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V Pozadí Drákuly: Co Inspirovalo Brama Stokera k Vytvoření Jeho Díla

Bakalářská práce

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## **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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vlastnoruční podpis

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## Introduction

Vampires represent an interesting and tempting topic that has been present in human religion, literature and imagination since the fascination with blood and its connection to life sprung in human minds. Dracula, who is probably the best known vampire in literature, has survived more than a century of existence. He hardly shares a fate of forgotten characters of novels, which are lost in time, no longer remembered, nor read. His popularity gradually grew into the present state, when the Count is an icon. Due to various commercial variations his original form is often forgotten or twisted. In the novel it is impossible to find a single reference about an opera cloak or a carefully trimmed hair-style. Original Dracula also cannot hope for a status of a sex symbol. In the original novel he lacks the dark, yet attractive aura Christopher Lee, Gary Oldman or Bela Lugosi gave him in the later film versions. Instead, in the novel he is described as a “dead man alive”<sup>1</sup> as Stoker wrote down when making notes for his new novel. This thesis focuses on the novel which Bram Stoker had written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it’s also analyzes the most eminent influences and inspiration that caused the creation of *Dracula* (1897) in its authentic form.

The first chapter focuses on the non-fiction which Stoker studied in order to shape his vampire according to the real folk-tales and superstitions. This is describing a various vampire-like creatures, which he later used when he was forming his most known character. In this chapter are also described Stoker's descriptions of Dracula's homeland, Transylvania, and other customs which are not related to the supernatural but are also a result of research that is discussed in this chapter as well.

The beginning of the second chapter follows with Stoker's youth, when he had evolved an interest in the Gothic, thanks to his family and his Irish origin. However, the major part of this chapter targets Stoker's life as an acting and business manager in the Lyceum Theater, and it also describes his close relationship with an actor and owner of the theater, Henry Irving.

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<sup>1</sup> Bram Stoker, Robert Bisang, and Elizabeth Miller. *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula* (Facsim. ed. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Pub., 2008), 319.

Other significant, yet not so immense influences and people Stoker met are summarized in the final, third chapter of this thesis. Oscar Wild together with his family and a famous American poet, Walt Whitman, are objects of a more detailed observation. The final paragraphs of this thesis deal with persons and incidents that might contribute, in some extent, to a few events or facts presented in the novel.

# 1. Dracula and Older Views on Vampires

## 1.1 Ancient Fears Incarnated

Death remains to be a mystery since the origin of the human existence. Even nowadays, when science explaining many former mysteries, people are afraid, and at the same time fascinated, by the end of the life as they know it. What happens after the body ceases to function, troubles the minds of many people. From these fears and anxieties various superstitions and beliefs arose including many vampire like creatures present in almost every culture. Stoker included in his research notes a list of books dealing with vampires, werewolves and the supernatural beings, but it is not known, how many of them he actually read<sup>2</sup>. Supposedly, he read at least some of them, which for Dracula was a mix of those vampires from folktales and the literary vampires like Carmilla or Varney, (which) will be described later in this chapter.

In the novel, when Dracula's identity is fully revealed Stoker through Dr. van Helsing provided the reader with a complete list of Dracula's abilities and weaknesses.

For the supernatural powers, Dracula cannot die when supplied with blood, he is more sneaky than a mortal man, and brutality is in his nature. Dracula is a powerful necromancer, he can command animals such as wolves, bats and other minor creatures, he can also change his form and transform himself into an animal or change his size. With some limitations he is able to appear and disappear. He can also direct the elements around him causing a change of weather<sup>3</sup>. Dracula is even able to transform himself into a dust and travel in this form<sup>4</sup>.

Traditionally, vampires and werewolves were interconnected. Dead werewolf became a vampire, or in some regions these two words meant the same creature. A werewolf can be also an offspring of a witch and a vampire but on the other hand,

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<sup>2</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 173.

<sup>3</sup> Bram Stoker and Maurice Hindle. *Dracula* (Rev. ed. London: Penguin Books, 2003), 252.

<sup>4</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 255.

there are also stories about werewolves and vampires fighting against each other<sup>5</sup>. Apart from changing into an animal there are also beliefs that a vampire can embrace a form of a small flame, or light<sup>6</sup>.

On the other hand, one of Dracula's biggest weaknesses is his sensitivity to sacred objects, garlic, silver, or a branch of wild rose. All of these information, which Stoker also put down into his notes he knew from Emily Gerard's article *Transylvanian Superstitions* (1885). Gerard here describes traditions, customs and beliefs in ghosts, vampires and other evil creatures in the Eastern Europe and also how to get rid of them<sup>7</sup>.

In Stoker's notes, there is also a list of possible ways of how to kill a vampire. Essential is destruction of the heart which can either be extracted and burned to ashes, that should be then put on the grave, or a stake should be driven through it. The head of a vampire should be cut of and a mouth filled with garlic<sup>8</sup>. Apparently, if he is shot in his coffin with a sacred bullet, he will be destroyed too<sup>9</sup>.

A vampire in Stoker's novel is powerful during night but he grows weak in the day and all of his abilities are strictly limited. If he is away from his home, all transformations are possible only at noon, sunset or sunrise and he needs to rest in the soil brought (or taken) from his home. He cannot enter places on his own, he must be first invited and then he can come and leave as he wishes<sup>10</sup>. Also a running water is a big limitation to Dracula too. He can cross it, but only during high or low tide<sup>11</sup>.

The most significant difference between a literary vampire, like Dracula and a common vampire of folk beliefs is in the importance of blood consumption in their existence. As was revealed in the book, for Dracula, blood was absolutely vital.

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<sup>5</sup> Tommaso Braccini, *Před Draculou: Archeologie Upíra*. (Vyd. 1. ed. Praha: Argo, 2014) ,86.

<sup>6</sup> Braccini, *Archeologie*, 90.

<sup>7</sup> Jim Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula?: Bram Stoker's Trail of Blood* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 107.

<sup>8</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 125.

<sup>9</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 256.

<sup>10</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 255.

<sup>11</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 256.

The vampire live on, and cannot die by mere passing of the time; he can flourish when that he can fatten on the blood of the living. Even more, we have seen amongst us that he can even grow younger; that his vital faculties grow strenuous, and seem as though they refresh themselves when his special pabulum is plenty. But he cannot flourish without this diet; he eat not as others.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, most of the non-literary sources do not mention sucking of blood as a vital part of the diet of a vampires. Many cases report bread, fruit or even wine<sup>13</sup>.

Unlike the literary vampires who are by sucking blood of their victims devour their energy and also by killing them, the former vampires are able to cause harm by words, infectious breath or by suffocating their victims<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2 From Dragon to Vampire

The most basic characteristic of a vampire being is an undead corpse coming back from a grave that pests the surroundings, made Stoker search for an adequate name that would fit his evil count. It would not be sufficient to create his vampire from a common human being, as in Stoker's time an aristocratic antagonist was often used in literature<sup>15</sup>. Stoker also needed a name, that would be connected with his chosen environment for the story and that would impress the readers. He started his notes with no set names for the characters and for Dracula he used a neutral name Count<sup>16</sup> later he chose a name Count Wampyr<sup>17</sup>. Stoker had finally found the name Dracula in 1890. By the look of the particular note where he uses it for the first time, Stoker was amazed by this name. Dracula is written all over the page around other notes and Count Dracula, as the final form of the name, is

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<sup>12</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 254-255.

<sup>13</sup> Braccini, *Archeologie*, 124.

<sup>14</sup> Braccini, *Archeologie*, 125.

<sup>15</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 285.

<sup>16</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 33.

also underlined<sup>18</sup>.

Stoker found the mention about Dracula in *An Account of the Pricipalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (1820) by William Wilkinson<sup>19</sup> in Whitby. Spending a vacation with his family there, he spent most of the time exploring the town and the haunting Gothic landscapes, which also inspired Lewis Carrol or Charles Dickens.<sup>20</sup> This experience provided Stoker with a new rich source of inspiration. Stoker covered whole pages of his notes with inscriptions from the tombstones, which had later appeared in the novel and he also created a short personal dictionary of Yorkshire dialect<sup>21</sup>.

Stoker found the mention about Vlad Tepes and his father called Dracul, in *An Account of the Pricipalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* from which Dracula was derived. Traditionally, with the suffixation of the father and son relationship was expressed in Wallachian<sup>22</sup>. Stoker seems to be ignorant about this and after the discovery of his notes it became clear that Stoker knew very little about the real Dracula. He relied only on the name and little knowledge about the two voivodes, Vlads, who also Wilkinson did not know much about and not all his data were correct<sup>23</sup>. Even the castle Dracula comes purely from Stoker's imagination, there is no mention about Vlad occupying a castle in the Borgo pass<sup>24</sup>, and instead he lived in a castle at Poenari<sup>25</sup>.

It is questionable what would happen with the character of Dracula, if Stoker did a proper research about Vlad the Impaler. In the novel, Stoker never mentions Vlad's cruelty and passion for torture, instead he claims Dracula to be a brave man during his life. One of the few changes that seems to happen after the final setting on the name for a vampire count is the change of the main locations in Stoker's novel, when he deleted the former Styria<sup>26</sup> and replaced it with

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<sup>18</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 26.

<sup>19</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 285.

<sup>20</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 72.

<sup>21</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 143-149.

<sup>22</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 113.

<sup>23</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 112.

<sup>24</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 37.

<sup>25</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 115.

<sup>26</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 15.

Germany and later on with Transylvania.

There is no other mention about Dracula in his noted, except from the information that Dracula means Devil, which Stoker copied from Emily Gerard's article *Transylvanian Superstitions* which was mentioned already earlier on. Again, this is a misunderstanding. According to the historical records, the first Vlad, Dracul, was given an Order of the Dragon, one of the many chivalric orders of that time, for his resistance against Turks<sup>27</sup>. The name Dracula, which can be translated as Dragon, was also added to Vlad's name and his son's, when succeeding his father inherited the title as the Son of a Dragon<sup>28</sup>.

### 1.3 Relatives in Literature

Although *Dracula* is nowadays one of the most known vampire novels, there are at least three other works which Stoker might have been influenced by. *The Vampyre* (1819) by John Polidori is one of the first significant Gothic vampire stories<sup>29</sup> written in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original idea belongs to George Gordon Byron, who came up with the idea for a short story during the famous ghost story night, when he, Polidori, Mary Shelley and others invented plots for horror short stories. He abandoned this idea but Polidori took it and based his *The Vampyre* on it. Plot is based on the ability of a vampire to corrupt and seduce people around him causing their destruction<sup>30</sup>.

Lord Ruthven, the vampire antagonist, resembles Dracula in his ability to charm and hypnotize people. Although Dracula resembles a monster even with his appearance, while Polidori made Ruthven a capable seducer, that uses his charm for causing evil. The novel was first published under the Byron's name what caused a success of the novel<sup>31</sup>. Interesting thing that appears in *The Vampyre*, is

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<sup>27</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 113.

<sup>28</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 113.

<sup>29</sup> Gordon J. Melton, *The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead* (Third Edition ed. Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2011), 542.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 596.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 542.

the ability of a vampire to regenerate wounds under the moon light<sup>32</sup>. Dracula needed the soil from his home to rest and gain his powers back.

Another important novel, that introduces a memorable vampire is *Varney the Vampire Or the Feast of Blood* (1847) written by James Malcolm Rymer. This more than 800 pages novel first started as a series in a magazine and later on was published as a book. This novel was often judged as a chaotic and not well written, but it serves as transition between *The Vampyre* and future vampire novels<sup>33</sup>. The novel, for the first time, features a vampire which is aware of his evil deeds and feels sorry for them but he cannot help his nature. In fact, Varney's vampirism is a curse for the deeds done in the past when he was a human<sup>34</sup>. The ability to regenerate under the moonlight again was possibly borrowed by Rymer from Polidori.

A novel published twenty years before Stoker started his notes, *Carmilla* (1872), is one of the most valued Gothic horror stories written by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. Even though Polidori was the first author to introduce a vampire character in his story<sup>35</sup>, Le Fanu's novella set a standard for Gothic vampire stories in the time when it was published<sup>36</sup>.

*Carmilla*, a female vampire, is presented in a form of a seductive young lady from the Karstein family. She can change into a cat or a phantom and grows weak and apathetic during the day, although she can resist the daylight. She even consumes human food, as she is seen by Laura, her victim, to take cups of chocolate<sup>37</sup>. The relationship of this vampire to her victims strongly resembles fascination or a twisted kind of love. When she feels a strong attraction to her victims, she chooses young girls and she drains their blood during the night. Her victims are usually her relatives<sup>38</sup>. The symptoms that Laura shows after her visits are very similar to the Lucy's symptoms in *Dracula*. They are also sharing strange

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<sup>32</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 597.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 780.

<sup>34</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 781.

<sup>35</sup> Jack Lynch, *Critical Insights: Dracula* (Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 30.

<sup>37</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 104.

<sup>38</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 104.

dreams and hallucinations so it is possible that Stoker took his inspiration also from here. Even though the symptoms of anemia can hardly be copied, they are the same in all the cases, Lucy and Laura are both the young innocent victims. It is also possible that both of them suffer a sexual abuse from the vampires<sup>39</sup>.

Carmilla is even more bound to her home than Dracula is, for she can rest only in her grave. She is also limited when she is changing her identity, she can only create names from her original name, Mircalla. In the novel, she is known to use names like Carmilla or Mirallarca<sup>40</sup>.

It is apparent that Stoker read this novel, for early in his notes he chose Styria, the country in which it takes place<sup>41</sup>, also for his *Dracula*. Later he crossed it out and chose Germany instead, although the final location is Transylvania. The influence of *Carmilla* is even more visible in his short story, *Dracula's Guest*, where there is a female vampire countess resembling Carmilla or her mother.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 105.

<sup>40</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 105.

<sup>41</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 103.

<sup>42</sup> Gordon, *Encyclopedia*, 105.

## 2. Influence of the Theater

### 2.1 Early Fascination

Theater had been an important part of Bram Stoker's life from his early age to his end. His parents, although being a part of the lower middle class<sup>43</sup> did their best to encourage their children in a good manners, hard work and a suitable career to live a proper life with a sufficient income to support their own families<sup>44</sup>. To earn enough to avoid poverty was not a matter of course in those times in Ireland where cholera epidemic and famine in 1845 threatened the Irish<sup>45</sup>.

Stoker's interest in theater was raised by his father, Abraham, who spent hours discussing plays and actors' performances with his son<sup>46</sup>. For Bram, these discussions were a great relief as his physical condition was poor in his early childhood. Being too weak to walk he was not able to enjoy typical child games and he was forced to spend considerable amount of time in bed, where his parents entertained him with conversations and stories. His mother, Charlotte, knew a lot of Irish folk myths and legends rich with Gothic atmosphere and his father informed him about the plays and news in the theatrical world<sup>47</sup>. The dark Gothic theme in the folk tales enhanced Bram's fantasy and it is probable that they contributed to his depictions enriched with horror. Moreover, his mother was a direct witness of the horrible cholera epidemic in Ireland and she shared this experience of seeing innumerable amount of people dying, with her son. When was Lisa Hopkins inspecting Stoker's work, she detected the motif of death and the border between life and its end in many Stoker's works, as well as the ceremony of a burial. These are most significant in *Dracula* and *The Jewel of the Seven Stars*, where a vampire count is dependent on his coffin and soil from his home, and an ancient queen Tera is mummified in order to preserve her life.

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<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Miller and Dacre Stoker, *The lost journal of Bram Stoker: The Dublin years* (London: Robson Press 2012), 260.

<sup>44</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 263.

<sup>45</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 211.

<sup>47</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 24.

Interesting thing is, that Abraham Stoker Senior valued the performances on stage and the plays but he did not considered actors to be a proper company for his son and he never even thought about theater as a possible carrier for Bram. Later, he even warned Bram against a close friendship with the actress, Genevieve Ward and giving up his job for writing plays, when he left school so he took a job at Dublin Castle<sup>48</sup>.

While disabled in childhood, when entering the Trinity College, Bram Stoker excelled in all his classes, and surprisingly, he successively participated in many sport disciplines<sup>49</sup>. His physical condition has improved rapidly but his fascination with theater did not vanish, instead, he participated in two plays by Richard B. Sheridan, *The Rivals* (1775) and *The School for Scandals* (1777). Thanks to his mentor, Edward Dowden, Stoker have opportunity to study Shakespeare<sup>50</sup>. Shakespearean plays inspired many authors and many details in *Dracula* suggest, that Bram Stoker was one of them. His early devoted reading of Shakespeare awoke even more interest in theater and lead to Stoker's future life as an acting and business manager for Henry Irving in the Lyceum Theater. Moreover, Irving excelled in the roles of Hamlet or Macbeth provided him with even more inspiration for Stoker as will be described later on in this chapter.

Although the published *Dracula* does not resemble aa a theater play, Stoker's notes uncover an early play-like division of the story into four acts<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, this divided it into parts, Transylvania to London, Tragedy, Discovery and Punishment, all further arranged into seven chapters, which were found among his notes and particularly this part of his plans was scribbled on a paper with a Lyceum sign<sup>52</sup>. After the publishing of the novel, *Dracula* was performed on a stage of the Lyceum theatre, but this was only a single event. This provided Stoker with the rights for *Dracula*, in that time this process had to involve a public performance, although these performances were usually not appealing to the

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<sup>48</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 236-237.

<sup>49</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 122.

<sup>50</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 212.

<sup>51</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 277.

<sup>52</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 29-31.

audience, they were only made for one purpose, securing the rights<sup>53</sup>.

## 2.2 Theater Backstage and Henry Irving

Even if the plot of the story is interesting for a reader, the novel cannot be successful if it is poorly written and the reader loses its interest. Despite the fact, that *Dracula* was judged critically for its “implausibility’s, coincidences, and overwrought characters”<sup>54</sup> when it was published, the book is still very well-known and popular. The reason for this might be the interesting diary style that is more attractive to the reader than common narration and so it is more pleasing to follow. Diary entries provide a fluent yet clear cut passing of the story, which sustains the attention of a reader.

Stoker worked many years as an acting and business manager in the Lyceum Theater and participated in production of the plays. Henry Irving, the owner and the most important person in the theater was famous for his perfectionism, even despotism, when it came to arranging the plays. He worked hard on every single detail and demanded the same effort from others, which won him a nickname “The Governor”<sup>55</sup>.

Stoker's devotion to Irving sometimes resembled almost a master-servant relationship<sup>56</sup> and he endured Irving's eccentric behavior without complains. However, this does not mean that Stoker was not able to judge Irving's performance soberly. He was a fan of Irving a long time before they actually met. His reviews which he wrote for free, only because of his passion for theater for the *Dublin Evening Mail* he did not only praise Irving, Stoker criticized him for weak physique or inability to produce semitones<sup>57</sup>.

Being a part of composing scenes and refining the acting gave Stoker a valuable experience in constructing a fluent and compelling form of the book. The dark haunting atmosphere of Transylvania and an unknown thread that slowly

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<sup>53</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 119.

<sup>54</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 6

<sup>56</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 216.

evolves into a mortal danger. An innocent girl turned into a seductive blood-lusting demon still wearing the white dress of its former pureness, or the freaking insane asylum are but few examples why *Dracula* is read even nowadays. The diary entries and letters provide a striking sensation and the reader gets an impression of being closer to the characters. Notes that Stoker was taking when planning *Dracula* contain this idea of a mess of diaries, personal correspondences and newspaper excerpts from the beginning, Stoker never planned to write his novel in any other way<sup>58</sup>.

Few years before Stoker started to plan *Dracula* he kept a diary and was often taking random notes about things which interested him and he obviously passed this feature down to his characters<sup>59</sup>. When reading *Dracula*, the story evokes a feeling that the diaries are real thanks to the little details which Stoker put in. As for example the recipes of dishes or the real tombstones inscriptions.

It seems, that the most influential plays for Stoker were *Hamlet* (1603) and *Macbeth* (1611), both belonging to Irving's favorite roles. Dackre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller described the influences after revisiting Bram Stoker's journal. They conclude that in the first few chapters, Jonathan Harker can be identified with Hamlet as he realizes he is a prisoner in the castle and he questions his own sanity. All the important conversations with the Count together with the dramatic encounter with the vampire brides take part at night, in this case Harker even quotes Shakespeare using his line "My tablets! Quick, my tablets! 'tis meet that I put it down"<sup>60</sup> in his diary. Like Hamlet, who did not suspect his uncle Claudius of any disguise or evil intentions, Jonathan trusts *Dracula* at the beginning but he grows very suspicious and he uncovers vampire's horrible plan.

*Macbeth* is an evil character, one of Shakespeare's most known creations and Irving enjoyed this complicated role with all the gestures and grand theatrical moves that Miller and Stoker link to *Dracula*. He appears little in the book, yet he often outstands in the scenes and outshines other characters.

Apart from *Macbeth*, another famous evil role that Stoker had an

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<sup>58</sup> See Stoker, Bisang and Miller, op. cit., 275.

<sup>59</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 55.

<sup>60</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 43

opportunity to study, was Mephistopheles that Irving performed many times with success. Many scholar, including Elizabeth Miller, Jack Lynch and Jim Steinmeyer agreed on Mephistopheles as an immense manifestation of evil that Stoker used when creating Dracula.

It was not an uncommon thing to quote Shakespeare in Stoker's time. In the Victorian society, Shakespeare was often referred to when the speaker wanted to express a serious statement as Shakespeare was taken as a cultural authority<sup>61</sup>.

The plays were quoted even in common discussions and the theaters performing the plays went even further by making Shakespeare “better” by changing or rewriting his plays. Henry Irving was one of the actors that personalized his roles and added lines to the plays<sup>62</sup>.

Many authors referred to Shakespeare in their works so Stoker's use of these quotes is nothing unusual but the important fact is that Stoker chose the plays that were, as earlier mentioned, favorites of Henry Irving<sup>63</sup>. This gave Dracula even deeper and more complex nature, because Stoker was not limited with written lines of the plays but instead he could observe the characters in flesh. Dracula, being a mix of elaborated play characters and a great actor with a difficult nature himself is a perfect Gothic villain.

The influence that Henry Irving had over Stoker and the close relationship they had Bram confirmed by writing a biography of Irving's life, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (1906). Publishing a biography is not possible without being close to the person.

Stoker admired Irving from the first time he had seen him performing. It took nine years from that time until he and Irving actually met<sup>64</sup> and their lifelong friendship started. Earlier in the same year Stoker lost his father and it is possible that his bond to Irving became so tight because he needed to fill in the loss and he felt connected with such a strong figure which Irving was<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> Lisa Hopkins, *Bram Stoker: A Literary Life* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 61.

<sup>62</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 54.

<sup>63</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 56.

<sup>64</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 47.

<sup>65</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 47.

Also, it was after his father's death when Stoker stopped using his full first name Abraham and he changed it for Bram, like he was trying to change something in his life and get rid of a boring position of a clerk by accepting Irving's offer to work for him in the theater<sup>66</sup>. However, as its stated above, the relationship of Stoker and Irving was sometimes turbulent. Irving possessed a typical eccentric behavior of an artists and domineering nature, yet the theater stuff still respected and adored him<sup>67</sup>. He owned and ruled the theater from the stage and Stoker, as a business manager, governed the administrative.

Dracula is a unique character. Despite the fact that he does not appear frequently in the story, every time he does, he brings his own atmosphere with him. Dracula, as the only one character in the novel, speaks almost like he was reciting a poem<sup>68</sup> which highlights him in those scenes. This is a feature that Stoker came up with clearly either thanks to the theater or there might be also a connection with Walt Whitman that will be discussed later. Shakespearean and also other plays were written this way. Stoker knew well what influence it has on the audience, the colloquial speech does not create the desired dramatic effect.

With this manner of speech Dracula is at the beginning presented like an educated honorable foreign nobleman with good manners and a respectable family history. Jonathan Harker is amazed by Dracula's courtesy. The vampire does not lose it even when his monstrosity is not a mystery anymore and it gives the evil in him more power than any destructive behavior of a common beast could achieve. When it comes to a discussion about who inspired Dracula, his appearance as well as his nature, many people identify the vampire with Henry Irving<sup>69</sup>. The actor possessed a talent for transforming himself into tragic heroes or Gothic villains. The roles that suited him the best were Hamlet and Macbeth, Mephistopheles from *Faust* (1886), or Mathias from *The Bells* (1871) by Leopold Davis Lewis shared a dark aura that can be compared to the one that spreads around Dracula<sup>70</sup>.

Irving's performances won him a status of an international star and even

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<sup>66</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 12.

<sup>67</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 197.

<sup>69</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 119.

<sup>70</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 56.

queen Victoria became a fan of him. He was a first English actor that was knighted<sup>71</sup>.

Irving's physical appearance, gestures and face-play which were essential for him in creating his most valued roles. Apart from mastering his own roles he, as an owner of the theater and so the boss of other actors, demanded much effort from the cast. He was often giving them advice about acting or simply bullied them into what he desired<sup>72</sup>.

Building a stage for a new play meant that the theater staff will work without a rest with Henry Irving as the head of the process. He did not hesitate when it came to buying whole organ<sup>73</sup> for a theater in the sake of a successful play. The special effects created an inseparable part of Irving's roles. Even if he elaborated his acting skills to his highest standards he needed a proper environment on the stage to make the illusion as powerful as possible.

Irving never let the theater staff to deal with the stage effects on their own, he was always present and pursued his vision of how the scene should look like from the lights settings to the trapdoor. Even the choice of the fabrics for costumes was done by him and he did not hesitate to travel to places where the plays were set to get the idea for the scene in his theater<sup>74</sup>.

When his authoritative nature and his preference for dark characters are put together, Henry Irving is indeed a person that could inspire Stoker when he created *Dracula*. As far as it is known, Stoker never marked anyone as a source of an inspiration, he only claimed that the idea of the vampire comes from a nightmare about a dressed crab he once had<sup>75</sup>. Dreams are often a source for an inspiration for authors, but Stoker worked on his novel for years and his carefully written notes indicate that all the characters underwent an evolution before appearing in their final forms in the published novel. Stoker was known as a person that was very fond of humor and liked to tease his companions<sup>76</sup>, therefore

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<sup>71</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 6..

<sup>73</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 105.

<sup>76</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 72.

his statement about a crab being an exclusive model for *Dracula* cannot be considered as true.

There is no doubt that meeting with Henry Irving significantly changed Stoker's life and he had a great influence over him, but this is not possible to label him as a single source of inspiration. It was Irving himself that introduced Bram Stoker to famous and important poets, actors or writers, like Tennyson, Thomas Hardy or Mark Twain<sup>77</sup>. Stoker also met many other people he admired or was a friend with. These relationships will be analyzed in the following chapter.

### **3. Friends, Acquaintances and Idols**

#### **3.1 Stoker's Early Writing Career**

Being an author of a novel means a great responsibility. The common, yet unpleasant truth is, that many authors copy the ideas from other works of different authors and use them for their own purposes and their own plots. This illegal practice is punishable by law and is generally seen as shameful.

Furthermore, there are many cases of the same or similar elements in different stories that were not copied intentionally and the authors don't need to even know that a transfer of a certain idea had happened.

Nowadays, with so many different novels, novellas and short stories by such a high number of authors it is impossible to come up with an original or never used scheme. The situation was similar also in the Victorian era. The genre of the Gothic novel, in which *Dracula* belongs to, had a typical setting and archetypes of characters that were modified for individual novels.

It is generally assumed, that the later authors of this genre took the legacy of Horace Walpole or Matthew Lewis into their hands, polished and refined it and created immortal villains that survived more than three centuries without fading away from public view<sup>78</sup>. *Dracula*, *Dorian Gray*, *Heathcliff* or *Dr. Jekyll/ Mr. Hyde* made it into innumerable adaptations and even nowadays their names are known

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<sup>77</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 39.

<sup>78</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 5.

by the general public.

In the first chapter, the possible influences available for Stoker when building a vampire character were presented, but count *Dracula* but one part of the whole novel and there are many other literary works and people that might induce certain ideas that are found in the novel, or only in the notes for *Dracula*. There are many short memos that were never used in the final form of the story.

To write a successful novel usually takes a long practice and one has to acquire writing skills sufficient for creating an elaborated text. The only way to achieve this is to practice and pay a special attention to the novel one plans to get published.

Stoker did not write only *Dracula*, he is also an author of seventeen novels, but *Dracula* is without any doubt his most famous and successful one<sup>79</sup>. His work as a clerk and later as a theater manager were time consuming Stoker did not have much time for writing and his novels often look like they were put together in short time without much care and if he had more time to refine the novels his work could be judged better<sup>80</sup>. His *The Shoulder of Shasta* (1895) earned a comment that: “Mr. Stoker can probably do much better than this”<sup>81</sup>.

*Dracula* was a successful novel, but it gained its vast popularity with the various film and other adaptations that truly made it immortal<sup>82</sup>. That is why the novel was not analyzed into such a depth during Stoker's life as it was in the recent years and so, many mysteries about the author's intentions and sources of inspiration are not clear. There are many possible solutions but without Stoker's approval, they cannot be proclaimed as utterly true, we can only surmise the truth.

The haunting atmosphere in *Dracula* did not come out of nowhere, it was not Stoker's first novel with Gothic elements, before *Dracula*, he also published a novel *The Snake's Pass*, that possessed Gothic elements. Even though Stoker was Irish and he was very fond of his motherland, this novel, dealing with the legend about St. Patrick banishing the snakes from Ireland, is his only one that is

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<sup>79</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 1.

<sup>80</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 52.

<sup>81</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 83.

<sup>82</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 17.

connected with Ireland<sup>83</sup>. Reworking the old legends or using only certain elements of the broadly known mythology is a common practice that can be hardly judged as plagiarism, yet once applied, the work cannot be marked as purely original, and there are motifs that appear regularly in various other works.

Gothic was present in Stoker's life from his early childhood. Stories told by parents, in Stoker's case by his mother, not only entertain the child but also influence its mind and shape the imagination.

Stoker's diary that was revisited and published by his great-grandnephew, Dacre Stoker, and professor Elizabeth Miller, uncovers many personal attitudes and views of Bram Stoker, including his devotion to Ireland which was for some unknown reason reflected in only one of his novels, the previously mentioned *The Snake's Pass*.

Diary might enlighten also a choice of Whitby as one of the major locations in *Dracula*. This seaside town was a destination, where Stoker and his family visited for a short time and here Stoker discovered the name for his count as well as many other useful sources in the library<sup>84</sup>. The charming port town had to enhance Stoker's fantasy and gave him many ideas for his planned novel. Apart from the picturesque town, the atmosphere that was so appealing to Stoker might be created also by the wild North Sea. The diary of Bram Stoker he kept for a certain period of time, show his deep admiration of see and delight in observing it<sup>85</sup>. The dreadful scene when Dracula arrives to the port on Demeter is, according to the notes for the novel, based on a real incident which Stoker noted when a Russian ship hit the port<sup>86</sup>.

### 3.2 Wilde Family

In the present, the most know member of this influential Irish family is Oscar Wilde. Bram Stoker knew him for many years and their relationship was complicated, mainly due to Stoker's marriage with Wilde's former fiancée,

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<sup>83</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 14.

<sup>84</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 119.

<sup>85</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 155.

Florence Balcombe<sup>87</sup>. Even though it was Wilde who ruined his relationship with Florence, when he settled in Oxford<sup>88</sup> he insisted on having feelings for her even after she got married.

Richard Ellman, the biographer of Oscar Wilde has suggested two possibilities for the break up, either Wilde's mother gave him an advice to marry a wealthy woman, for Florence did not possess any significant fortune, or, if the rumors investigated by Steinmeyer can be trusted, Oscar Wilde had to undergo a medical treatment for he was suspected for having syphilis<sup>89</sup>.

The friendship between Stoker and him was shaken, however, their frequent correspondence proves that Stokers and Oscar Wilde were in regular touch for a long time, the last letter from Wilde to Mrs. Stoker was sent in 1893, two years before Wilde's imprisonment<sup>90</sup>.

Before his unfortunate trial which destroyed Wilde's name he was very popular due to his extravagant behavior, like wearing colorful gloves or carrying flowers, and ability to amuse wide audience with his wit and literary skills<sup>91</sup>.

While he belonged to the London elite, Wilde was, apart from the correspondence and in personal contact with Stoker, he was also a regular visitor of the Lyceum Theater. When Wilde was condemned guilty for sodomy and imprisoned, Stoker erased all accounts about Wilde's presence<sup>92</sup>. In the published version of the *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker did not mention Oscar Wilde and he made it look like Wilde had nothing to do with the Lyceum Theater. This was certainly not true as he was an established author of theater plays and he was famous for visiting many social events, including theater performances<sup>93</sup>. Bram Stoker knew Oscar Wilde for years and he could closely observe his flourishing career. In Stoker's notes for *Dracula*, there is a memo about the count that was never actually used in the novel, yet it might suggest, that

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<sup>87</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 24.

<sup>88</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 42.

<sup>89</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 43

<sup>90</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 153.

<sup>91</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 213.

<sup>92</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 154.

<sup>93</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 213-214.

Stoker was, for a short time, considering an idea which can be found in Wilde's only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). The key element in the Wilde's novel is the picture that absorbs all physical transformations of the protagonist, Dorian Gray, leaving him unchanged. In the notes, Stoker wrote "painters cannot paint him – their likeness always like someone else"<sup>94</sup>. It is not the same motif as appears in Wilde's novel but it indeed might be a sign of an inspiration for Stoker when he was planning *Dracula*.

During the trial, Oscar Wilde was psychically devastated due to an enormous pressure he was put under. He lost his reputation and the public estranged from him for his guilt. Sodomy was perceived as an awful and shameful behavior in his time and Oscar Wilde lost his status in the society. Although Wilde did not lose all his contacts and many people supported him before the imprisonment and also during his exile, for example Henry Irving<sup>95</sup>. Many scholars studying the lives of Oscar Wilde and Bram Stoker, including claim, that this unfortunate trial inspired Stoker more than can be deduced from his notes. The complicated relationship of Stoker and Wilde might eventuate in Stoker's feeling of disgust and his incorporation of this immoral condemnable act into *Dracula*. As Jack Lynch concludes, *Dracula* is a dangerous and mysterious thread that evaded England to infect it, feed his lust and fulfill his hideous desires<sup>96</sup>. He feeds on blood of innocent women, causing corruption of their pure souls, which can be also read not only as drinking their blood but also as a perverse sexual act. Mina, a married woman, is raped by Dracula in her own bedroom, with her own husband unconscious by her side, when the vampire forces her to swallow some of his blood. He thus takes her virtue from her and it can be undone only by destroying Dracula. After his death, the denigration is stripped from her and men surrounding her finally see that "the snow is not more stainless than her forehead! The curse has passed away!"<sup>97</sup> Mina is a strong female character. She is the only victim in the novel, who was able to resist Dracula and consciously fight for her salvation. From the women characters in the novel, she is the most energetic and

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<sup>94</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 21.

<sup>95</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 42.

<sup>96</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 62-65.

<sup>97</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 401.

contributing one. She did not accept her fate, instead she was able to take action and call Van Helsing when she wanted to help her husband to overcome the trauma he had suffered. Later on in the novel, she worked on collecting all the materials the vampire hunters needed to fight the Dracula. After being infected, she was brave enough to turn Count's powers against him. Her courage and strength were manifested in the moment, when she asked her companions to finish her life if she was to become a dangerous monster. Possessing all these positive features and being able to express an endless loyalty and love to her husband, she was a powerful character that won respect and devotion of her male companions that risked even their lives for her salvation<sup>98</sup>.

The victim that Dracula overpowered completely, Lucy, has no opportunity for gaining her previous innocence she possessed while living as a young cheerful fiancé of a respectable man, Arthur. When losing her life she became a demon, the same vicious kind as her creator. While alive, Lucy was a fragile and kind-hearted creature. She was much more sensitive than pragmatic Mina. She was very fond of animals, as Mina stated in her diary when describing an incident that happened to her and Lucy:

During the service the dog would not come to its master, who was on the seat with us, but kept a few yards off, barking and howling. Its master spoke to it gently, and then harshly, and then angrily; but it would neither come nor cease to make a noise. It was in a sort of fury, with its eyes savage, and all its hairs bristling out like a cat's tail when puss is on the war-path. Finally the man, too, got angry, and jumped down and kicked the dog, and then took it by the scruff of the neck and half dragged and half threw it on the tombstone on which the seat is fixed. The moment it touched the stone the poor thing became quiet and fell all into a tremble. It did not try to get away, but crouched down, quivering and cowering, and was in such a pitiable state of terror that I tried, though without effect, to comfort it. Lucy was full of pity, too, but she did not attempt to touch the dog, but looked at it in an agonised sort of way. I greatly fear that she is of

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<sup>98</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 31.

too super-sensitive a nature to go through the world without trouble. She will be dreaming of this to-night, I am sure.<sup>99</sup>

Lucy and was very friendly to all people she knew, when four men proposed her, she was happy because of the upcoming wedding, yet she was deeply sorry for the men she had to deny, as she wrote to Mina:

Oh, Mina dear, I can't help crying: and you must excuse this letter being all blotted. Being proposed to is all very nice and all that sort of thing, but it isn't at all a happy thing when you have to see a poor fellow, whom you know loves you honestly, going away and looking all broken-hearted, and to know that, no matter what he may say at the moment, you are passing quite out of his life. My dear, I must stop here at present, I feel so miserable, though I am so happy.<sup>100</sup>

Once the infection, Dracula contaminated her with overpowering her, she lost her natural kindness and chastity. These were replaced by selfishness, cruelty, lust and passions of the flesh which was shown mainly on her changed appearance:

And then insensibly there came the strange change which I had noticed in the night. Her breathing grew stertorous, the mouth opened, and the pale gums, drawn back, made the teeth look longer and sharper than ever. In a sort of sleep-waking, vague, unconscious way she opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once, and said in a soft, voluptuous voice, such as I had never heard from her lips.<sup>101</sup>

The demonstration of the ultimate corruption and vile sexual desires are the female vampires in Dracula's castle. When they are introduced in the novel they are presented as:

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<sup>99</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 97-98.

<sup>100</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 65.

<sup>101</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 172.

In the moonlight opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them, for, though the moonlight was behind them, they threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me, and looked at me for some time, and then whispered together. Two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed—such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound never could have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable, tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand.<sup>102</sup>

As well as in Lucy's case, their sexuality is a strong weapon for these vampires and Jonathan was not able to resist their depraved, yet luring seductiveness. Their intention to use him and then kill him might symbolize the evil of uncontrolled and free sexuality available only for such monsters as vampires<sup>103</sup>, when people become nothing more than objects of desires which are dumped once used. The humanity can no longer be found in these female vampires, Jonathan, when observing the vampire, who was about to bite him, saw that she “licked her lips like an animal”<sup>104</sup>. On the other hand, it cannot be concluded that they understand drinking of blood only as a feeding as animals would do. There is a sexuality in

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<sup>102</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 44-45.

<sup>103</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 44.

<sup>104</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*, 45.

this act, for they call the bites kisses, so drinking the blood of a young strong man provides also a sexual pleasures for them.

Motherhood is connected to any average woman but the weird sisters, in their freedom and lust deny also this aspect that would limit the freedom and independence they gained when they submitted to Dracula. Instead of accepting a role of a mother that naturally emerges in a life of a woman, the weird sisters and Lucy feed on newborns and children to keep their power<sup>105</sup>.

There are no clear mentions about homosexuality, yet a strange remark can be found in the earliest notes for the novel and also in the novel itself, when Count Dracula proclaims Jonathan as his own, when he says that “this man belongs to me I want him.”<sup>106</sup>. Except for this, there are no other indications about homosexuality and Dracula never shows any intentions of drinking man's blood that would be connected with sex. The only incident, when the Count sees a fresh blood running from a fresh cut on Jonathan's skin is described as purely instinctive and impulsive. On the other hand, when he visits his female victims he does that when they are the most helpless and exposed to his desires, dressed in their nightclothes and asleep. A powerful man threatening a half-naked and barely conscious woman brings an undeniable sexual undertone into this novel.

The second male character, which is closely connected to the Count is his servant Renfield, a lunatic that calls the vampire a master and shows a deep devotion to him. Renfield proclaims this relationship as purely religious. Renfield, in his madness, struggles to imitate his wicked idol Dracula by devouring the lives of the lesser animals<sup>107</sup>. He, being the only vampire's tool, has no chance to achieve his ambition to become immortal and when he is no longer useful, Dracula eliminates him. Although the homosexuality is never openly exposed in the novel, it is not improbable that Wilde's infamous trial had an influence over Stoker and gave him a deeper perspective about the luring corrupting evil, which he depicted in his novel. There are various speculations<sup>108</sup> about Stoker's own inclination to homosexuality, that would explain his strong reaction to the trial and public shame

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<sup>105</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 30.

<sup>106</sup> Stoker, Bisang and Miller, *Notes*, 17.

<sup>107</sup> Lynch, *Insights*, 117.

<sup>108</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 4.

that Wilde suffered. However, this theory is only hypothetical and there is no actual proof that would provide an evidence about Stoker's homosexual orientation.

Stoker was on better terms with Oscar's parents, Lady Jane Wilde, better known as Speranza, a poet and an important figure of Irish folklore, and Sir William Wilde, a surgeon and an amateur Egyptologist. Stoker was often engaged in discussions on various topics, from art and archeology to Irish nationality. He even spent the last Christmas of Sir Wilde before his death in their household<sup>109</sup>. Being an amateur, yet passionate Egyptologist, it is highly probable that Sir Wilde and his knowledge about Egypt, which he had shared with Stoker, were later a source of inspiration for Stoker's *The Jewell of Seven Stars* (1903). This novel deals with a reanimated mummy, a former queen, with destructive power. Tera, the mummified antagonist, is another undead character of Stoker and according to Lisa Hopkins, she might be a woman version of Dracula<sup>110</sup>.

As was stated before, death and horrors of dying were presented to Stoker from his early childhood, when his mother was attending him by his bed while he was unsound due to his long illness and she entertained him with stories.

### 3.3 Walt Whitman

One of the leading figures of American poetry which did not gain his popularity only in his homeland. Walt Whitman and his work were discussed into detail also in Europe and Bram Stoker became Whitman's admirer from the first time he had read his *Leaves of Grass* (1855) when studying at Trinity College.

Again, it was his mentor Dowden, who recommended him these poems which resulted in Stoker's lifelong fascination with America and the democratic and idealistic spirit of the country he found in *Leaves of Grass*<sup>111</sup>. Whitman's poems were often criticized for expressions evoking a homosexual love and for this reason his poems were often censored and their author was ridiculed in many

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<sup>109</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 29.

<sup>110</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 25.

<sup>111</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 33-34.

discussions<sup>112</sup>. Stoker wrote to Whitman a long enthusiastic letter including very private information about himself and praising Whitman's poetry. This later lend impetus to various speculations about Stoker's homosexuality but as Lisa Hopkins claims, "it is equally true that Stoker's fiction characteristically seems to be deeply invested in the erotic power of women."<sup>113</sup> Also his great nephew, Daniel Farson, denies the suggestions about Stoker's homosexuality<sup>114</sup>.

Stoker provides to the introduction of the letter a long and detailed physical as well as psychical description of himself. This might be explained not by accusing him of secret homo-eroticism but by his study of physiognomy. This field covers the study of one's personal appearance and its relation to the personality. It was discovered that Stoker possessed *Essays on Physiognomy* (1878) a work dealing with this topic by one of the most influential scholars in this discipline, Johann Caspar Lavater<sup>115</sup>. This work was published two years later after Walt Whitman answered the letter but in the text of the letter he wrote to Whitman: "You are I know a keen physiognomist. I am a believer of the science myself and am in a humble way a practiser of it."<sup>116</sup>

After reading these lines the idea about homosexuality indeed does not seem probable, instead it proves that Stoker was not interested in physiognomy before purchasing these essays. It can be concluded that his wide description in his letter was simply an effort to present himself in detail giving thus Whitman a chance to imagine his correspondent better. Whitman's answer was very encouraging:

My dear young man,

Your letters have been most welcome to me—welcome to me as Person, & then as Author—I don't know which most—You did well to write to me so unconventionally, so fresh, so manly, & so affectionately too. I too hope

<sup>112</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 33.

<sup>113</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 4.

<sup>114</sup> Hopkins, *Literary Life*, 6.

<sup>115</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 62.

<sup>116</sup> Letters of Note: You Are a True Man." Letters of Note. Accessed April 12, 2015.  
<http://www.lettersofnote.com/2013/11/you-are-true-man.html>.

(though it is not probable) that we shall one day personally meet each other. Meantime I send you my friendship & thanks.<sup>117</sup>

In 1884, when Bram Stoker and Henry Irving went on their second theater tour to America, the not probable possibility of meeting in person was realized. Whitman was in that time 65 years old and went through a traumatic experience of the American Civil war, where he worked in the field hospitals as a nurse for the wounded and dying soldiers.

According to Steinmeyer's research, this dark and painful period in Whitman's life completely changed him. The horrific number of soldiers he comforted minutes before their death and the terrible mutilations on bodies and souls of those who survived, scared Whitman. Steinmeyer claims, that the poems Whitman wrote during and after the Civil war, that were published in *Drum-Taps* (1865) and *Sequel to Drum-Taps* (1865) show a shift from his earlier optimism and instead of the happiness and positivity that can be found in his *Leaves of Grass*, in these poems, Whitman expresses his obsession with tombs, love and death<sup>118</sup>. Steinmeyer then describes the physical appearance of Count Dracula after reading Whitman's war poetry as follows:

His pungent breath, coarse hands, strong arms fit for physical labor. He is never far from the tomb – smudged with the dirt of his last resting place, smeared with blood of his last meal. Dracula is not a scrubbed, perfumed aristocrat but a proud creature of the earth that might be found in Whitman's verses.<sup>119</sup>

Since Walt Whitman was one of the inspirational figures in Bram Stoker's life and his poetry belonged to one of the most favourite works of Stoker, it is indeed possible, that also Whitman's later state influenced Stoker when drafting his

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<sup>117</sup> Walt Whitman Archive - Walt Whitman's Correspondence." The Walt Whitman Archive. Accessed April 7, 2015.

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/biography/correspondence/tei/uva.00372.html>.

<sup>118</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 194.

<sup>119</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 194.

*Dracula.*

### 3.4 Minor Influences

Bram Stoker led a rich social life and apart from the persons already mentioned in this thesis he knew a great number of others. His tours in America did not only gave him an opportunity to meet his idol, Walt Whitman but he also became a friend with Mark Twain<sup>120</sup> and he briefly met with William “Buffalo” Bill. Elizabeth Miller and Dacre Stoker when revising Stoker's documents uncovered a note about a meeting with a man on a ship who was traveling to Australia, dressed as an adventurer. The man possessed a Bowie knife, a weapon of the man of an American frontier, Quincey Morris, from *Dracula*, which was used by Quincey to kill the vampire<sup>121</sup>.

Short remarks about incidents and people, which Stoker memorized, do not cover only Quincey, who is a prototype of an American. There are many in-jokes in the novel that Stoker put in order to refer to his close surrounding. Stoker's personal journal is full of evidence about his humorous nature and the journals of the other people that knew him also state that he was very keen to having fun, especially verbal humor was preferred by him<sup>122</sup>.

Theater life opened door to many rich or considerable people. Stoker was very popular among his surrounding for his kind-hearted and witty nature, so he established many friendships with these figures of a social life. Stoker incorporated them in his novel in a form of small details that could be fully understood only by the people they were connected to.

Bernard Davies identifies one of the persons mentioned above as Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts, a rich woman in England that owned or supported places, buildings or organizations that were mention in *Dracula*. For example a white church near Count's house in Piccadilly or Stoker particularly mentions the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that the baroness also supported. Furthermore the Coutss appears in the novel in a connection with the bank

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<sup>120</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 75.

<sup>121</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 185.

<sup>122</sup> Miller and Stoker, *Journal*, 73-77.

through which Dracula's transactions were arranged<sup>123</sup>.

A Hungarian adventurer, Arminius Vambery, that was a guests in the theater and dined with Bram Stoker and Henry Irving, was a known story-teller, and he also enjoyed depictions of his adventures in the Middle East and east Europe. Stoker also included him into his novel, when he let Van Helsing say “my friend Arminius”<sup>124</sup> that is, according to Steinmeyer, clearly aimed at Vambery. It is likely possible that Vambery entertained Stoker with his adventure stories that he decided to reward him for this<sup>125</sup>.

Family members are often targets of funny remarks which many times only the author and the affected person can identify with. Davies in his essay about in-jokes in *Dracula* further writes about the members of Stoker's family that might be traced down in the novel. The Hampstead mystery in *Dracula* revolving around children with bites on their throats and talking about a mysterious lady is set in the place where Stoker's cousin Ernest worked in the hospital in the same year when Lucy became a vampire in the novel. Furthermore, Walworth, a location in London where a significant part of the novel takes place, was in the time when Stoker was working on it a place where two of his cousins, James and William Stoker, worked as a doctors<sup>126</sup>.

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<sup>123</sup> Elizabeth Russell Miller, *Dracula: The Shade and the Shadow: a Criticall Anthology*, (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 1998), 133-134.

<sup>124</sup> Stoker and Hindle, *Dracula*,

<sup>125</sup> Steinmeyer, *Who Was Dracula*, 99-100.

<sup>126</sup> Miller, *Shade and Shadow*, 135.

## Conclusion

When Bram Stoker started working on his *Dracula* which he planned to name *The Undead*, he certainly had no idea that he will continue working on it for the next seven years. His ample notes he took when planning this novel, which were very useful when working on this thesis, They uncovered, that he used a wide range of scientific publications in order to depict Transylvania accurately and bring a sense of realism in the story. There is no information which books he actually really used to get this knowledge but the long list of books he mentions in his notes proves that he indeed did a vast research about the locations he wanted to use in *Dracula*. Stoker also studied publications about vampires as they are portrayed in superstitions, specifically in Eastern Europe, so his *Dracula* would suit the environment Stoker chose as his homeland. Even though *Dracula* is a name of a famous historical figure, Vlad *Dracula* also called The Impaler. Stoker only used his name and he most probably did not study the history of this governor, as there are many inaccuracies about *Dracula* in the novel. Another source for the Count were vampires found in literature, especially the works of Le Fanu, Polidory and Rymer. This seems to have a significant influence over Stoker's vampire in his final form.

Stoker's employment in the Lyceum Theater during the time he had been working on his novel, had an immense impact on the form of it. The uncommon style Stoker used when conceiving it, was a mix of various letters, journal entries and articles, which greatly enhanced the atmosphere of the novel. This brought realism to it and made it more readable than a common plain text. Stoker's employer, a famous and very talented actor, Henry Irving, can be also directly connected to *Dracula* as a dark dangerous character. The popular plays from Shakespeare or Leopold Davies Lewis are major contributions, except *Dracula*, also to other characters and dynamics in the novel.

Bram Stoker was acquainted with Oscar Wilde and his parents, Sir William Wilde and Lady Jane Wilde. Although there was a rivalry between Stoker and Oscar Wilde because of courting the same woman. Stoker had also a very friendly relationship with his parents who encouraged him in his carrier. The trial

of Oscar Wilde when he was sued for sodomy co-extends with the time when Stoker was working on the novel and so it is highly probable that some sexual or destructive motifs in *Dracula* were inspired by Oscar Wilde and his scandalous behavior. Stoker did not mention any homosexual relationship in the novel, he focused his perception of sexuality and its darker aspects denied by society through his women characters, Mina, Lucy and the vampire brides.

Apart from theater Stoker was very fond of poetry, especially the poetry of an American bard, Walt Whitman. However, Stoker met his idol in his elderly age, after a devastating experience of the American Civil war, which extremely changed his poetry and brought dark shades in it. It is not improbable that some part of *Dracula's* personality was influenced by Whitman. On the other hand, Stoker absorbed also Whitman's idea about brave new and fresh American world full of possibilities. Mainly the character of Quincey Morris shows traits of an ideal American. Although Whitman was a major figure when it comes to propagating America, Stoker also knew other significant Americans, like Mark Twain or Buffalo Bill, who also contributed to the typical American culture which is depicted in *Dracula*.

## Resumé

Tato práce se zaměřuje na dílo Brama Stokera, *Drakula*, které se za uplynulé století stalo fenoménem a zejména hlavní antagonista, hrabě Drakula, je postavou všeobecně známou a ztvárněnou v mnoha rozličných podobách, které se už jeho původní formě častokrát vůbec nepodobají. Co všechno bylo pro Stokera inspirací a jak tyhle vlivy nakonec použil je našťastí možné prozkoumat díky obsáhlým poznámkám, které si zapisoval po dobu sedmi let, kdy na svém románu pracoval a přemýšlel o svých postavách a zápletce. Také je k dispozici mnoho publikací věnujících se jeho životu a lidem, které znal a kteří mohli být předlohou pro *Drakulu*. Také se nám zachoval jeho deník, co opět umožňuje nahlédnout a něco hlouběji do jeho života a zejména jeho osobnosti.

Stoker bral svůj počín již od začátku vážně a ve svých poznámkách uvádí seznam literatury zabývající se upíry ve starých lidových pověstech a pověrách a jak tyhle bytosti zničit, nebo také publikace o geografii a východní Evropy. Není možné dokázat kolik z nich opravdu prostudoval, ale podle barvitého zobrazení Transylvánie v úvodních kapitolách *Drakuly* pro psaní nějaké podklady opravdu využil. Jediným problémem je samotný hrabě, sice nese jméno po obávaném panovníkovi Vladu Drakulovi, řečenému i Narázeč, no knižní Drakula jenom málo odpovídá skutečné historické postavě, zdá se, že Stokerovi stačilo dobře znějící jméno a dalším výzkumem se nezabýval. Došlo tak k mnoha nesrovnalostem mezi fakty a Stokerovou fikcí.

Kromě literatury faktu je na *Drakulovi* patrný i vliv jiných románů, které vyšli před ním a je patrné, že Stoker se inspiroval i tady a obohatil svého upíra o vlastnosti, které předchozí romány udaly jako typické pro upíry, i když se od původních pověstí lišily. Zejména slavné sání krve je doménou knižních upírů, nikoli nestvůr vytvořených lidovými pověrami.

Bram Stoker strávil velkou část svého života v divadle a když se blíže prozkoumá styl, jakým *Drakulu* napsal, je možné povšimnout si jisté dobře vyvážené dynamiky a pocitu reálnosti, které ze stránek číší. Místo klasického vyprávění Stoker svolil mnoho různých vypravěčů, kteří příběh podávají pomocí svých deníků, dopisů a článků z novin, čímž umocnil pocit sounáležitosti čtenáře s

postavami a prohloubil zážitek ze čtení. Pro divadelní hry je nutností mít svižný a zajímavý spád, jinak by působily nudně a mdle. Stoker dlouhá léta pracoval jako manažer v Lyceum Theater a tak byl svědkem nespočetného množství představení, kde mohl načerpat inspiraci pro to správné načasování v ději a atmosféry, která pro čtenáře vytvoří silný zážitek. Kromě technické stránky divadelních her byl pro Stokera obrovskou inspirací i jeho zaměstnavatel a přítel, Henry Irving, talentovaný a populární herec, který se proslavil četnými úspěchy v roli zvláštních a temných postav jako například Macbeth nebo Mefistofeles. Mnoho lidí studujících Stokerův život přesazuje myšlenku, že hrabě Drakula byl inspirován zejména Irvingem a jeho brilantním zobrazením zla. Není náhoda, že jak Irvingovými oblíbenými rolemi byly postavy Shakespeara, které, hlavně Hamlet a Macbeth, jsou citované i v Drakulovi a je možné najít i podobnosti mezi postavami těchto děl.

K divadlu a společnosti kolem ní se váže i Oscar Wilde s jeho rodinou. Bram Stoker byl od Wilda o sedm roků starší a velmi dobře si rozuměl s jeho rodiči, kteří byli věhlasně známí svou extravagantností a aférami, ale také podporou umění jako takového. Extravagance neobešla ani jejich syna Oscara. Byl velmi úspěšný autor mnoha literárních děl a divadelních her, měl talent pro herectví a konverzaci, a také miloval pozornost, kterou na sebe poutal. Avšak jeho homosexuální orientace, jejíž projevy a homosexuální vztahy se v té době braly jako zločin a Oscar Wilde skončil ve vězení a krátce po propuštění umřel v bídě. Mnoho publikací opakovaně porovnává dobu, kdy se konal soud se Stokerovým životopisem v té době a je dost dobře možné, že Stoker byl konáním svého někdejšího přítele natolik znechucen, že do Drakulu zakomponoval i zvrhlou formu sexuality upírů jako symbol zkaženosti a úpadku.

Kromě divadla Bram Stoker také miloval poezii a již od školních let mezi jeho velké oblíbence patřil americký básník Walt Whitman. Stoker v mládí četl jeho optimistickou sbírku *Stébla Trávy*, která oslavovala ducha volné a nespoutané Ameriky jako země plné možností. Když ale Stoker svůj idol poznal i osobně, bylo to hodně let od doby kdy četl Whitmanovu první sbírku a básník se mezičasem notně změnil vlivem hrůzných zážitků, které prožil když pomáhal nesčetnému množství raněných a umírajících vojáků v americké občanské válce.

Tahle zkušenost Whitmana změnila a část jeho optimismu se nenávratně vytratila, i když se rozhodně nedá říct, že by Whitman zahořkl úplně, ale válka a její hrůzy notně změní každého kdo s ní přijde do kontaktu. Je proto možné, že Stoker, když se střetl tváří tvář s patrnou změnou jak v poezii tak v osobnosti svého oblíbeného autora, získal také inspiraci pro jisté temné aspekty postav v *Drakulovi*, zejména v hraběti samém. Duch Ameriky a setkání nejen s Waltem Whitmanem, ale i Buffalo Billem, nebo přátelství s Markem Twainem mají pravděpodobně za následek i konečnou podobu Quinceyho Morrise, hrdinu amerických plání, který v románu prezentuje jak americkou kulturu tak klasické gentlemanství té doby.

## **Annotation**

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