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## THE GOTHIC, ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN TRADITION WITH RESPECT TO THE POETICS OF THE SUBLIME

### THE SPACE OF TRANSYLVANIA AND VICTORIAN LONDON IN BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA

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Tracing the Romantic Sublime in Victorian fiction, the changes in late 19<sup>th</sup> century discourse through which the Romantic Sublime was generally rejected due to its nature of excessive romantic subjectivity, egoism and lack of social responsibility cannot be ignored. However, speaking of the transitional nature of the sublime in 19<sup>th</sup> century fiction<sup>1</sup> it becomes clear that the Victorians found the Romantic Sublime potentially attractive and thus subconsciously present in their works. Nevertheless, what is a more relevant aspect in the Victorian novel is the human aim at the rationalising of events which attempts to define the relationship of literature and science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Questioning the criteria of objectivity and rationality in the course of the narrative becomes relevant namely in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* where scientific and technological progress is undermined by the sublime presence of the undead in spite of the human effort to use all available documentary material to witness the case.

#### The moment of transgression

*Dracula* as a late Victorian novel represents the constant process of transgressing not only the rational order of things but also moral boundaries with a tendency of the main entity towards perversion and crime, resulting in the madness of others. These essential elements of the Romantic Sublime characterise the transgression of the term “sublime” between the 18<sup>th</sup>

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1 See Stephen Hancock, *The Romantic Sublime and Middle-Class Subjectivity in the Victorian Novel*, Routledge, 2005, 81.

and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup> According to Michel Foucault, transgression is an action which

involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses. The play of limits and transgression seems to be regulated by a simple obstinacy; transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable. (Foucault 34)

The moments of transgression become essential for the understanding of space in *Dracula*. As Dracula moves from his castle in Transylvanian forests and mysteriously sets out on the journey over the Mediterranean sea to reach the sacred place of Whitby, the space he occupies displays particular sublime features which evoke fear in other characters. Dracula's aim clearly is to evoke fear and demonstrate his power from the moment Jonathan Harker, who becomes acquainted with the Other for the first time in Dracula's castle, enters the region. The sublime fear from the unknown and the uncanny occurs immediately upon entering the Borgo pass which brings Harker to the region of the Transylvanian wilderness.

Dracula is largely associated with the transgression of any rational explanation of the Victorian world, the functioning of Victorian society and its moral and social rules and thus becomes an essential part of the Romantic Sublime. Simultaneously, he functions as the violent and ruthless Other, as an entity which invades England and attempts to extend his power to manipulate his victims and spread contagion through the blood of his prey. Such features of the novel point to the literary tradition of decadence, nevertheless Dracula as a character and especially the space he occupies constitute the essence of the Romantic Sublime in Bram Stoker's novel.

Dracula's movement in space can be described on the basis of Foucault's definition of transgression which "is not related to the limit as black to the white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces. Rather, their relationship takes the form of a spiral which no simple infraction can exhaust" (Foucault 35).

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<sup>2</sup> For more, see Martin Procházka, *Romantismus a romantismy*, Karolinum, 2005.

Dracula's swift and mysterious approach to the English coast is reminiscent of a spiral of uncontrolled movement which is demonstrated through his limitlessness as it points to the infinite and sublime element. The trajectory of his movement transgresses all possible rational explanations and Dracula remains out of reach before he accesses the most civilised centre of Victorian society. Dracula therefore occupies the so called smooth space<sup>3</sup> whose line of flight takes the form of the spiral movement and thus undermines the principle of space striation as created by Victorian civilisation aims (Deleuze and Guattari).

Dracula's presence both in Whitby and in London is closely associated with the theme of repressed or freed sexuality, which, according to Foucault, "in the new discourse leads to the emptiness of transgression, to the limit of our consciousness, the way our consciousness can read our unconscious" (32). Dracula therefore represents the model of freed and uncontrolled sexuality which corresponds to his dangerous Otherness and focuses upon the unconscious and repressed fears and desires of Victorian society.

In this respect, *Dracula* reflects the false assumption that the masculine aspect of human behaviour becomes associated with the aesthetic quality of the sublime and the feminine aspect with the beautiful (Hancock). This principle seems to be reflected in the structure of *Dracula* where male power and dominance are balanced by the presence of female beauty and wit. Nevertheless, through the character of Mina we can perceive the becoming strength of Victorian womanhood and her firm desire to survive and help the group of Harker's friends stop and destroy the monster. Another female character who represents pure beauty and innocence becomes a victim of Dracula's desire, thus the only positive quality of Lucy's beauty turns into the monstrosity of becoming a vampire and is prevented from spreading the pestilence in the most violent and extreme manner. The perfection of male characters thus relies on their masculine empowerment which is partially enforced through the threat of violence imposed both on Dracula and his victims. What becomes equally important in the female aspect of

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3 In the chapter "Treatise on Nomadology" in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define the category of smooth space as representing the dynamics of forces. Smooth space is related to the aesthetic expression of space, i.e. how a space is perceived by the narrator or character. The smooth space is generally associated with force, which arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

the sublime is the heroine's moral authority which suggests a transition to a new system of treating the sublime aspect of human nature.<sup>4</sup>

### Oceanic and gothic sublime

In the space representations of the novel *Dracula*, the two essential forms of the Kantian sublime that reflect upon the magnitude of nature in correspondence with the expanse of the reader's imagination can be recognised. The first concept of the Gothic sublime can be traced in the character's presence near Dracula's castle as registered by Jonathan Harker and his company. In this respect the novel takes the cyclical structure of entering an unknown region and returning to it. The two moments of transgression that are associated with space can thus be defined as stepping over the threshold which is submerged into the Gothic sublime. The turning point in *Dracula* is then bound to the moment of the landing of Dracula's ship in the harbour of Whitby. This particular landscape of the seaside and the space of the sea itself is bound to the Kantian idea of the oceanic sublime which is intertwined with the presence of the Gothic sublime in the surroundings of the tomb in Whitby.

### The oceanic sublime

Kant designates the ocean as an important icon of the natural sublime as he stresses the turbulence and power of the waves. The oceanic sublime undoubtedly evokes fear, enlarging the consciousness through the confrontation between the terror from the unknown and the dangerous power of water, especially in the storm. In the Romantic and post-romantic tradition the admiration of the mighty space of the ocean becomes associated with the freedom of movement and the search for the moment of transcendence. However, the oceanic vistas can easily "veer into the uncanny" (Den Tandt, 42) and thus late-Victorian prose reflects upon the presence of the ocean as the image of the sublime horizon in connection with the idiom of terror. The scene of Dracula's arrival in the ship clearly points to the presence of the uncanny and human consciousness confronted by terror at

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<sup>4</sup> See the opening chapter of *The Romantic Sublime and Middle-Class Subjectivity in the Victorian Novel*, which mentions the feminine sublime modes discussed by Anne Mellor and Barbara Freeman among others.

the moment of the ship's arrival in the storm. Sinister happenings in the scene are foreshadowed through romantic postulates in the metaphors of the roaring sea while using monotonous colours with the dominating grey:

Everything is grey – except the green grass, which seems like emerald amongst it; grey earthy rock; grey clouds, tinged with the sunburst at the far edge, hang over the grey sea, into which the sand-points stretch like grey fingers. The sea is tumbling in over the shallows and the sandy flats with a roar, muffled in the sea-mist drifting inland. The horizon is lost in a grey mist. All is vastness; the clouds are piled up like giant rocks, and there is a “brool” over the sea that sounds like some presage of doom. (Stoker 93)

In connection with the philosophy of space as understood by Deleuze and Guattari, the perception of space of blurred lines between the horizon, the sky and the sea points to the absolute, as the space of the ocean is classified as smooth space *par excellence* and human orientation in space becomes extremely difficult. Generally speaking, the space of the harbour becomes smooth with the coming of the night and the storm intensifies the notion of the potential dangers of the approaching death endangering human existence. The prophecy of an old sailor referring to the strange ship appearing on the horizon gives way to romantic interpretations of Dracula's arrival: “There's something in that wind and in the hoast beyond that sounds, and looks, and tastes, and smells like death. It's in the air. I feel it comin'” (Stoker 94).

Typically enough of 19<sup>th</sup> century poetics of space, Stoker associates the space of the night with supernatural elements and the power of vile forces. Open spaces, including the shore and the harbour become unsafe and undesirable with the sunset and unfavourable weather. The space of the harbour, which reflects civilisation aims being striated by walls, becomes submerged into the smooth space during the night while human orientation in darkness becomes complicated as perceived by female characters of Mina and Lucy in the novel: “I see the lights scattered all over the town, they run right up the Esk and die away in the curve of the valley. To my left the view is cut off by a black line of roof of the old house next the Abbey” (Stoker 86). As with the concept of “aura” in Walter Benjamin's *Illumination* we can trace the feature of romanticising the space of the city (or

town in the case of Whitby) as the text of *Dracula* in this chapter evokes “the city’s sublime splendour” and “acknowledges the fragmentation of its object” (Den Tandt 38–39). The “aura” of the city becomes concealed behind an inaccessible horizon associated with self-delusive mysticism and the town of Whitby at the moment of approaching nightfall appears as the “uncanny totality” (Den Tandt 38) where, from the far distance behind the horizon, mysterious superhuman forces approach.

Interestingly enough, Bram Stoker, in accordance with the late Victorian demand for objectivity and scientific approach both in life and literature, seems to suppress the romantic imagery of his space representation in ironic comments referring to art, especially concerning the imagery of colours. In the crucial scene before Dracula’s arrival the space of the sea is referred to by a journalist who keeps the distance from the aesthetic experience of the sunset, which is accompanied by “myriad clouds of every sunset-colour – flame, purple, pink, green, violet and all the tints of gold; with here and there masses not large, but of seemingly absolute blackness” (Stoker 96). No matter how intensively the description alludes to the paintings of J. M. W. Turner, it is an ironic commentary from the journalist’s point of view, who leaves it up to perceptive artists and painters to make use of the scene later and transform it into a valuable work of art. The journalist’s task is to ignore the aesthetic function of art as he is to report objectively about the things he witnessed. Art in general, through the author’s ironic comment, is to stand in contrast to the objectivity of science and rationality. Nevertheless, ironically enough, the things “reported” by the journalist from a local newspaper are intensively connected with the mysterious and supernatural occurrence of a ship commanded by a dead steersman lashed to the wheel and the only living creature on board being a dog who disappeared onto the moors on the ship landing. As a result of the report, the Victorian reader must have been left in doubt as to what remained to be analysed rationally and objectively. Creating a strong sense of the supernatural, the uncanny and the romantic sublime seems to be the intention of the narrative at this point, especially in connection with the space perception and space representation. In the scene of Dracula’s arrival with the ship heavily loaded with coffins stuffed with soil, Stoker, in a variety of aspects, alludes to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, partially through the “prologue” of the “ancient mariner” who talks to Mina in the chapel and makes the strange

prophecy of death coming. Another hint at intertextuality within the context of the tradition of the Romantic Sublime has been mentioned before in connection with the allusion to the paintings of J. M. W. Turner – “as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean” (Stoker 96). In the scene of Dracula’s landing, the sea in the storm takes all the aspects of the romantic imagery of nature’s convulsion which attacks the shore striated by human aims in the forms of piers and lighthouses. The sea becomes the embodiment of threat through the mass of water and sea fog, its waves being compared to the height of mountains, displaying the potential of the Romantic Sublime and the power of supremacy of the ocean over humans: “the sea, running mountains high, threw skywards with each wave mighty masses of white foam, which the tempest seemed to snatch at and whirl away into space” (Stoker 97). Simultaneously, the stillness of nature before and after the storm becomes associated with death, ominous silence and uncertainty which highlights the tension of the narrative until Lucy’s death and the shift of the place of the narrative to London.

### **Gothic varieties of the romantic sublime**

In the third *Critique of Judgement*, Kant defines the attributes of the Romantic sublime in Nature in terms of greatness of natural features:

Bold, overhanging, and as it were threatening, rocks; clouds piled up in the sky, moving with lightning flashes and thunder peals; volcanoes in all their violence of destruction; hurricanes with their track of devastation; the boundless ocean in a state of tumult; the lofty waterfall of a mighty river, and such like; these exhibit our faculty of resistance as insignificantly small in comparison with their might. But the sight of them is the more attractive, the more fearful it is, provided only that we are in security; and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the energies of the soul above their accustomed height, and discover in us a faculty of resistance of a quite different kind, which gives us courage to measure ourselves against the apparent almightiness of nature. (Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, online edition)

However, the sublime should be simultaneously perceived as the immeasurable whole beyond recognition as it opens space to the mystery and fear

of the unknown. In *Dracula* the space of the vast ruined castle in which the narrator keeps on ascending and at the same time sinks deeply into the trap of being imprisoned in the castle intensifies the sense of the Gothic sublime; the space reflects features of Gothic architectural elements such as lofty halls, secret passages, great round arches, tall black windows and broken battlement with its projection against the sky, resulting in the effect of the gloomy atmosphere. The sublime feeling of terror of the unknown is supported by Harker's state of mind on the verge between dream and reality in which it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish between the two.

Another place that represents features of the Gothic sublime is the part of Whitby called the Crescent where the ladies became the first victims of Dracula's attack in England. The mystery and horror of the scene is highlighted by Dracula's transformation into a wolf or a bat the images of which remain partially suppressed in the victim's unconscious. The atmosphere of the Gothic sublime is supported by the presence of the bright full moon, heavy black driving clouds with "a fleeting diorama of light and shade" (Stoker 116) which creates a typical romantic contrast. The presence of the ruins of the Abbey and the churchyard associates the poetics of space of the Gothic novel genre and as the scene proceeds, the contrast of black and white becomes significant in the form of two figures, which contrast Lucy's innocence and the presence of the uncanny in the form of Dracula's figure attacking her. Interestingly enough, the scene is witnessed from Mina's perspective who watches the action from over the bay and therefore remains out of reach. At the same time the aspects of the sublime and beautiful combine in the very next scene as the heroine observes a bat flitting in the moonlight and "the soft effect of the light over the sea and sky – merged together in one great, silent mystery – was beautiful beyond words" (Stoker 116).

### The wolves

Supporting the notion of the Gothic sublime presence in space the animal aspect (i.e. the presence of the uncanny) in *Dracula* represents Victorian fears deeply rooted in the unconscious; basically all the main characters dream of wolves, dogs, bats or vampire figures. The space of *Dracula* becomes filled with the howls of dogs or wolves, which supports the theory of the smooth space according to Deleuze and Guattari. Nevertheless, later



the wolves are associated with violent force as they break into human shelters to impose Dracula's will upon the sleeping victims.

The presence of wolves whose hostile howls and Otherness become associated with their subordination to the Count's rule forms another source of dramatic tension as well as the Gothic horror atmosphere of the woods. The wolves accompany the process of Dracula's transgression and, interestingly enough, their presence in space forms an essential part of the sublime Gothic both in Transylvania and England. The wolves represent sublime nature accompanied by fear as they remain parts of the unconscious.

Wolves or werewolves have always existed as part of the Gothic imagination either as humans in animal form or animals in human form. According to Gilles Deleuze,<sup>5</sup> their animality/ humanity classifies them as *liminal creatures* whose main aspect of existence is focused on crossing the threshold between the two worlds. Therefore, the wolves in *Dracula* become the essential part of his transgression and possibly transformation within the Gothic sublime. For Deleuze the wolves are metonyms of forbidding landscapes and their howl as well as appearance defines their identity of monstrous creatures who display the potential to form a multiplicity of difference in terms of space, gender, sexuality etc. Typically enough for *Dracula*, they form the intersection of the real and the imaginary and thus embody human anxiety of difference, which creates the essential aspect of the Gothic sublime in Victorian literature. Deleuze's philosophical term of *becoming animal* supports the perception of wolves as demonised creatures in *Dracula*. The category of the werewolf or vampire supports Dracula's identity in terms of his transgression as a part of the theory of the sublime Gothic which results in the instability of human identity of the late Victorian era. According to Deleuze and Guattari, wolves inhabit the smooth space, they are in constant motion and their movement is unpredictable and vertiginous, resembling a swirl (33). Dracula himself is the wolf-man, an individual creating the multiplicity. The wolves in the pack are considered intensities associated with speed which form "nondecomposable variable distances" (Deleuze and Guattari 35). In Deleuzian terms they create lines of flight which point to their deterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 60). Wolves in *Dracula* represent animality in man and question

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5 See especially the chapter, Deleuze and Guattari, "1914: One or Several Wolves?" in *A Thousand Plateaus* (29–44).

sexual identity, becoming bloodthirsty creatures whose bloodlust suggests eroticism in association with becoming inhuman. The werewolf transformation as a part of the transgression then embodies the crisis of human identity and therefore represents the threat for mankind in general.

The presence of wolves in *Dracula* in association with the sublime notion of space is stressed from the beginning of the novel when Jonathan Harker enters the woods of Transylvania. In fact, the wolves are the first creatures he faces in the night wilderness: “Close at hand came the howling of many wolves. It was almost as if the sound sprang up at the raising of his [Dracula’s] hand, just as the music of a great orchestra seems to leap under the baton of the conductor” (Stoker 64). The sound of the wolves’ howl magnifies Harker’s sense of confusion and intense fear as he becomes familiar with the fact that the smooth space he entered is shaped by the presence of the Other, dangerous creatures:

As the door began to open, the howling of the wolves without grew louder and angrier; their red jaws, with champing teeth, and their blunt-clawed feet as they leaped, came in through the open door. I knew that to struggle at the moment against the Count was useless. [...] Suddenly it struck me that this might be the moment and the means of my doom; I was to be given to the wolves, and at my instigation. (Stoker 65)

Harker’s awareness of his subordination to the Count becomes inevitable as he realises the impossibility of escape until the master of the castle decides to set him free. The sublime terror associated with Dracula’s power is demonstrated through his actions that make the castle a prisonlike fortress: “With one sweep of his powerful arm, the Count threw the door shut, and the great bolts clanged and echoed through the hall as they shot back into their places” (Stoker 67).

In the course of the narrative, wolves become parts of the unconscious as the setting of the novel moves from Transylvania to England. The fearful and liminal creatures appear in dreams of main characters and signify the furtive presence of the upcoming danger. Lucy hears dogs howling in her dream but “all seemed to be real” as she was “passing through the streets and over the bridge, leaning over water and she heard a lot of dogs howling – the whole town seemed as if it must be full of dogs all howling at once” (Stoker 121).

The presence of dogs or wolves howling becomes closely associated with the presence of water in Lucy's dreams: "I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was a singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men" (Stoker 124). This connection which is used rather frequently in Victorian novels suggests the loss of identity of individual consciousness and a split between the rational and emotional part of human consciousness signifying the conflict with the power of the unconscious. In her dream Lucy becomes as if hypnotised by Dracula's power and her fear of otherness (embodied in the shape of animals) is combined with the fear associated with water. The motif of Lucy's drowning in her dream in the situation when she was attacked by Dracula for the first time has also an erotic connotation of his attack evoked by Lucy's beauty and innocence. However, the threat of Dracula's intrusion is combined with her unconscious pleasure: "I have a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once" (Stoker 116). In this respect, Lyotard's interpretation of the Kantian sublime may be used to define the feelings of the sublime sentiments, which is also the sentiment of the sublime, "a strong and equivocal emotion: it carries with it both pleasure and pain. Better still, in it pleasure derives from pain."<sup>6</sup> This expression of Lucy's suppressed desires suggests the sense of decadent perversion in the novel, undoubtedly shocking in the late Victorian era.

### Sublime horizons

Another moment of transgression and the most intensive evocation of the sublime reflected through nature occurs in the final scene of *Dracula*. In the closing chapter Dracula's castle "stood against the red sky and every stone of the broken battlements was articulated against the light of the setting sun" (Stoker 448). Its projection against the sky articulates the aforementioned sublime moment which signifies something that exceeds it and becomes reflected through nature:

We saw it in all its grandeur, perched a thousand feet on the summit of a sheer precipice, and with seemingly a great gap between

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6 See Lyotard, "Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism," *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, 71–82.

it and the steep of the adjacent mountain on any side. There was something wild and uncanny about the place. We could hear the distant howling of wolves. They were far off, but the sound, even though coming muffled through the deadening snowfall, was full of terror. (Stoker 442)

The aspects of the long distance, sublime horizon, the uniqueness of the place and its elevated position intensified in the light of the sunset give rise to the feelings of the presence of the uncanny which ideally support the romantic imagination and weaken the realistic component of space representation.

Dracula's metaphorical invasion of the English soil near the shore of Whitby in the form of "a fierce brute" (Stoker 97) has more than the aspect of animal transgression in its occurrence. Stoker's imagery of the place was probably influenced not only by his stay in the popular 19<sup>th</sup> century tourist resort of Whitby, but he also took into account the breaking of a Russian schooner on the shore in 1885. The "exotic" origin of the fictitious ship which had set sail from Varna in the novel points out to the Victorian threat of the unknown space of south-east Europe perceived as the Other, dangerous, and the uncanny. The Count and the act of his landing thus represent Victorian fears that are more universal. As Stephen Arata points out in his article,<sup>7</sup> in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain felt its decline as a world power, which undermined Victorian beliefs in progress and hegemony and the decline of imperial force found its reflection in the narrative. In this respect Arata uses the term "reversed colonization" in which the "civilized world becomes civilized by primitive forces" (Arata 642) and the colonised takes the position of the coloniser. This aspect of sublime fear of the primitive unknown brings an anxiety of lost values connected with moral, spiritual and racial decline, which makes the nation more vulnerable and exposed to harmful influences from the colonized world. Thus "the count's transgressions and aggressions" threaten the space of Victorian England and problematise scientific progress as well as the boundaries between victimisers and victims. In *Dracula*, Transylvania is seen as a politically and ethnically unstable region in the clash of antagonistic cultures and the complex situation within the empire then reflects the features of

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7 See Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," *Victorian Studies* 33 (1990): 621–45.

perpetual invasion, human displacement and signs of collapse (Arata 643). The vampire myth and its transformation by Bram Stoker is thus seen as a political threat to the Anglo-Saxon world as the count penetrates into the heart of the Empire and his lust for blood endangers Britain's integrity as a nation as well as of any individual (Arata 630).

Dracula's transgression of categories of animals and the undead further manifests his absolute power over animals and humans. Upon entering the region, the narrator Jonathan Harker revisits the primitive past, in search of business partnerships in the role of the coloniser, but paradoxically falls into the trap of the Count's dominating power. Harker's initial indefinite fear later becomes transformed into the fear of Dracula's power and dominance. Interestingly, what finally wins over Dracula's intentions is Victorian rationality and objectivity as late as when the Count reaches London, the heart of the late Victorian colonial empire. The city of London is therefore a place where the Victorian individuals are able to think rationally as they overcome the fear of the unknown and prime their minds to fight the monstrous Other. In correspondence with the sublime feelings the anguish and terror from the unknown region enlarges the spiritual world of rational Victorian characters and awakens their senses to a higher intensity of life.

In the course of the narrative the sense of the supernatural forms a contrasting view to the scientific methods and Victorian belief in rationality as it brings a new approach of studying the supernatural. The new approach is represented by Dr. Van Helsing whose interest in psychoanalysis and hypnosis uncovers the universal mystery of life and death in *Dracula*.

The sublime perception of space and its connection with Victorian fears becomes a general topic for Elaine Showalter who claims that the crisis of the *fin de siècle* was felt more emotionally and intensively because of the approaching end of the century because it was "weighted with symbolic and historical meaning"<sup>8</sup> to which the metaphors of death and rebirth are bound. Myths and metaphors are to be closely associated with the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century literature as a part of our historical consciousness, Showalter claims further. Thus, we can understand Bram Stoker's novel as a representation of such a crisis of both male and female sexual identity, as an exploration of the vampire myth and moreover as a vision of the apoc-

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8 See Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*, Bloomsbury, 1991.

alypse that mark the *fin de siècle* of literature and culture. Dracula leads us into the space of the sublime nature of Transylvania, the smooth space of the sea as he approaches the English soil to become an invader of our civilisation aims and perhaps opens a vision of the apocalypse that reflects the *fin de siècle* crisis of humanity.

However, it remains only a theoretical postulate that the space of the British Isles could have become guarded, isolated and “Otherness” be prevented from entering. As Showalter claims:

If the different races can be kept in their places, if the various classes can be held in their proper districts of the city, and if men and women can be fixed in their separate spheres, many hope, apocalypse can be prevented and we can preserve a comforting sense of identity and permanence in the face of that relentless specter of millennial change. (Showalter 4)

Interestingly enough, the fears of regression and degeneration, the threat of transgressing the boundaries and fear of the unknown remains more general a theme more than a century after the vampire myth became such an important part of the Gothic sublime notion of space.

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