. Ellen dies, sacrificed her life for humanity. The last scene shows Count Orlok's ruined castle in the Carpathian Mountains, symbolizing the end of Count Orlok's reign of terror.

Max Schreck as Vampire became the film's most enduring image. Rick Worland says, Unlike the familiar impression of *Dracula* as a suave, tuxedoed gentleman, Orlok's gaunt frame and beady eyes accentuate an almost alien visage with pointed ears, bald head, sharp nose, and chin, and two little fangs set close together. Elongated claw like fingers complete the effect of the vampire as an expressionist rat man. Hordes of rats emerging from the docked ship to spread pestilence and death through the town as the monster takes up residence extend the motif. (48-49)

A woman's reading of the film compels one to say that a death tale that has been launched by men has to end by a woman for life to go on and not death. In this context one is reminded of Aristophanes' *Lysestra* where Lysestra mobilizes woman of her state to strike against men who are fighting in the war forfeiting their pride, only to stop war and death. The female is posited as life giver. The ghost seems to be an inspiration of the biblical Satan who appears first as a snake and the Vampire here is having a snake's tongue instead of the large pointed fangs as in other vampires. However *Nosferatu* as a well-made German Expressionist film has magnetized innumerable screen versions.

Dracula (1931) is a classical Hollywood vampire-horror film directed by Tod Browning and Bela

Lugosi starring as Dracula. The film is based on the 1924 stage play *Dracula* by Hamilton Deane and John L. Balderston, which in turn is based on the novel *Dracula* by Bram Stoker. Even though there were slight changes with the novel, it appears on the screen as a typical Hollywood movie of the classical times. Here the story begins with Renfield, a solicitor, Jonathan Harker's employer who goes to the castle of Dracula and becomes his slave. Dracula's intention was to lease Carfax Abbey in London. He comes to London meets Harker and his wife Mina and Seward and his daughter Lucy and her fiancé. He kills Lucy and she becomes a vampire sucking out the blood of small children at night. Later on Van Helsing realizes that Dracula is a Vampire. Dracula enters Mina's bedroom and drinks her blood by which she yields to his lures. However towards the close Dracula was impaled and killed by Van Helsing and others. Mina turns to normal and so it is a happy ended movie. Tod Browning's film as a typical characteristic element of Hollywood films features less number of deaths from the targeted and the annihilation of the enemy. The film's histrionic dramatics from the stage play are also reflected in its special effects, which are limited to fog, lighting, and large flexible bats. The vampire's transition from bat to person is always done off-camera. The film also employs unmitigated periods of silence and character close-ups for dramatic effect. There are several intertitles and a close up of a newspaper article to press on the story.

The economic crisis of Europe after the war was well represented by horror films in the Hollywood as well. "To interpret the predatory monsters of Hollywood's horror boom as metaphors for the Depression is tempting, though similarly indirect. Still, the fundamental aim of the genre in whatever medium is to invoke fear, an emotion that was socially widespread at the time horror became popular in America." (Rick Worland 56). In this context one is reminded of Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech in 1933, where he says, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself-nameless, unreasoning, unjustified, terror." (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5057/>)

Francis Ford Coppola reels the Bram Stoker's novel as *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) with typical Hollywood traits and excellence of filming and winning three Academy Awards; Best Costume Design, Best Sound Editing and Best Makeup and was nominated for Best Art Direction/Set Decoration. It also won four Saturn Awards, with Best Director and Best Actor for Coppola and Gary Oldman, respectively.

The story begins in Transylvania shortly after Constantinople's fall to the Turks in 1462. Dracula, the bravest knight in all Transylvania, goes mad with grief when his young wife, Elisabeta, tricked into suicide by the fiendish Turks, is denied a Christian burial. The young count renounces God and stabs the sacred cross, which begins to bleed. Dracula's vampirism results from this outrage and pledges to take revenge against God, remains Undead for centuries as did Satan, Lucifer with God to mislead man from the path of God, after being expelled from Paradise. The setting in the story is that of 19th century England. Dracula lives in his castle in Transylvania. Jonathan Harker a young English solicitor comes to Transylvania to help the old count in his plans to move to London. The Count says he is tired of living in this old castle and so wants to go to England to find a new life. Eventually, he finds a photograph of Mina, Harker's fiancée, whom finds as the reincarnation of his lost wife, Elisabeta. The eerie atmosphere and horrible experience at night in the castle leaves Harker thunder struck and later sick with fear. In the morning he finds Dracula lying in his coffin. Somehow manages to escape and reach England to his fiancée and friends.

The film has got a subplot as well. As the film is subtitled "Love never dies" tells the story of romance of the Vampire. He takes revenge over his wife death by impaling Lucy and other women and taking them to the world of undead. At the same time goes in search of Mina, the embodiment of his love, to unite in love. The Mental asylum represents rationality where Doctor Seward conducts research to find cure for abnormal minds. He records the speech and developments of Mr. Renfield. Mr. Renfield is the solicitor who goes out to Transylvania, to Dracula's Castle before Jonathan and returns quite out of his mind with an insatiable appetite for insects. This episode represents the slow and steady growth of science in the Victorian era. A similar aspect could be seen in the story of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by R.L. Stevenson and later on filmed by many. In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a young doctor works hard to find cure madness. In both films the attempts go vain, ineffective as in the case of Renfield and worse in the case of Dr. Jekyll's metamorphosis as Mr. Hyde turns out destructive. The Victorian dichotomy between science and religion is well represented in Dracula when the brilliant Prof. Abraham Van Helsing enters as a physician and ghost rider. Ultimately, towards the end of the film it is love that conquers a devil is transformed or rather resurrected from his undead life to eternity and world of God. Here one is reminded of Chaucer's Nun's badge which says "Amor Vincent Omnia" (Love Conquers All). Dracula unites with Mina and redeems himself of Vampirism. The closing sequel, the most beautiful scene of the film; affirms that cure to all abnormality or sickness in Man is love which in turn is divine.

There are innumerable versions of the story of Dracula, from the novel to the present Dracula Untold, including the Hammer Dracula movies. Hence it is a difficult task to bring in a discussion on the entire version at a time. It is worth mentioning how the Marxist viewed the Dracula story.

The Marxist interpretation of the imminent presence of the Dracula as capitalism recalls ever the predicament of man as a slave to exploitation in a society ridden with exploitative human relationship. Marx and Engels's Communist Manifesto(1848) famously opens with the image, 'A spectre is haunting Europe....', while Das Kapital is suffused with vampire-like, live only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more it sucks'; 'the prolongation of the working day...only slightly quenches the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour'. (Quoted in Darryl Jones 71-72)

The Marxist reading of the character Dracula in the Modern world is capitalism, in the 15th century Dracula was a cruel count that used to impale his people, whom he suspected or rather feared, to death. During colonial period until mid twentieth century Dracula represented the colonial power that subjugated its so called colony by all means. The latter half of twentieth century that has foreseen numerous wars by the imperialist, fascist powers of the world calls our attention to see Dracula a fascist imperialist who destroys whatever he finds as a threat to his wishes. In an age where the multinational companies make profit at the cost of humanity and human values and so called 'big powers' hunting upon humans and nations to wipe them off from the face of the world creating false news, allegations, denying life in the land where one is born and brought up and all kinds of violence against Peace and Amity, Draculas keep incarnating again and again.

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