

2020

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Michael Valdez Moses  
*Duke University*

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### Recommended Citation

Moses, Michael Valdez (2020) "The Irish Vampire: Dracula, Parnell, and the Troubled Dreams of Nationhood," *Journal X*: Vol. 2 : No. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/jx/vol2/iss1/5>

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Figure 1.

## The Irish Vampire: *Dracula*, Parnell, and the Troubled Dreams of Nationhood

Michael Valdez Moses

*Michael Valdez Moses is Associate Professor of English at Duke University. He is the author of The Novel and the Globalization of Culture (Oxford UP, 1995) and editor of a collection of critical essays, The Writings of J. M. Coetzee (Duke UP, 1994). His essay on Dracula comes from a book-length work in progress, "Nation of the Dead: The Politics of Irish Literature, 1890-1990."*

"Parnellism springs from the root of sensualism and crime."

—Bishop Nulty of Meath

1. "a blankness in which others could find themselves"

In May 1887, Charles Stewart Parnell coolly attended a performance at the Lyceum Theatre in London. Just weeks before, the *London Times* had begun to publish its infamous series of articles, "Parnellism and Crime," which sought to link the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party with the 1882 assassinations in Dublin's Phoenix Park of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Burke, the chief and under secretaries of Ireland. Parnell's imperturbable manner was no doubt noted by the Anglo-Irish manager of England's premier theater, Abraham Stoker.<sup>1</sup> Parnell's hauteur and self-possession were already legendary, though doubtlessly steeled in this instance by his knowledge that the charges made in the *Times* were false, based as they were on forgeries reputed to be letters in Parnell's own hand condoning the murders. In retrospect, Parnell's masterfully staged appearance at the Lyceum amid a scandal that cast him in an infernal glow of violence, savagery, and terror was emblematic of the ambiguous mythic stature that "the uncrowned King of Ireland" attained, a legendary status that only grew more controversial after his death in 1891. Parnell captivated the late-Victorian and Edwardian imagination — a looming

specter whose heroic and scandalous life fascinated equally his Irish, English, and American contemporaries and whose ghost haunts the pages of Stoker's most famous work, *Dracula*.

The power of gothic form, and especially of its most enduring manifestations, such as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, depends upon the polyvalent significance and indeterminate identity of its monstrous protagonists. *Dracula* owes much of its mythopoeic power to the uncanny ability of its central figure to call forth a diverse and even mutually contradictory set of symbolic associations — sexual, anthropological, historical, psychological, economic, and political. Such a “monstrous double” possesses a talent for polymorphous masquerade; his allure depends in part on his superhuman capacity to assume whatever shape he pleases. In his notes for *Dracula*, Stoker projected a scene (never written) in which a painter attempts to render a lifelike portrait of the vampire but discovers that, “however hard the artist tries, the subject always ends up looking like someone else” (see Belford 261-2; and Frayling 344).

Stoker's *Dracula* does not simply recapitulate the life of Charles Stewart Parnell in a straightforward allegorical fashion. Many other figures have been plausibly offered as the original of Stoker's most famous character, including Sir Henry Irving, Sir Richard Burton, Henry Morton Stanley, Franz Liszt, Jacques Damala (the Greek actor married to Sarah Bernhardt), Oscar Wilde, Sir William Wilde (the father of Oscar Wilde), Walt Whitman, and of course, the fifteenth-century Wallachian prince Vlad Dracula (also known as Voïvode Dracula, Vlad Tepes, and Vlad the Impaler), about whom Stoker had read while researching *Dracula*.<sup>2</sup> But while acknowledging that there is no single source for *Dracula*, who is a composite and free transformation of his many originals, I shall nonetheless suggest that Parnell serves as a model (and a particularly malleable and politically suggestive one) for Stoker's aristocratic vampire.

The vampire as nationalist liberator. The idea is bizarre, fantastic. And yet the singular quality that may explain Parnell's immense political appeal is one he shared with Stoker's *Dracula*: a protean capability to assume whatever shape or image his audience found most deeply (and even illicitly) appealing. Which is not to deny that Parnell was a champion of the political rights of the Irish people or a resolute and controversial advocate of Irish nationalism. Nonetheless, what has continued to strike his critics and defenders alike for more than a century is Parnell's *charismatic* power to embody the inchoate and conflicting dreams and desires of his followers (and it might be added, the deepest fears and paranoid fantasies of his enemies).<sup>3</sup> No doubt all successful politicians must have something of the actor in them, but Parnell was, for all his indisputable breeding, education, wealth, intelligence, and influence, the stage Irishman *par excellence*. Terry Eagleton's characterization of Parnell in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* is a recent and typical example of the kind of response that Parnell's cult of personality even now elicits from critics, biographers, and historians:

The Irish are no doubt more remarkable for showing off than any other people; but there was certainly a sense in which they knew themselves to be permanently on stage. And it is suitably symbolic that two of their greatest



champions, Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell, displayed in their discourse a mastery of equivocation and ambiguity which would have been the envy of Mallarmé. As that oxymoronic animal, a radical landlord, Parnell could offer himself as a conveniently indeterminate space in which different forces — Fenianism, constitutionalism, agrarian agitation — might temporarily congregate. He was not the only Irish leader to live his existence as a kind of symbol, converting his Anglo-Irish aloofness into a blankness in which others could find themselves conveniently reflected. (143)<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the specific parallels Stoker may have intended to evoke between Dracula and the Irish leader (it is finally impossible on the basis of scant biographical evidence to know what the circumspect and secretive author intended his greatest literary creation to *signify*), he makes full use of the license granted him by the gothic form. The result is a mythic (and melodramatic) protagonist who embodies the charismatic appeal and metamorphic quality of Parnell's persona taken to a higher power. As such, Dracula manages to embody not only certain features commonly associated with Parnell but others inconsistent with what his most reliable biographers tell us of him. Dracula thus not only incarnates the attributes of Parnell as radical nationalist, dangerous leader of the Catholic masses (though himself a Protestant), and secret ally of violent revolutionary movements, he also incarnates a demonized version of the very sort of traditional and conservative Anglo-Irish Ascendancy landlord who despised Parnell as a traitor to his class. To be sure, there was and continues to be no perfectly consistent view of Parnell's life and career, owing in no small measure to his powers of political equivocation and protean self-invention. Nevertheless, it is a mark of the plasticity of Stoker's Dracula that he outstrips even Parnell in his capacity to personify the various historically, politically, and religiously incompatible forces that contended with one another in nineteenth-century Ireland.

By reading Stoker's gothic romance in the context of Parnell's turbulent political career, with particular emphasis on the revolutionary struggles of the Irish leader for land reform and Home Rule, I aim to suggest how Dracula functions as an overdetermined figure onto whom are cathected many of the most formidable political and social issues of nineteenth-century Ireland. Among these controversies are the challenge of the peasantry, working class and rising bourgeoisie to the political power and economic privileges of the landed interests in Ireland; the increasingly problematic role of women in democratic politics of the day; the violent confrontations between rebellious Irish nationalists and a repressive English government; the recurrent religious and cultural struggles between the Irish Catholic majority and the Protestant Ascendancy; and finally the general threat to the integrity and durability of the British Empire posed by increasingly forceful demands for Irish political autonomy. An overarching argument runs throughout the separate treatment of these matters: like Parnell, Dracula appears as a blank screen onto which the incoherent and conflicting dreams and fears of emergent Irish nationhood are imaginatively and sometimes surreptitiously projected. As Tim Healy, one of Parnell's

closest political associates and a spokesman for the Irish Parliamentary Party put it, "We created Parnell . . . and Parnell created us. We seized very early in the movement the idea of this man with his superb silences, his historic name, his determination, his self-control, his aloofness — we seized that as the canvas of a great national hero" (quoted in Foster, *Modern Ireland* 401). I suggest that Healy's words might serve as an apt characterization of Dracula. For the genius of the charismatic Irish nationalist leader, like that of Stoker's aristocratic vampire who employs the imperial "we" when speaking of himself, resides in his power to embody in himself the inchoate dreams of a new social collective at once profoundly desired and deeply troubling. To bring into existence such an entity would mean symbolically to raise in the midst of the living body politic a nation of the Undead.

## 2. "between the living and the dead"

Parnell was a member of a wealthy Anglo-Irish Ascendancy family that had settled in Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century. A Protestant landlord with a sizable estate in County Wicklow, Parnell was descended from a line of distinguished public men who had wielded considerable economic and political power in Ireland and who, moreover, had earned a reputation initially for loyalty to British imperial rule and subsequently for liberal reformism and steadfast Irish patriotism in the face of an oppressive imperial government. Born in 1846, Parnell was the eldest son of an Anglo-Irish father, John Henry Parnell, and an American mother, Delia Tudor Stewart. Parnell attended private school in Ireland and later Cambridge, and at the age of twenty-nine was elected to the British Parliament. A champion of Irish nationalism and a fierce critic of British rule in Ireland, Parnell joined Isaac Butt's Home Rule League and as a member of Parliament courted the support of radical and extremist elements in Ireland (including a number of prominent Fenians).<sup>5</sup> By 1877 Parnell had effectively succeeded Butt as president of the Home Rule Confederation and had become the leading figure among the Irish members of the British Parliament. In 1879, already an increasingly popular figure in Ireland and America, especially among Irish Catholics, Parnell became the president of the Irish National Land League, which had been recently founded by Michael Davitt. This organization agitated for sweeping agricultural and economic reforms in Ireland, going so far as to call for the abolition of landlordism. While Parnell remained a strict "constitutionalist" who refused to endorse the "physical force" nationalists, he approved openly of many controversial tactics of the Land League, including rent strikes and social ostracism (boycotting), while refusing to work actively to put an end to agrarian "outrages" that ranged from threatening letters and the maiming of livestock to physical assaults on and assassinations of "rack-renting" landlords and their agents. However much Parnell claimed to remain fully within the law, he benefited politically from the violent and sometimes murderous illegalities of his supporters during the "Land War" of 1879-82.<sup>6</sup>

Parnell's leadership of the Land League, and his earlier participation in the tactic of "obstruction" (filibustering) in the British Parliament as a means of

forcing consideration of Irish political issues, made him a controversial, even much hated figure in Britain among Tories and Liberals alike, to say nothing of Unionists and most Anglo-Irish Protestants in Ireland (see for instance Morris 476). Paul Bew, a biographer of Parnell, argues that “even moderate nationalist opinion — let alone Irish Tories and Liberals — saw Parnell as an extremist . . . hopelessly entangled in dangerous and speculative projects” (39). Even so, by 1880 Parnell had become the chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the single most important Irish political figure since “the great Liberator,” Daniel O’Connell. Parnell’s continued backing of the Land League, even after major legislative concessions were made by the British government (the 1881 Land Law), prompted the prime minister, William Gladstone, to order his arrest and call for Parliament to outlaw the Land League. When the already high level of agrarian violence associated with the land agitation continued to rise after Parnell’s detention in Kilmainham jail, Gladstone released him and the other key members of the Land League and further promised to grant new concessions on land reform, all in exchange for Parnell’s assistance in helping to bring the violence to an end.<sup>7</sup> The “Kilmainham Treaty,” as the deal was known, was ultimately perceived by Parnell’s supporters as an immense triumph for him and his party and further enhanced his status as an Irish patriot, hero, statesman, rebel, and martyr.

After his release, Parnell became the leader of the newly established Irish National League, which sought Home Rule for Ireland. Having secured a “sealed concordat” between the Roman Catholic Church and the nationalist movement, Parnell and his party won a sweeping victory in the general election of 1885, winning 86 seats and thereby gaining control of the balance of power in the newly elected parliament at Westminster. By 1886, Parnell had formed an alliance with Gladstone’s Liberals, having secured the assurance of the prime minister that his government would introduce a Home Rule Bill for Ireland. Following the narrow defeat of the First Home Rule Bill in 1886, the *Times* began publication of “Parnellism and Crime.” A Special Commission was established by Parliament (with Parnell’s consent), which effectively placed the entire Nationalist movement on trial. Its purpose was to investigate Parnell’s role in the Phoenix Park murders, as well as the complicity of nationalist leaders in Fenian violence and the “outrages” of the land agitation. With the revelation in 1889 that a man named Richard Piggot had forged the letters purportedly proving Parnell’s complicity in the Phoenix Park murders, the Irish leader was vindicated, becoming in the process more popular than ever and reaching the zenith of his political power. Home Rule seemed to be within his and Ireland’s grasp.

But within months of his exoneration, Parnell’s career was destroyed. In late December of 1889 he was named as correspondent in a divorce case initiated by Captain William O’Shea, a former member of Parliament and disaffected ally of Parnell, and the husband of Parnell’s English mistress for nearly a decade, Katharine O’Shea. In 1890, the scandal surrounding his adulterous relationship led to Gladstone’s repudiation of Parnell and to the rapid collapse of popular support for the Irish leader. Having been officially denounced by the Catholic clergy in Ireland, Parnell tried unsuccessfully to hold on to control of

the Irish Party, which split in 1890 with a majority opposed to his continued leadership. In 1891, Parnell's already frail health deteriorated precipitously as he sought in vain to recoup his political fortunes. Having once been the idol of immense crowds in Ireland and America (where he had been invited to meet the president and address Congress), Parnell was roundly vilified in public; his detractors included many Irish Catholics who were once his most ardent supporters. At one political rally, a member of the violently anti-Parnellite crowd threw lime in Parnell's face, and at another meeting an angry mob ripped the doors off his carriage while a priest cried, "Down with libertinism!" (see Morris 488). The Parnellite candidates were repudiated in a number of by-elections, and with his personal and political reputation in shambles, Parnell died in 1891 at the age of forty-five. In death, however, he became an ever more potent symbol of resurgent Irish nationalism, an immortal martyr whose very name was a source of inspiration for Irish patriots eager to gain their freedom from British imperial rule.

This rough outline of Parnell's career cannot do justice to the way in which he was popularly described and imaged in Stoker's day. For public rhetoric, especially that of Parnell's English (and Anglo-Irish) critics, often cast the Irish leader in the role of a mythic, prophetic, divine figure, or not infrequently a tyrannical, demonic, and even monstrous one. For example, shortly before Gladstone ordered the arrest of Parnell, the prime minister delivered one of the most famous speeches of his career. His remarks were aimed at discrediting Parnell's attempted subversion of the Land Act of 1881 and were clearly meant to warn the Irish leader that the Liberal government would make full use of its powers in putting down what it regarded as a seditious attempt to inflame violent agrarian resistance to British rule. On October 8, 1881, Gladstone, speaking before a great crowd at the Cloth Hall banquet at Leeds, denounced Parnell in a striking manner:

He desires to arrest the operation of the Land Act; to stand as Moses stood *between the living and the dead*; to stand there *not as Moses stood, to arrest, but to spread the plague*. . . . If it shall appear that there is still to be fought a final conflict in Ireland between law on the one side and *sheer lawlessness* upon the other, if the law purged from defect and from any taint of injustice is still to be repelled and refused, and the first conditions of political society to remain unfulfilled, then I say, gentlemen, without hesitation, *the resources of civilization against its enemies are not yet exhausted*. (Quoted in Morley 3: 61; emphasis added)<sup>8</sup>

The speech, published in the *Times* (and thereafter regularly quoted in many subsequent biographies of Gladstone and Parnell), is remarkable for its image of Parnell as an inverted or demonic Moses, a false prophet and tyrannical liberator who inhabits the tenebrous realm between life and death, an alien and malignant force with the necromantic power to hasten the plague even to the shores of England itself. An avid follower of political news, the future author of "The Un-dead" (Stoker's original title for *Dracula*) must surely have read Gladstone's speech.<sup>9</sup> If so, his attention might well have been arrested by a

nearby passage in the same speech in which Gladstone attacked those political opponents (among whom Parnell was numbered) who falsely proclaimed that “*the vampire of free trade was insidiously sucking the life-blood of the country*” (quoted in Morley 3: 61; emphasis added). Here Gladstone warns against protectionists such as Parnell who employ the false metaphor of the vampire to blacken the good name of free trade. But it is nonetheless suggestive that in the very speech in which Parnell appears as a tyrannical prophet and unholy



Figure 2.

necromancer who threatens to unleash a plague upon the land, Gladstone should have prominently deployed the metaphor of the vampire.

In another celebrated speech of the same period, Gladstone denounced Parnell and the Irish Nationalists as “marching through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire” (quoted in Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* 285; see also Ranelagh 137). Shortly after the gruesome Phoenix Park murders (Cavendish and Burke were stabbed and their throats slashed with surgical knives), Sir John Tenniel’s “The Irish Frankenstein,” a famous cartoon of Parnell as Victor Frankenstein, appeared in the pages of *Punch* on May 20, 1882 (see figure 2). Featuring Mary Shelley’s monster as a masked, knife-wielding assassin in the foreground (his pronounced subhuman traits betray the signs of contemporary English racial stereotypes of the Irish) and a kneeling Parnell/Frankenstein in the background, the cartoon seeks to blame the Irish leader for providing the animating spirit of the monstrous crimes that have been perpetrated.<sup>10</sup> Not long after Parnell’s death, a newspaper article in the *Spectator*, with the suggestive title “Banquo’s Ghost,” referred to the Irish leader as an “evil genius” (15 April 1893; 474), while another in the *Fortnightly Review* described him as “that sad, strange, shadowy figure, prophet, desperado, ruler, madman, martyr all in one” (1 November 1893; 705).<sup>11</sup> On October 24, 1885, on the eve of the decisive elections that were to propel Parnell and the Irish Nationalists to a leading role in Parliament, *Punch* published another remarkable cartoon by Tenniel entitled “The Irish ‘Vampire’” (see figure 1). The cartoon shows a gigantic vampire bat hovering over a young and apparently unconscious female figure, whose harp (labeled “Hibernia”) lies beside her. The scene is illuminated by a full moon suspended above the horizon. Emblazoned across the outspread wings of the vampire bat are the words: NATIONAL LEAGUE. The bat bears a recognizably human face, its eyes focused on its victim, its bearded mouth opened menacingly as it descends. The vampire’s features are so finely detailed that its identity cannot be mistaken: it is Charles Stewart Parnell.<sup>12</sup>

Given the gothic and even vampiristic associations that swirled around Parnell in the 1880s and 90s, it seems likely that Stoker’s portrait of Dracula should have drawn on the “myth” of the Irish leader for inspiration.<sup>13</sup> This hypothesis is strengthened when we take into account Stoker’s well documented interest in contemporary Irish and English politics, his direct involvement in British imperial rule in Ireland as a one-time civil servant in the employ of English authorities in Dublin Castle, his lifelong support of Irish Home Rule and friendship with leading members of the nationalist movement, his passing acquaintance with and deep admiration for Gladstone (with whom he discussed Parnell), and his own equivocal feelings toward and disappointment in the leader of the Irish Home Rule movement.<sup>14</sup> Once seriously entertained, this thesis draws considerable support from abundant and suggestive textual parallels between Parnell and Dracula that may be mobilized by the politically attentive reader of Stoker’s novel. For example, both Parnell and Dracula are known for their haughty and reserved aristocratic bearing and for their uncanny power of commanding respect and attention. An arresting phrase that Winston Churchill uses to describe Parnell could easily find its place in Stoker’s description of Count Dracula: “Here was . . . a being who seemed to exercise uncon-

sciously an indefinable sense of power in repose — of command awaiting the hour” (*Great Contemporaries* 281).<sup>15</sup> T. P. O’Connor’s 1891 biographical memoir of Parnell casts the Irish leader in a similar role:

What the Irish saw in Parnell was a man who was proud, scornful of English indignation. . . . The strong nation was humbled by the weak, in the person of Parnell; the proud conqueror baffled; the scorn of the dominant race met with a scorn prouder, more daring and more deep. . . . It was a spirit in some respects evil, and at first decidedly malignant; but it was the spirit of self-confidence, pride and hope which Parnell thus inspired. . . . Parnell . . . was the first man who, for two generations, approached the proud and, as England then was, cruel and contemptuous conqueror, and compelled him to stand and listen — and obey. (Quoted in Murphy 72-3)

Moreover, like Dracula, Parnell was often viewed in England as a *foreign* threat, as a hostile *alien* presence who, as an MP at Westminster, pursued his designs against English rule in Ireland while safely ensconced at the very heart of the British Empire. Sir Charles Dilke, one of Parnell’s parliamentary adversaries, described his antagonist with a mixture of awe and xenophobia: “He acted like a foreigner. We could not get at him as at any other man in English public life. He was not one of us in any sense. Dealing with him was like dealing with a foreign power” (quoted in Murphy 77).<sup>16</sup>

Like Dracula, Parnell was said to possess an almost hypnotic gaze; the penetrating and fiery quality of his eyes is a commonplace in contemporary portraits of the man.<sup>17</sup> Both Parnell and Dracula are also distinguished by a propensity for disguise. Dracula assumes not only the forms of a bat, wolf, and dog but also the more prosaic ones of a coachman and of the bourgeois lawyer, Jonathan Harker. In particular, the foreign aristocrat always conceals or transforms his appearance in order to make possible his clandestine visits to his English women: Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker. During his decade-long affair with Kitty O’Shea, Parnell resorted to similar subterfuges when making his semi-secret visits to his mistress in England, donning peculiar disguises in order to pass unrecognized. One of Parnell’s most important political lieutenants and a friend of Stoker, William O’Brien, described meeting Parnell in a thick fog near Greenwich in December of 1886, in a scene straight out of a late-Victorian gothic thriller:

I suddenly came upon Parnell’s figure emerging from the gloom in a guise so strange and with a face so ghastly that the effect could scarcely have been more startling if it was his ghost I met wandering in the eternal shades. He wore a . . . costume that could not well have looked more bizarre in a dreary London park if the object had been to attract attention. (Quoted in Ranelagh 142)<sup>18</sup>

Parnell’s strange proclivity for disguise and invisibility became more pronounced after the scandal of his affair with O’Shea broke. Like Dracula when he is hunted down first in London and later in Transylvania, Parnell exhibited

an understandable paranoia, a “constant fear of being followed, and made attempts at disguise which only served to give him a sinister appearance” (Bew 96). Henry Labouchere, a political advisor of Parnell and another friend of Stoker, warned the Irish leader about the dangers of attempting to pass among the “teeming millions” of London (*Dracula* 71): “Do not go into the East End or you will be taken for Jack the Ripper” (quoted in Bew 96). Given Stoker’s comment that the 1888 Whitechapel murders of Jack the Ripper “originated from the same source” as the murders in *Dracula*, Labouchere’s anecdote concerning Parnell is unusually suggestive.<sup>19</sup>

Stoker often seems to have seized upon Parnell’s most peculiar personal habits for his portrait of Dracula. For example, one of Parnell’s more notable eccentricities, commented upon frequently by contemporaries and later biographers, was his obsession with finding gold in the Wicklow mountains near his ancestral estate (see Bew 7-8; and Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* 282). Stoker’s vampire, in the guise of the mysterious coachman who transports Jonathan Harker to Castle Dracula, pursues a similarly weird obsession when he chases a supernatural blue flame that one night a year indicates the location of “hidden gold” buried beneath the ground about his estate (*Dracula* 33). Parnell’s many personal oddities included an unusually superstitious disposition; for example, he had an intense “loathing” of the color green — a serious handicap for an Irish politician with nationalist aspirations (see Bew 9). This tendency finds its exaggerated counterpart in Dracula, whose entire life is bounded by superstitions of the most varied and deadly serious kind. As Van Helsing puts it, “tradition and superstition are everything” to the count (*Dracula* 307). Even Parnell’s alleged paranormal ability to detect the presence of his beloved Kitty O’Shea when she entered the Ladies’ Gallery in the House of Commons has its echo in the telepathic connection that exists between Dracula and his female victims, especially with the woman responsible, at least indirectly, for his final downfall, Mrs. Mina Harker.<sup>20</sup> In short, Stoker seems to have ransacked the Parnell legend for a great many personal effects with which to costume his gothic villain. The cumulative effect of these many shadowy resemblances is a demonized portrait of Parnell as criminal, sensualist, adulterer, aristocrat, and demon, who threatens the domestic harmony, legal structures, political institutions, and moral conventions that undergird Victorian society and the British Empire.

### 3. “I would be master still”

Although Dracula has most frequently been understood by critics to pose chiefly a psychosexual or sociocultural threat to Victorian England, Stoker places great emphasis upon the *political* stature of the count and insists upon the larger historical significance of his attempted invasion of Britain. Dracula himself repeatedly emphasizes for his Victorian bourgeois foes that as count he has “commanded nations, and intrigued for them, and fought for them, hundreds of years before they were born” (370). Like Parnell’s many political antagonists, the would-be destroyers of Dracula must concede that their enemy *is* a great



political figure. As Van Helsing puts it, “then was he no common man; for in that time, and for centuries after, he was spoken of as the cleverest and the most cunning, as well as the bravest of the sons of the ‘land beyond the forest’” (309); “he was in life a most wonderful man. Soldier, statesman, and alchemist. . . . He had a mighty brain, a learning beyond compare, and a heart that knew no fear and no remorse” (388-9). Pressing forward with recent efforts to read *Dracula* in political terms, I suggest that Stoker’s *Dracula* retains much of Parnell’s political significance and revolutionary character — that is, his assault on the inhabitants of England is linked with a persistent historical threat of political violence directed against British rule in Ireland. However, it must be emphasized that *Dracula*’s polymorphous capacities as a political figure exceed even those of Parnell. As such, *Dracula*’s personal and genealogical history also associates him with a group to which Parnell was linked by familial and class affiliation, but to which the progressive and even revolutionary political objectives of the Irish leader were opposed: the traditional Anglo-Irish Ascendancy in its conservative, imperialistic, and politically repressive historical role. In a virtually Derridean sense, the figure of *Dracula* functions as a “trace,” or “margin,” the site at which fundamental historical and cultural differences are at once generated and dissolved, a kind of symbolic hinge through which conflicting religious ideologies and political animosities may move, converge and diverge.<sup>21</sup>

The identification of *Dracula* as both Irish political revolutionary and exploitative Anglo-Irish landlord is facilitated by David Glover’s recent work, which argues for geographical and ethnographic similarities between nineteenth-century Ireland and the imaginary representation of Transylvania and the Balkans in Stoker’s fiction (see Glover 32-43, 73). “Transylvania,” as Van Helsing knows, means literally, “Beyond the Forest,” which is strikingly close to the phrase current from the fourteenth century on that was used to describe those parts of Gaelic Ireland lying outside of Anglo-Norman and later British control: “Beyond the Pale.” In general, the conditions in *Dracula*’s homeland, however much they reflect the “real” state of nineteenth-century Transylvania and Wallachia (or at any rate, the popular descriptions of these places provided by British travelers and tourists), correspond to many of those in Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Both are characterized by divisive and even murderous ethnic conflicts (*Dracula* 449); both are notable for their relative poverty, economic backwardness, and depressed agricultural state; in both an exploited peasantry suffers from the depredations of a declining (and sometimes absentee) landholding class clinging desperately to feudal or neo-feudal privileges; both are inhabited by a rural population that appears to secularized British Anglicans as extraordinarily superstitious (which is to say Catholic); both have suffered in the recent past from various plagues and disasters that have led to a massive depopulation of the countryside (411, 413);<sup>22</sup> both have suffered from centuries of invasion, political and religious strife, and imperial rule by foreign peoples, some of whom have attempted to impose an alien religion upon the populace; and both may be said to lack, in any strict sense, a *national* identity that supersedes ethnic, religious, cultural, and dynastic affiliations.

Dracula's name, as more than one critic has noted, is a homonym for the Gaelic phrase "*droch fholm*," meaning "bad blood" (see Belford 264; and Lloyd 119). In keeping with the Irish roots of his gothic tale, Stoker provides the count with a noble genealogy that departs fancifully from that of the historical Dracula but symbolically aligns his ancestry with that of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, from which Parnell (and far more distantly and indirectly Stoker himself) descended: "We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship. Here, in the whirlpool of European races" (42). Like the ancestors of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, the Draculas claim to rule by right of conquest. Moreover, the Szekelys and the Anglo-Irish are by no means pure-blooded but rather descended from several waves of conquering peoples: Berserkers, Huns, and Magyars on the one hand; Celts, Norsemen, Old English (Normans), and New English on the other. The racially hybridized Draculas have fought a series of religious wars against the Turks, as well as dynastic and territorial struggles against the Hungarians (to say nothing of the Lombards, Avars, and Bulgars). Similarly the Anglo-Irish for centuries have been immersed in religious warfare (principally between Protestants and Catholics), dynastic struggles (the Jacobite challenge of the late seventeenth century), and violent attempts to assert or maintain their political autonomy in the face of foreign invaders, including such anti-British interlopers as the Spanish and French. Even the imperial designs of the Draculas in the Balkans and Asia Minor, as the occasional allies of the Hungarians and the Four Nations, echo the important role members of the Anglo-Irish played in advancing and defending the British Empire throughout the world. (The Duke of Wellington, Sir Richard Burton, and Garnet Wolseley, as well as many other prominent heroes of British imperialism, were all Anglo-Irish). To be sure, Dracula's encyclopedic summary of his noble "house" and "race" can seem confusing, convoluted, and even contradictory. (Are the Szekelys foes or kin of the Magyars? Are the Draculas defenders of or apostates from the one true faith? Are Dracula's ancestors foreign conquerors or native patriots?) But if my thesis is correct, the obscurities and anomalies of Dracula's ancestral history are partly explicable as the analogue of the peculiarly complex and tangled history of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy that produced an Irish nationalist and revolutionary such as Parnell. As Foster explains, the "Protestant Ascendancy" included members "whose descent could be Norman, Old English, Cromwellian or even (in a very few cases) ancient Gaelic" (*Modern Ireland* 170). It is worth noting that Parnell's own heritage was unusually hybridized even for an Anglo-Irish landlord: his mother was an American. Like Dracula, Parnell could claim direct descent from a number of famous patriots, politicians, rebels, and warriors; his maternal grandfather was the famous Admiral Stewart — "Old Ironsides" — who distinguished himself in several naval battles *against* the British in the War of 1812.

It may seem odd that a foreign *nobleman* should symbolize for Stoker a *revolutionary* threat to the British imperial order. But one must remember that for centuries many of the most celebrated leaders of Irish resistance to English rule were aristocrats — Hugh O'Neill, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Edward Fitzgerald —

or members of the Anglo-Irish (Protestant) Ascendancy — Theobald Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmett, Henry Grattan, and Parnell. To be sure, by Parnell's day, the great majority of Ascendancy landlords were historical anachronisms fighting a rearguard action against the progressive forces of English liberalism and the more radical challenge of Fenianism, the Irish Land League, and the National League. A few of the more astute and pragmatic members of the Ascendancy were aware of the precarious nature of their economic fortunes and political power. In the opinion of at least one of Parnell's biographers, it may well have been his profound sense of the historical decline and politically vulnerable position of the Ascendancy that contributed to Parnell's revolutionary ardor. Bew offers the controversial thesis that Home Rule or complete Irish independence might have been the means by which Parnell, "a conservative . . . nationalist with a radical tinge," hoped to salvage the declining political and economic fortunes of the Ascendancy (136). In Bew's view, Parnell (like Yeats and Lady Gregory in a later phase of nationalist agitation) hoped that by severing ties with England, an independent Ireland might provide a safe haven for the Ascendancy, a last refuge from the onslaught of egalitarian modernization (see 73-4, 90, and 136-7).<sup>23</sup>

The count acknowledges that the glory of his house is a thing of the past: "The warlike days are over. Blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonorable peace; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told" (*Dracula* 43). In Stoker's novel the sanguinary pursuits of the medieval aristocracy are *literalized* in the course of history and belittled as Dracula's monstrous blood-drinking addiction — an old habit he just can't seem to kick. Vampirism is not so much the practice of a healthy nobility in its historical prime as the decadent habit of a senescent class that tries desperately to preserve its existence long after it has lost its political *raison d'être*. Like the Undead, the Ascendancy live beyond their historical moment. Stoker's image of this decaying class is reinforced by his depiction of the count's precarious financial status. Harker is shocked by his discovery at Castle Dracula that the count must live *entirely without servants*. The noble *boyar* performs the most "menial offices" (41) of cook, chamber maid, and coachman. The count often laments the passing of his aristocratic way of life: "the walls of my castle are broken; the shadows are many, and the wind breathes cold through the broken battlements and casements" (36). The medieval ruins of castles, homes, and churches that Dracula inhabits in his native Transylvania and in England reveal the Ascendancy not in its historical glory but at the point of its ultimate financial and political collapse. Although he continues to claim the feudal prerogatives of the nobility, the count can no longer rely on the wealth of his landed estate for his financial sustenance. Castle Dracula is thus Stoker's gothic counterpart to the doomed "Big House" of the Anglo-Irish historical novel. Stoker's depiction of the count's predatory abuse of the local Transylvanian peasantry could well echo the kind of Fenian denunciation of Ascendancy landlords as "cormorant vampires" and "coroneted ghouls" made popular by Parnell's associate Michael Davitt or his sister Fanny Parnell (see Foster, *Modern Ireland* 375; and Glover 51). As the fortunes of the ruling class degenerate, it resorts to ever more desperate and exploitative measures — bleeding the peasantry dry.

Parnell's reputation for liberality, his widely acknowledged status as a progressive, entrepreneurial, and generous landlord, set him apart from the great majority of Anglo-Irish landlords of his time. Nonetheless, his own financial fortunes may be echoed in Dracula's increasingly dire economic predicament. For Parnell's Wicklow estates, like those of a great many of his Ascendancy compatriots, were unprofitable and by 1883 heavily mortgaged. So anxious was Parnell for finances that he was forced to rely on his mass of political supporters for funds; the scandalously huge subscription of £37,000 they generated came to be known as "the Parnell tribute" (Bew 62). One of Parnell's less successful schemes — a massive program for the reclamation of abandoned estates in the West of Ireland — may correspond to Dracula's equally disastrous real estate speculations in London. Parnell and an associate made vast and widely publicized purchases of uncultivated lands in County Galway with the apparent intention of relocating thousands of Irish peasants to these new areas in an attempt to reclaim estates that had been abandoned by absentee landlords (see Bew 63-4). Dracula buys up abandoned property in London, which he hopes to resettle and presumably repopulate with his growing army of vampiristic victims. Dracula's clandestine scheme proves as fruitless as did Parnell's widely publicized one.

But given the highly fluid character of Dracula's identity, another logically inconsistent but oneirically compatible interpretation of Dracula's attempt to reestablish himself in London suggests itself. As Eagleton has argued, the extended subplot involving Dracula's transportation of coffins filled with earth literalizes, via the dream logic of gothic romance, a conventional political insight of the period: the Ascendancy cannot survive without their landed property. Separated from his blessed/cursed plot of earth, which in Dracula's view has been sanctified by the blood of the many battles fought over it, the Ascendancy lord will perish — his existence is unimaginable without it (Eagleton 215-6; see also Deane 89-90). Ironically, it is this very dependence on the soil that limits Dracula's mobility and renders him a virtual corpse during business hours. From this vantage point, Dracula seems to represent the conservative Ascendancy landlord rather than Parnell, whose detractors often attacked him as "a social radical totally lacking in respect for the rights of property" (Bew 136). The more extreme demands of Parnell's Land League — the abolition of landlordism, redistributionist land reform — certainly represent political solutions at odds with Dracula's anachronistic hopes of clinging to his ancestral estates in Transylvania. However, it should be remembered that in his ongoing negotiations with Gladstone over the Land Acts and Home Rule, Parnell fought for assurances that the dispossessed Irish landlords would be handsomely compensated, if not by the British taxpayer, then by the Irish. If then *Dracula* plays out in an oneiric mode the often bloody struggle over property rights in Ireland, in which the landed estates of the Ascendancy were understood as both cause and object of centuries of civil conflict, the count's attempt to transfer his "property" to England might also be understood as the metaphoric equivalent of his looking to the English law for the protection and preservation of his financial and social interests. Like those Ascendancy landlords whose estates were purchased from them by the terms of the Land Act,

and who in many cases moved to England where they attempted (not always successfully) to reconstitute their fortunes, Dracula abandons his manorial estates overseas and attempts to recoup his financial position in London, all in an ultimately vain attempt to escape the historical fate of his anachronistic European class: annihilation.

At certain moments, Dracula strikes a less intransigent pose, as if he were not so much an alien invader as a displaced refugee (of however noble a background) who seeks a new home within the secure order of Victorian Britain. Abandoned by his servants and peasants, who fear and despise their “lord,” Dracula reluctantly seems to undergo a metamorphosis that arguably is the “real” historical counterpart of his more supernatural acts of transformation: he learns to become an (English) bourgeois. He prospects for gold, acquires the professional skills of the rising middle-class — Jonathan Harker suggests the count “would have made a wonderful solicitor” (45) — and increasingly transfers his wealth into liquid assets (the bank notes and gold coins he stuffs under his clothes in London), which supplant land as the modern form of capital.<sup>24</sup> As Stephen Arata has argued, Dracula, as the Occidental counterpart of the British orientalist, studies, masters, and ultimately learns to mimic the ways of the new ascendant class of English imperialists and businessmen; in short he learns to “pass” as a Victorian gentleman in London itself (632, 634–41).<sup>25</sup>

The result is an odd inversion of the traditional social hierarchy. In a gesture that typifies much of Victorian literature of the late imperial period, Stoker seems unusually concerned to characterize his middle-class crusaders as the true inheritors of the mantle of nobility: as Van Helsing says to Mina, “your husband is noble nature, and you are noble too, for you trust” (238). In general, Stoker’s romance faithfully carries out a narrative strategy that appears in British literature at least as early as the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, wherein the highest or purest form of nobility belongs to the ascendant bourgeois characters, who supplant the degenerate aristocracy of the *ancien régime*. This symbolic inversion of the social hierarchy helps to explain why Stoker’s gothic romance, which presumably is less bounded by the conventions of the nineteenth-century realistic novel, is nonetheless so relentlessly obsessed with the details of business agreements, clinical reports, and legal contracts. *Dracula* provides a symbolic landscape in which the historically incompatible aristocratic and bourgeois forms of class identity, lodged in competing notions of economic and political status, blood-lines and inheritance, civil and property rights, might be juxtaposed, inverted, or transformed. While the spiritual ennoblement and social elevation of bourgeois characters is effected through their supernatural battle with the “last” surviving representative of an older aristocratic order, their struggle is fought with the material weapons of business contracts, legal forms, medical reports, train schedules, and the other tools of the professional bourgeoisie. The Victorian middle-class protagonists claim for themselves the forms of honor, glory, spirituality, and religious elevation that used to be the “privilege” of the aristocracy, while requiring that all the material prerogatives of the count be legitimized and regulated by the customs and laws of a middle-class liberal democratic regime.

Of course, Dracula’s metamorphosis into a bourgeois might be understood as no more than a Machiavellian pose that enables him to preserve rather than

relinquish his claim to mastery and lordship: "I have been so long master that I would be master still — or at least that none other should be master of me" (32). His "occidentalism" would not then signal his willing assimilation to modern bourgeois culture but would instead represent the tactical means by which Dracula hopes to conquer England and create, in Van Helsing's words, "a new order of beings" (389). Here, Parnell's career provides a clear historical analogue. Though the foremost Irish political figure of his day, he spoke with an impeccable English accent and struck his fellow Irish parliamentarians as "the most English Irishman ever yet seen" (see Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* 282; and Bew 9).<sup>26</sup> As a liberal-minded entrepreneurial Protestant landlord seeking to improve both his own and his tenants' material fortunes, Parnell appeared to most of his contemporaries to have aligned himself with progressive political and social ideas in England. Moreover, like Dracula, who studies, among other things, English "politics" and "law" (30), and whose careful, precise and systematic manner of carrying out his plans is praised by his enemies (291), Parnell owed a great deal of his success to his ability to master and manipulate the complex rules and rhetoric of the English legal and parliamentary systems. As an avowed "constitutionalist," Parnell did not openly embrace violent resistance to British rule in Ireland, but by virtue of his talents as a parliamentarian, popular campaigner, public speaker, fund raiser, and demagogic nationalist politician, he managed to threaten the power of the empire in a way no other figure of his age did.

Like Gladstone and the Liberals, who in the early 1880s discovered that even the most sweeping land reforms would neither satisfy Parnell nor definitively resolve the Irish Question, Van Helsing and his Victorian allies must admit that their struggle with Dracula does not end even after they (symbolically) repossess his English properties and force him to flee from London. More is at stake here than the mere tenure, distribution, and control of land and property. Even as he is driven from English shores, the count swears to pursue his mortal struggle against his foes: "My revenge is just begun! I spread it over centuries, and time is on my side" (394). We catch here a hint of the unbridgeable divide between the revolutionary nobleman and the representatives of the Victorian imperial order. For the truly intractable issue seems to be not Dracula's financial interests or the changes his presence promises to make in the tenure and title of property but rather the count's threat to the political loyalty that binds the British subject to the Empire. Until he is utterly defeated and destroyed, the count, as leader of the Undead and as master of those who have been infected by his desires, will claim as *his own people* those — like Mina — who have hitherto been the dutiful subjects of Britannia.

Of course, like Parnell, Dracula ultimately does not rely entirely upon the efficacy of constitutional means but as a "prophet armed" benefits from the constant if implicit threat of violence. Here we come to one of the most significant subterranean connections between "the Rebel Prince" of Ireland (Morris 468) and the Transylvanian prince of darkness: their unholy associations with murder, rapine, and bloodshed. In an incendiary speech as famous as Gladstone's at Leeds on October 8, 1881, Parnell defended himself and his continued opposition to the Land Act at Wexford on October 9. Characterizing the

English prime minister as “this masquerading knight errant, this pretended champion of the liberties of every other nation except those of the Irish nation” and as a “schoolboy” whistling “on his way through a churchyard at night to keep up his courage” (terms ironically appropriate to Van Helsing and his band of Victorian “crusaders”), Parnell notably refused Gladstone’s challenge to repudiate publicly the Fenian “dynamite policy” (O’Shea 1: 194-8). Arguing that, in Gladstone’s view, “no man is good in Ireland until he is buried and unable to strike a blow for Ireland,” Parnell virtually defied the prime minister to arrest him (1: 195). In an exchange that quickly became a standard anecdote in the Parnell hagiography, the Irish leader, when a supporter asked who would take his place if he were jailed, responded: “Ah, if I am arrested Captain Moonlight will take my place” (quoted in O’Shea 1: 198). Parnell’s reply was a barely veiled threat of new agrarian outrages to be carried out on the part of violent “moonlighters,” as they were commonly known. Their widespread and much feared *nocturnal* visitations, which, in a few of the more spectacular cases publicized at the hearings of the Special Commission, led to the deaths of women and children, provide the turbulent historical background to Dracula’s own surreptitious moonlight depredations. (It is suggestive that Dracula on several occasions quite literally assumes the form of moonlight when carrying out his nocturnal attacks on Renfield, Mina, and Lucy).<sup>27</sup>

Though never substantiated, the public charges that Parnell tacitly supported agrarian outrages, the Phoenix Park murders, the dynamite campaign waged by Irish-American Fenians in the heart of London in 1883 and 1884, and the renewed violence that flared up in the late 1880s in the aftermath of the defeat of the First Home Rule Bill assured Parnell’s reputation as a kind of revolutionary terrorist and seditious criminal of the most brutal kind, a “real” alien monster who sought by any means at his disposal to dissolve the Act of Union that married Ireland to the British Empire. If the ultimate horror of Dracula’s campaign against the English nation is not the deaths of a handful of middle-class Londoners but rather the creation of a “new order of beings” who might come into existence at the very heart of the British imperium (389), then Parnell’s greatest threat was not the violent murder of British subjects but the prospect that he might bring into existence a whole new people, a nation of free Irish citizens under his leadership.

#### 4. “the children of the night”

Stoker’s theoretical commitment to Home Rule and his backing of Irish nationalism was qualified by his disapproval of violent Fenianism and many of Parnell’s tactics, and it was surely in tension with his enthusiasm for the glory of the British Empire.<sup>28</sup> Consequently his portrait of the would-be nationalist liberator accentuates the ethically questionable aspects of revolutionary politics. Nevertheless, Stoker cannot help but generate sympathy for his vampire. Mina Harker, though already a victim of Dracula’s assault, which puts her soul at peril, counsels pity for the count, the “saddest case of all” (397). The moral rhetoric of his foes continually circles back to credit Dracula with a formerly

noble nature that has at some indeterminate moment in the distant historical past, and in a manner that Stoker refuses to specify, become corrupt. In a moment of empathy, Mina implies that the count's demonic behavior is, in a theological sense, not a product of his unfettered will. Her liberal Protestant ideology identifies Dracula as a victim, that is, as one who has also been the prey of a vampire. She insists that he must truly yearn for *freedom*, for release from his condition (397). Jonathan Harker's passing suggestion that it is the "holiest" love that has led many a good soul into "the ghastly ranks" (383) is of course part of the romantic repertoire of the gothic form, but it is also ambiguous enough to allow for a kind of patriotic love of one's own kin or country that might partially exonerate both Dracula and Parnell. This intriguing possibility is strengthened by Dracula's answer to the rebuke that he has never loved: "Yes, I too can love; you yourselves can tell it from the past" (55). In his excursus on vampirism, Van Helsing suggests that Dracula, the proud Transylvanian *voivode*, for all his power and rank, is "not free. Nay; he is even more prisoner than the slave of the galley, than the madman in his cell" (308). Stoker's liberal sensibility breaks through to grant a basic concession: the evil of Dracula is intimately connected with and possibly even a product of his lack of liberty.

Stoker's novel thereby dramatizes the dialectical nature of the romantic struggle for political liberation and thereby replays a trope of English (and Anglo-Irish) thought that dates back at least as far as Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. In *Dracula* the enlightenment goal of total liberation turns into a nightmare of terrorism, murder, and brutal sensualism. The specific Irish backdrop of Parnell's quest for Home Rule darkens Stoker's gothic fable; the action of the novel takes place in the wider context of a conquered people's struggle for political self-determination and against an empire that claimed to grant full liberties and protection under the law to all its subjects. On at least one occasion, Dracula assumes the metaphoric guise of a would-be liberator of an enslaved people. He appears before Mina as "a sort of pillar of cloud" (333), which prompts Mrs. Harker to remember the passage from Exodus 13: 21-22, "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light."<sup>29</sup> In short, Dracula appears in the guise of the Lord leading the children of Israel out of captivity in Egypt. To be sure, Dracula, unlike Parnell, never appears before the Irish nation, nor even before characters explicitly identified as Irish. Nonetheless, he seems attractive to and attracted by those individuals and types who are marginalized and disenfranchised in Victorian England: women, foreigners, the poor, and inmates of mental asylums.<sup>30</sup>

More than any other figure in *Dracula* the character of Renfield serves as a stand-in for the Irish adherents of Parnell and the nationalist cause. Though Renfield is nowhere referred to as Irish, his condition as an *imprisoned subject under direct British supervision*, one who in the absence of his English warder, John Seward, must be monitored by an *Irish* doctor named Patrick Hennessey, provides fertile ground for an allegorical reading. Renfield's erratic conduct follows a pattern that Parnell's detractors detected in his most troublesome Irish Catholic and Fenian followers. His violent outbursts correspond closely to the slightest movements and the merest whims of his "Master" (132). As the vam-



pire-killers discover, his actions are a barometer of Dracula's moods and desires. Like the Irish peasants who were reported to have knelt in the presence of Parnell, Renfield is capable of extreme acts of worshipful self-abasement. When the count bids him to be patient, he becomes a docile, even model subject, while at other times, when possessed by the count, he fights "like a tiger," "more like a wild beast than a man" (135). The particulars of his murderous attack on Seward, in which Renfield uses the Doctor's (presumably surgical) knife as a weapon, seem to recall one of the more sensational details of the Phoenix Park murders of Cavendish and Burke. While the immediate context of this assault suggests that Renfield's attack is merely an outbreak of homicidal mania, his verbal outbursts raise the prospect that he is fighting, or at least *believes* he is fighting, against institutional oppression and for his political rights and property, as well as for his beloved leader: "They shan't rob me! they shan't murder me by inches! I'll fight for my Lord and Master!" (203). Placed within the context of Fenian and agrarian violence in Ireland, Renfield's remarks appear as a demonic parody of the political slogans employed by violent nationalists and Parnellite advocates of land reform. Read allegorically, Renfield emerges as the nightmarish image of the "crazed" moonlighter and "insane" nationalist agitator that Parnell was alleged to have sponsored and even directed.

Stoker deepens the portrait of Renfield by granting him moments of lucidity in which he articulates a doctrine of human liberation and self-government. In one telling scene, Renfield claims that he is "as sane as at least the majority of men who are in full possession of their liberties" (314). His request is simple and straightforward: as a subject capable of rational self-government, he should be set free: "Let me go! let me go! let me go!" (317). For Renfield, spiritual or mental freedom without possession of concrete civil liberties is a contradiction in terms: "I want to think and I cannot think freely when my body is confined" (350). Above all, he wishes to be sent "*home*" without delay (313; emphasis added). His demand for *freedom* is linked explicitly with the demand for his *own* home(land); were he capable of rational self-government, he would deserve to live in his own home unsupervised by English warders. Of course, Seward and Van Helsing suspect that Renfield's rationality, dignity, and self-possession are merely a form of madness, all the more so because Renfield refers to the count as his "lord and master," whom he might serve in "some diabolical way" (320). For all their devotion to liberalism, enlightenment science, rationality, and the rule of law, Seward and Van Helsing refuse to grant that Renfield could be a rational creature capable of self-government.<sup>31</sup> Like many Irish subjects caught in the violence between Fenians and the British crown, Renfield perishes in the brutal conflict without ever regaining his "home." Stoker clearly lays the blame for Renfield's violent death on the count. But Renfield's peculiar complaint, "I don't care for the pale people" (361), with its buried pun, hints that his British custodians, or at the very least, those who inhabit the seat of British government within the Pale, are in some manner partly responsible for his dismal fate. Even his supervisors tacitly recognize that they must share the burden for his demise, for otherwise they would not resort to falsifying his death certificate to avoid an unwanted inquest (373).

If Renfield functions at a deep symbolic level as an allegorical stand-in for those Irish subjects whose hopes for national self-determination were frustrat-

ed, or even for those who were callously sacrificed in the struggle for land reform and Home Rule, then Quincy Morris assumes an oddly ambivalent if critical role in the unfolding of the “political unconscious” of the novel. As an American, Morris would presumably be largely indifferent to relations between Ireland and England. Nevertheless, the intriguing possibility remains that this rough and ready representative of the Wild West and the new American imperialism may himself have a hidden stake in English-Irish politics. This speculation is supported by certain highly suspicious if shadowy connections between Morris and Dracula. Morris is the first to use the term “vampire” in the novel or to suggest that Lucy has been bitten by a vampire bat. Lucy’s condition unexpectedly deteriorates rapidly immediately *after* she receives a transfusion of blood from Morris; previous transfusions by contrast worked to halt or at least slow the advance of her vampirism. During a scene in which Van Helsing and the others hold a conclave indoors in which Dracula is first named as their enemy, Morris leaves the group, and then fires *into* the room where the vampire-killers are assembled, subsequently claiming that he was aiming for a vampire bat (on the window sill) that no one else inside the home had noticed. Later, after Dracula makes a hasty escape following his critical assault on Mina Harker, Quincy is inexplicably seen running *from* the house and hiding in the shadow of a great yew tree outside the asylum. Still later Jonathan and Mina are awakened by suspicious noises outside their bedroom door; suspecting another assault by Dracula, Jonathan opens the door only to discover . . . Morris. All of these details suggest that Quincy, although he ultimately sacrifices his life in an effort to kill Dracula, is nevertheless secretly allied with the count. On the basis of this evidence, Arata argues that Morris is to be seen as an instance of a new American imperialism that challenges the global dominance of the British Empire (642-3). But another possibility remains. Like the Irish-American Fenians and allies of Parnell, who worked actively (and secretly) in the United States and the United Kingdom for the violent overthrow of English government in Ireland, Morris — whose original first name in Stoker’s notes for the novel was “Brutus,” assassin of the emperor Caesar — seems to harbor a hidden if complex antipathy to the representatives of the British imperial order (see Frayling 342). Whether or not “Morris” is intended by Stoker to be an Irish-American name,<sup>32</sup> the importance of America and Americans in Parnell’s struggle against British rule would not have been underestimated by the author of *Dracula*. Parnell made several tours of the United States (as did Stoker), where he raised money and popular support for his political designs, lobbied Congress and the American presidency for moral and diplomatic assistance, and in general looked to the United States for resources in order to press his case with the British Parliament. As the archetypal American in Stoker’s gothic romance, Morris serves to embody the complex and deeply ambivalent attitude of the United States towards imperial Britain, an attitude profoundly affected by the large Irish-American immigrant community that wielded a growing political influence in late-nineteenth-century American politics.

One last group of characters who seem especially susceptible to the charms of Dracula is, of course, women. Critics of *Dracula* have made much of Stoker’s profound suspicion of “the New Woman” and the way in which his hostility toward female emancipation informs his gothic romances and novels (see

Glover 100-135; and Senf). I would suggest that Stoker's anti-feminist sympathies, so palpably evident in *Dracula*, draw considerable inspiration from the often problematic relationships between Parnell and the various women who played significant roles in his political and personal life. *Dracula* reincarnates in the form of gothic romance the semi-mythical portrait of Parnell as both criminal and sensualist. Most thoughtful political analysts of Parnell's career, even those not predisposed to sympathize with his political ambitions, would grant that the charge of sensualism against Parnell had little basis. Few disputed that he was devoted to Katharine O'Shea, to whom he was faithful from the beginning of their relationship until his death. The couple had a daughter who died in infancy and were, in fact, belatedly but legally married after O'Shea's divorce became final. Thus, the anti-Parnellite myth of the man as libertine, though based on a substantiated charge of adultery, was a gross mischaracterization. Even so, in rendering his gothic portrait of the polymorphic Dracula, Stoker turns as readily to the demonic myth of Parnell as to a historically trustworthy biography of the real man.

Allowing for the greater sensualism of Dracula, whose memorable taunt, "your girls that you all love are mine already" (394), resonates throughout the novel, Stoker's portrait of the count as womanizer and roué nevertheless borrows from and freely transforms Parnell's life in melodramatic ways. For Katharine O'Shea was much more than Parnell's adulterous lover; she was also one of his closest and most influential political confidantes. A key intermediary between Parnell and Gladstone, she served as a semi-secret courier for their political correspondence and in general as a kind of diplomatic intermediary for her husband in his parliamentary and political dealings. When the public scandal surrounding O'Shea's adulterous relationship broke, the sudden visibility of her erotic hold on Parnell led detractors to cast her in terms as gothic and mythical as those applied to Parnell. She was "O'Shea Who Must Be Obeyed" (an allusion to H. Rider Haggard's *She*, who seeks to usurp the throne of Queen Victoria) and even more suggestively "the were-wolf woman of Irish politics" (Marlow 259). O'Shea's fictional counterpart, Mina Harker, is likewise granted by Dracula something of the same power and status that Parnell conferred upon his beloved "Queenie." She is aware of Dracula's every movement and by virtue of her psychosexual bond with the count has access to male political plans and secret knowledge that would otherwise be denied by her liberal middle-class English husband and his friends. At a time when women could not vote or hold public office, Katharine O'Shea was granted not only the ear of Parnell but also that of the prime minister of England. By a force of circumstance as compelling as that which led Gladstone to accept O'Shea's uniquely influential role despite her sex, Van Helsing and the vampire killers are compelled to hang upon every word of the telepathic Mina Harker. Though they wish to exclude her entirely from their councils, inevitably the enemies of Dracula consult her, and they finally come to depend upon her analysis and advice to deal effectively with the count. Like O'Shea, Mina becomes the morally compromised but nonetheless powerful female medium at the center of a political crisis that is international in scope.

The legend of Parnell's "tragic" fall often casts O'Shea in the critical role as the seducer or corrupter of the heroic nationalist and political liberator. Par-

nell's contemporaries, adherents, and early biographers were wont to see Parnell's weakness for a married woman as his fatal flaw, the singular cause of his political catastrophe. While his relationship with O'Shea was an open secret among the more knowledgeable Irish and English politicians of the day, its public disclosure was the event that precipitated the end of his political career and any immediate prospect for Irish Home Rule. Parnell shares with Dracula a fatal destiny in which an English woman (O'Shea, Mina) who is the object of the hero/villain's obsessive attentions proves to be the instrument of his undoing. Though historians continue to debate whether Captain O'Shea was encouraged by Parnell's political foes to file the divorce complaint in court,<sup>33</sup> the fact remains that in Parnell's case as in Dracula's, an erotic attachment to a married woman provided his enemies with the weapon by which they wrought his destruction. In life Parnell was no less a Byronic figure than his fictional counterpart.<sup>34</sup> It is fitting then that a romantic if nonetheless historical incident — Kitty O'Shea's theatrical gesture of burying with Parnell's coffin the faded petals of a red rose that the Irish leader had presented her at their first meeting — finds its gothic echo in *Dracula*, where Van Helsing orders that a branch of the "wild rose" be placed atop the count's coffin in order to seal his doom (421).

Of course, Mina is only one of Dracula's many "women," who also include Lucy Westenra and the trio of aristocratic vampires who seduce Jonathan Harker in Castle Dracula and are ultimately destroyed by Van Helsing. By no means the libertine his religious critics accused him of being, Parnell was nonetheless very closely associated with women other than O'Shea, who were in many respects just as controversial and politically influential as his mistress. Among these were Parnell's mother, Delia Stewart, who was often (though perhaps inaccurately) understood to be one of the chief sources of her son's vehement anti-British attitudes, and, even more prominently, Parnell's sisters, Fanny and Anna. The sisters were instrumental in the organization of one of the most radical and violent organizations involved in the Land War, the group known as the Ladies Land League, branches of which were formed in the United States, Ireland, and Scotland. At the height of the land agitation, and particularly during the period of Parnell's imprisonment in Kilmainham jail, Anna Parnell assumed a crucial public role in leading the organized resistance against landlordism and British imperial policy in Ireland. An outspoken feminist and political agitator of violent and imposing character, Anna courted fame and infamy in equal measure with her provocative actions and speeches. Her criticism of Gladstone was regarded as so extreme as to make Parnell's own rhetoric seem tame by comparison. Carrying the war of words to the heart of Gladstone's electoral home, Anna went on a speaking tour of Glasgow in 1881, where she favored the local Irish population with the following characterization of the prime minister: "[He] is a wretched, hypocritical, bloodthirsty miscreant . . . who is having your own countrymen and countrywomen slaughtered now at home to suit his own vanity" (quoted in Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell* 273). On another occasion she deftly skirted an outright call for physical violence against Gladstone and his Irish secretary, W. E. Forster: she told an audience in Edinburgh that "she could see no advantage to shooting Mr. Forster or Mr.

Gladstone, as these gentlemen living were doing a service to Ireland which if they were dead they could not do; they were teaching the Irish people the utter folly and weakness of trusting any English statesman, or any Englishman, to work reform in Ireland.”<sup>35</sup> Parnell’s critics charged that he could not control Anna or the increasingly violent group of women who constituted the membership of the Ladies Land League. Parnell’s sister was accused of giving support to the agrarian violence in Ireland during the Kilmainham imprisonment of the Land League leadership, and even Katharine O’Shea in her memoirs argued that Anna was beyond the control of Parnell himself (O’Shea 1: 260-1). In a final effort to save himself from further political embarrassment and regain control of his followers, Parnell cut off all funds to the Ladies Land League, an action that effectively put an end to Anna’s political career and led to her life-long estrangement from her brother.

Given the free manner in which Stoker seems to have adapted the already fantastic contemporary myths surrounding Parnell, it seems possible that Dracula’s “seduction” of Lucy Westenra — whose Anglo-Irish last name belongs to the barons of Rossmore of County Monaghan (McCormack 843) — and his other women is a gothicized portrait (complete with its conventional psychosexual features) of Parnell’s own highly controversial and problematic relations with the women of his distinguished family. Like Anna Parnell, Lucy and the female vampires at Castle Dracula are infected by the violent spirit of the man they follow and to whom they are related by *blood*. But once vampirized, these women carry out violent moonlight outrages of their own, frequently without the direct knowledge or consent and sometimes even against the express wishes of their “lord and master.” Dracula must intervene to save Jonathan Harker from his female adherents, whose attitude toward the count involves an odd mixture of love, hatred, admiration, scorn, and bitterness. While the dominant critical view of Dracula’s threat stresses his libidinal corruption of innocent or repressed Victorian females, the more significant and politically charged consequence of his power is that women under his influence turn violent. It is the political rather than the specifically sexual liberation of women that most threatens the Victorian imperial order. Dracula’s criminality consists not simply in his power over women who follow his wishes but also, and more importantly, in his inability to control them completely after they have joined the ranks of the living dead.

##### 5. “knights of the Cross”

It is a sign of the fully secularized character of academic criticism in the present age that a gothic novel that insistently takes up religious themes should be commonly read as though its religious subject matter were merely a pretext for some other presumably deeper obsession on the part of its author.<sup>36</sup> This seems especially unfortunate in the case of *Dracula*, given that its author, raised in the Church of Ireland, received his formal university education at a time of important religious and sectarian controversies on both sides of the Irish Sea. In 1869 the Church of Ireland was disestablished by an Act of the British Parliament.

During the years that Stoker spent at Trinity College (at which time the university did not admit Catholics), one of its most prestigious faculty members, the Reverend Dr. George Salmon, Regius Professor of Divinity, played a pivotal role in the so-called "Revision Controversy," a public and highly contentious dispute concerning the reform of the doctrines, rituals, and political role of the Church of Ireland in the wake of its disestablishment. Officially independent from both the British government and the Church of England for the first time since the Act of Union, the Church of Ireland was engulfed in a struggle between its traditional Anglican and militant evangelical wings to redefine its relationship to both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. The Irish debate, it should be noted, did not take place in isolation but contemporaneously with a struggle within the Church of England between two camps, ritualist and anti-ritualist.

In Ireland the evangelical wing of the Church of Ireland was reacting against Anglican accommodation with Catholicism, represented by the Oxford Movement, and contemporary developments in the Catholic Church itself, such as the dogma of papal infallibility. The evangelicals, who were ascendant in the Church of Ireland by the late 1870s, sought to "purge from the Prayer Book all traces of sacerdotalism and 'Romanism'" (Akenson 303; see 302-18 generally). One of the focal points of the controversy was the nature of the Eucharist, with the evangelicals successfully amending the catechism to the effect that the Lord's Supper was to be "taken only in a heavenly and spiritual manner, through faith" (308).<sup>37</sup> Other successful reforms included the deletion of many of the saints' days from the church calendar and a sweeping series of changes in the ecclesiastical canons governing public worship, mainly involving the elimination or reduction of many ritualistic elements — the use of candles, wafer bread, incense, the mixing of water and wine, processions, the placement of a cross on or behind the communion table, the carrying of any cross, banner, or picture in a religious ceremony — that blurred the distinction between Protestant and Catholic services (306-7). While the "Revision Controversy" was more or less resolved by 1878, other public disputes between the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church punctuated the 1880s and 1890s, including Leo XIII's papal bull against the Anglican orders in 1896 and the counter-critiques delivered by Anglican divines shortly thereafter — a dispute that once more touched upon differing doctrinal views with respect to transubstantiation (see Webster 397-8).

These sectarian controversies were only the most recent chapters in a long and troubled history of religious conflict in Ireland. A series of Penal Laws passed in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had deprived Catholics of many civil rights and religious freedoms: the Catholic clergy had been banished; the rights of Catholics to vote and hold military and civil offices were abolished; Catholics were barred from election to Parliament, forbidden to work as solicitors, prohibited from teaching or sending their children abroad for a Catholic education; and severe restrictions were placed on the right of Catholics to buy and hold land. Though some of these laws were repealed in the late eighteenth century, full restoration of rights did not take place until 1829 with the Catholic Emancipation Act. Resistance to the religious monop-

oly of the Church of Ireland, and particularly to the financial burden placed on Catholics by mandatory church tithes (taxes), led to a series of tithe wars which reached its peak in the late 1830s. Such violent disputes marked the growing political power of the Catholic population in nineteenth-century Ireland and helped to bring about the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the renewed militancy of an embattled Protestant Ascendancy.

Religious disputes played a critical role in Irish politics during Stoker's lifetime. Parnell's fortunes were deeply enmeshed in religious and sectarian politics in Ireland. Possessed of charisma and an uncanny ability to embody the objectives and prejudices of a diverse following, he managed to become that most unlikely of hybrids: an Anglo-Irish *Protestant* landlord who led a nominally non-sectarian revolutionary nationalist and democratic movement supported mainly (though not exclusively) by an Irish *Catholic* mass of supporters. It was a paradox not lost upon Parnell's contemporaries, all the more so since the sudden collapse of his political fortunes in the wake of the O'Shea divorce case was in great measure abetted by the fierce antagonism Parnell's adultery generated among the Catholic clergy of Ireland. Though Parnell had studiously courted the support of local priests from his earliest days in Parliament, and though his political power depended upon the assistance he received from the priesthood after his "concordat" with the Catholic Church in 1885, the public revelation of Parnell's adulterous affair was vigorously denounced from the Catholic pulpits throughout Ireland, with the result that the majority of Parnell's Irish Catholic followers deserted his cause. The bitterness of the conflict between Irish nationalism and Irish Catholicism is evident in the literature of Ireland for decades afterwards: published in 1916, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* revisits the controversy by way of the heated exchange between Stephen's father (a loyal Parnellite) and his aunt, Dante, a devout Catholic and harsh critic of Parnell's immorality.

Stoker's novel evidences a serious engagement with religious matters, especially as they bear on the larger political questions confronting Ireland during Parnell's rise and fall. For example, Stoker's attention to Dracula's role in the medieval history of religious warfare between Christians and Muslims, as well as his insistence on portraying Van Helsing and his vampire killers as "old knights of the Cross" engaged in a modern religious crusade against their religious foe (412), seems to evoke obliquely the complex religious struggles that characterized Ireland throughout its history. Another persistently puzzling crux of Stoker's novel is why its nominally Protestant and quasi-secularized heroes and heroines must resort to the power of (virtually medieval) Catholic ritual and belief in order to triumph over Dracula. No doubt Stoker participates in a long-standing gothic literary tradition — one that includes the works of Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Charles Maturin, and Sheridan Le Fanu — in which Catholicism provides the atmosphere, stage scenery, and even the demonic villains necessary to produce in a Protestant and increasingly secular readership the proper shudder of horror (see Sage 26-69). Nevertheless, the religious controversies of late-nineteenth-century Ireland, which necessarily intersected with the great political crises of the period, provide us with a clue that casts the "gothic Catholicism" of Stoker's novel in a new light.

In the aftermath of Parnell's fall, the religious ironies and conflicts that characterized the career of the Irish leader seem to find their fictional corollary in Dracula's peculiarly ambiguous religious status in Stoker's novel. As I have already pointed out, the count lives among a highly devout folk who were long ago devoted to their lord but have come to fear and despise him. While the count's extreme alienation from "his people" clearly has a political and social basis — he is a *boyar* among peasants — it is often associated with the specifically religious loathing that the devout peasantry feel toward their master. The resemblance of Dracula's situation to that of a Protestant Ascendancy landlord becomes all the more striking once it is recognized that the wild "superstition" of the Wallachians and Transylvanians, which an Anglican such as Jonathan Harker finds so excessive and "idolatrous" (12), often consists in nothing more than the devotional practices of folk Catholicism. Like an anti-ritualist among English Churchmen or an evangelical of the Church of Ireland, Harker is half-ashamed to wear a crucifix given him by a local Transylvanian woman seeking to protect the young traveler from evil (Sage 51). While certain local religious customs, such as the sign against the evil eye, lie outside orthodox Catholic practice, Harker, as a Protestant with initially anti-ritualistic sympathies, often makes little distinction between pagan and Catholic practice; to him all are simply "superstitious" (*Dracula* 13). The sight of peasants kneeling at roadside shrines in "self-surrender of devotion" (15) strikes Harker as both strange and noteworthy, though it would be a scene common enough in the countryside of nineteenth-century Ireland.

If Catholicism is "transformed" by its gothic context so that it appears to Protestant eyes as a form of "superstition" and "idolatry," then it would seem plausible, in a work in which the symbolic valence of Dracula himself shifts frequently and unpredictably, that Protestantism would undergo a corresponding gothic metamorphosis, assuming a monstrous aspect as seen from the perspective of the Catholic peasantry. Dracula's vampirism can thus be interpreted as the "heretical" religion of an aristocratic apostate who has deviated from the Catholic faith. Dracula, after all, was in ages past an ardent *defender* of medieval Catholicism, a great crusader against the infidel Turks. While remaining adamantly opposed to the Turks in the Victorian era, the count as a vampire has nevertheless come to embody a profound challenge to — even a satanic deviation from — the one true faith of medieval Christian Europe. Dracula's vampirism therefore may be viewed as a distorted image of Ascendancy Protestantism as it appears to a Catholic peasantry who regard the religious beliefs of the ruling class as a corruption of their own true and originary form of Christianity. If so, then Van Helsing's insistence that only the rituals, sacraments, and relics of Catholicism (the Host, the crucifix, holy water, a papal indulgence) can provide the spiritual weapons necessary to combat Dracula's power — an insistence that the doctor's Protestant allies find disturbing, even offensive — reverberates with a political echo. For although Dracula, like Parnell, does not share the "superstitious" Catholicism of his "own" countrymen, and although his chief antagonists, like those of Parnell, view Catholicism with distrust and "disfavor" (41), it proves to be the powers, offices, and rituals of the Catholic Church that play a critical supporting role in the ultimate destruction of vampire and uncrowned king alike.<sup>38</sup>



I do not wish to insist upon the unequivocally “Protestant” nature of Dracula’s vampirism, for the count’s religious affiliations (if the term can be appropriately applied to the “monstrous” and “unholy” traditions and observances that characterize the life of the “Undead”) are, in keeping with his protean identity, unusually ambiguous and fluid.<sup>39</sup> Dracula’s vampirism in fact functions as a symbolic hinge between the most purified versions of Anglo-Protestantism and the most orthodox forms of Irish Catholicism. For if on many occasions the count’s vampiristic powers seem to the local Catholic peasantry as the heretical negation of medieval Catholicism, they more commonly appear to Stoker’s Protestant heroes and heroines as a particularly virulent form of archaic Catholic “superstition.” When he arrives in London, Dracula seeks out the estate at Carfax, which dates from “mediaeval” times and possesses a ruined “chapel or church” (35); the vampire is drawn to, indeed depends upon, a desanctified edifice, the original construction of which predates the Protestant Reformation. In short, the count seeks out the ancient grounds of the buried medieval Catholic past.

In one of the most sensational and discussed scenes in the novel, Dracula forces Mina Harker to drink his blood, which gushes from a wound in his bosom. The understandable temptation to read the scene in psychosexual terms has been so strong that critics have generally allowed the religious connotations of the episode to go unremarked. By contrast, Van Helsing, employing an explicitly religious vocabulary, insists that Dracula and Mina have enacted together the “Vampire’s baptism of blood” (414). The *tableau vivant* that Dr. Seward witnesses, the kneeling figure of the white-clad Mina literally drinking the blood that spurts from the wound in Dracula’s breast, is commonly linked in Catholic tradition to the scene of Christ’s crucifixion. In late-medieval European painting, the image of a follower of Christ drinking the blood of his crucified body, blood that sometimes flows from the wound in Jesus’s side, is a common iconographic motif compatible with many orthodox Catholic interpretations of scripture. Indeed the image has frequently been taken to be a pictorial gloss on a metaphor employed by the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of the “wine-press” of God, a metaphor that later patristic writings connected to the crucified Christ.<sup>40</sup> The association seems to have been on Stoker’s mind, for Dracula uses this very metaphor of the “wine-press” to describe Mina immediately after she has been vampirized (370). In any case, the scene takes on new social and political importance when viewed against the historical backdrop of the “Revisionist Controversy,” for it embodies that which the evangelicals in Ireland or the anti-ritualists in England found most objectionable in Catholic (or unreformed Anglican) worship: the belief in literal transubstantiation. The close connections in Stoker’s fiction between Dracula and the crucified Christ as he appears in late medieval Catholic pictorial and theological tradition thus have the effect of representing Catholicism, with its “pagan” and “idolatrous” rituals and sacraments, as a satanic threat to an increasingly defensive and therefore more strident and uncompromising Protestant order. Specifically, the scene images the “materialistic” Catholic notion of holy communion, the literal consumption of the Lord’s blood and body, as an unclean and superstitious ritual, at once obscene and sacrilegious to Protestant eyes (see Sage 51). Given

that Parnell was often represented in popular discourse as both a crucified Christ (a savior and sanctified martyr of the Irish Catholic nation) *and* a satanic figure,<sup>41</sup> the Anglican Stoker may have reimagined the Protestant Irish leader as a satanic parody of a *Catholic* Christ, promising eternal life to those faithful adherents who literally feed upon his blood.

A subterranean vein of anti-Catholicism in *Dracula* is also apparent in the unflattering portrait of Renfield. As I have argued, the unfortunate inmate in many respects functions as an allegorical figure for the violent Fenians and anti-British moonlighters associated (justly or unjustly) with Parnell. However, the language with which Dr. Seward describes his patient reveals a profound distrust of his religious temperament, which the English Protestant doctor can understand only as a form of transgressive and socially disruptive madness: "it is some sudden form of religious mania which has seized him. If so, we must look out for squalls, for a strong man with homicidal and religious mania at once might be dangerous" (132-3). Renfield's obsessions with "indefinitely" prolonging "life" (300), with the burdens of the "soul," with drinking blood, with the ritualized consumption and transubstantiation of (lower) forms of life, and above all, with acquiring "some higher life" (351), all point to the "irrational" religious origins of his violent mental disorder. Thus, while Renfield is nowhere explicitly marked as a Catholic, his unusual array of symptoms — religious/homicidal mania, zoophagia, consumption of human blood — function in Stoker's symbolic economy as the psychopathological signs of a violent, uncontrollable, and thereby demonized strain of Catholicism. Renfield's "irrational" insistence on the literal truth and material basis of the sacrament of communion — "the blood is the life" (184) — locates him within a Roman Catholic theological tradition as it had been unfavorably characterized in Stoker's day by evangelical Protestants and anti-Popish religious reformers (Sage 54). In Stoker's novel long-standing religious differences may be translated into the seemingly objective lexical register of scientific diagnosis and sectarian animosities insidiously pathologized. Stoker's portrayal of Renfield as a creature incapable of exercising a Protestant independence from hierarchical religious authority, as hopelessly subservient to his priestly "lord and master," thus subtly shades into the portrait of him as violent Fenian and Parnellite moonlighter slavishly doing the bidding of his malevolent political overlord and religious superior.

Stoker's associations linking Fenian violence, agrarian outrage, and folk Catholicism obscure the fact that the Land League was an ostensibly nonsectarian organization with both Catholic and Protestant members and that the Fenians and Catholic clergy were historically often at odds with each other. (The Fenians viewed the Catholic clergy as overly conservative, insufficiently nationalistic, unduly passive, and unreliable political allies; the Catholic clergy typically characterized the Fenians as irreligious, immoral, violent, and lawless). Nonetheless, as a gothic representation of the historical and political events of late-nineteenth-century Ireland, *Dracula* participates in the sort of fanciful distortion of history that was typical enough in the journalism and popular myths that circulated in Stoker's day. With respect to the gothic conflation of Fenianism, anti-English outrage, and "idolatrous" and subversive folk Catholicism,

*Dracula* partakes in the sort of inflammatory theories advanced by the so-called “Orange writers” in the North of Ireland, who saw the Land League as a vast and sinister conspiracy directed at the destruction of Protestantism in Ireland.<sup>42</sup>

While a powerful undercurrent of anti-Catholicism runs through Stoker’s novel, *Dracula* is in the end not entirely unsympathetic to the Catholic faith. Although it is not certain that Van Helsing, a citizen of the largely Protestant Netherlands, is a practicing Catholic, he certainly makes use of the rituals of Catholicism, with which he is intimately familiar, for “heroic” ends: the defense of the British realm and the preservation of a (Protestant) Victorian moral order. This fact, had it been recognized, would have been appreciated by the Anglican divines who defended the traditional ritual practices of the Church of Ireland before disestablishment. Moreover, the effect of having to confront a religious antagonist, however demonic, serves to revivify the religious convictions of Stoker’s modern and scientific English Victorians, whose religious struggle against demonized Catholicism has the paradoxical effect of respiritualizing their mundane existence. For example, a uniquely modern medical procedure — the transfusion of blood — becomes the literal means by which one’s soul is to be saved; even when it apparently fails in that ultimate objective, some of the communicants in this ritual, such as Arthur and Lucy, come away with the conviction that they have been “really married . . . in the sight of God” (225). The religious transformation of modern middle-class existence affects even so ordinary a figure as the dutiful bourgeois, Mina Harker. She metamorphoses, in the course of an explicitly religious ordeal involving repeated mortifications of the flesh, into a virtually medieval (Catholic) saint, whose “eyes shone with the devotion of a martyr” (373). As crusaders against a religious foe who serve in her holy cause, her husband and associates are not only ennobled but also spiritually uplifted and religiously transfigured. As Van Helsing puts it:

We bear our Cross, as His Son did in obedience to His will. It may be that we are chosen instruments of His good pleasure, and that we ascend to His bidding as that other through stripes and shame; through tears and blood; through doubts and fears, and all that makes the difference between God and man. (382)

One of the underlying paradoxes of Stoker’s novel is that by combating the threat of “vampirism,” his Protestant and quasi-secular characters borrow heavily from the medieval Catholic tradition that in part constitutes the “historical real” lurking behind the gothic persona of the vampire *Dracula*. It is only in a new and unexpected struggle against an ancient religious enemy from the remotest and most “primitive” regions of modern Europe that the Harkers, Seward, Godalming, Lucy, and Morris are made to feel that they possess immortal souls whose fates matter in some profound theological sense. What Van Helsing regularly praises and seeks in them is a capacity for “faith” (215, 249), for “belief” (246, 260), for overcoming the skeptical “doubt” of the age (240, 242-3). And over the course of the novel, the sacraments that were formerly so much at the heart of medieval European religious existence once again

appear as truly efficacious and holy. In particular, the sacrament of marriage, threatened by the evil of Dracula's adulterous designs, mystically reclaims a sanctified status amidst the prevailing secularism of the Victorian era — a lesson that both the friends and enemies of Parnell, the great "libertine" and adulterer, who nonetheless dutifully married Katharine O'Shea after his fall from power, might well have appreciated.

6. "we are pledged to set the world free"

In a novel in which Dracula serves as the ultimate source of evil and in which the narrative perspective is monopolized by the righteous voices of his victims and enemies, the dubious methods of Stoker's heroic vampire killers are not so easily discerned. Moreover, it is often reasonable to identify the theological speculations, ethical judgments, and social pronouncements of these Victorian "knights of the Cross" with Stoker's own liberal beliefs, however much they may have been imperfectly clear or coherent (see for instance Glover 5-21). Nevertheless, a sustained reflection on the tactics and practices employed by these heroes against Dracula reveals a shocking number of improprieties, criminal offenses, and political misdeeds. In the course of the novel, the vampire killers violate attorney-client and doctor-patient confidences, routinely break and enter buildings and apartments, vandalize their contents, rob them of valuables including gold and the deeds to property, twice abandon a kidnapped and physically abused child in the countryside at night, desecrate grave sites and mutilate corpses, misappropriate or steal personal correspondence and legal documents, falsify medical and coroner's reports in order to avoid police investigations and medical inquests, fail to protect the life of an inmate in their custody, bribe customs officials, avoid the payment of duties, commit fraud in the course of doing business with the owner of a sailing vessel, illegally stop and search non-British ships on foreign rivers through force and guile, impersonate customs and police officials, violently attack with knives and rifles a group of gypsies who have acted in an entirely legal manner, countenance involuntary euthanasia, and, of course, "execute" a foreign count and four women (who are sufficiently undead to be subject to gross physical injury and death) without recourse to trial or resort to any system of justice recognized by England — or for that matter by any other civilized society.

The language that Seward and Van Helsing sometime use to describe their own actions — "outrages" (262, 265), a "plan of campaign" (416) — is fraught with political connotations that directly associate their conduct with the political violence that characterized the relationship between England and Ireland during the career of Parnell. As I have already mentioned, "outrage" was the preferred political term to denote acts of agrarian violence during the Land War, while the "Plan of Campaign" was the official title of the political program, led by Parnell's associates and lieutenants, William O'Brien and John Dillon, that provoked a renewed upsurge in the land agitation after the failure of the First Home Rule Bill in 1886. I would argue that Stoker's repeated and deliberate use of these terms to describe the conduct of his heroes is meant

ironically and is intended to draw attention to the ways in which the deeds of an ostensibly progressive and liberal group of English champions, who are “pledged to set the world free” (413) and who claim to stand for liberty, justice, and political enlightenment, resemble the depredations and illegalities of their ostensibly illiberal political and religious antagonist.

Stoker’s odd reversal in applying these highly volatile political phrases to those who appear to embody a progressive ideal of English liberalism seems intended to draw attention to the profound contradictions — some would say the hypocrisy — of many English liberals when it came to political rule in Ireland. For the land agitations of 1879–82 and of 1886–7 were strongly linked in the minds of Irish nationalists and Parnellites with a series of Coercion Acts passed in 1881 and 1887 under both Liberal and Tory governments. The Coercion Acts gave the chief secretary of Ireland (W. E. Foster in 1881, Arthur Balfour in 1887) significant powers to repress agrarian agitations and Land League activities with force. One historian has described the first of these Acts as “a Bill that enabled the Viceroy to lock up anybody he pleased and to detain him as long as he pleased while the Act was in force” (Hammond 211).<sup>43</sup> The Coercion Acts were seen by their critics as final proof of the tyrannical nature of English rule in Ireland. Among the actions taken by the English government in the wake of these Acts were the expulsion of members of the Irish Party from Parliament, the jailing of Parnell and the leadership of the Land League, the forcible eviction of impoverished Irish tenants who were unable to pay rent, sweeping censorship of the Irish press, suppression of public meetings deemed dangerous by the Viceroy, the mass deployment of police and English troops, and the suspension of the right of habeas corpus. The unfettering of the police and army ultimately led to a number of violent assaults on the Irish populace and to many casualties and deaths among innocent subjects (O’Connor 451–2). The relatively conservative *Weekly Irish Times* of October 22, 1881 provides an example of the brutality unleashed by British authorities to quell peaceful demonstrations in Dublin after the arrest of Parnell:

The police drew their *bâtons*, and the scene which followed beggars description. Charging headlong into the people, the constables struck right and left, and men and women fell under their blows. No quarter was given. The roadway was strewn with the bodies of the people. . . . Women fled shrieking, and their cries rendered even more painful the scene of barbarity which was being enacted. All was confusion, and nought could be seen but the police mercilessly *bâtoning* the people. Some few of the people threw stones . . . but, with this exception, no resistance was offered. Gentlemen and respectable working men, returning homewards from theatres or the houses of friends, fell victims to the attack. . . . [M]ore than a dozen students of Trinity College and a militia officer — unoffending passers-by — were knocked down and kicked, and two postal telegraph messengers engaged in carrying telegrams, were barbarously assailed. When the people were felled they were kicked on the ground, and when they again rose, they were again knocked down by any constable who met them. (Quoted in O’Connor 442)

These coercive measures were widely denounced by Irish patriots and Parnellite sympathizers, and they ultimately proved to be profoundly embarrassing to English and Anglo-Irish Liberals, many of whom viewed the actions of the British government as “outrages” in their own right. One contemporary historian, T. P. O’Connor, characterized English coercion in terms that ironically reversed the customary notions of English liberalism and foreign despotism, English progressivism and Irish backwardness: “It was assuredly a strange proof of the idea that the Irish longed to be liberated from the tyranny of Mr. Parnell, that the population had to be dragooned by overwhelming military and police forces into the tame acceptance of Mr. Parnell’s imprisonment” (443). Many years later, Winston Churchill described the uncomfortably ironic position in which the leader of the Liberal party found himself: “Mr. Gladstone, the champion of freedom and national movements in every foreign country, the friend of Cavour and Mazzini, the advocate of Greek and Bulgarian independence, now found himself forced by duress to employ against Ireland many of the processes of repression he had denounced so mercilessly (and we will add so cheaply) in King Bomba and the Sultan of Turkey” (*Great Contemporaries* 285). In short, the coercive, brutal, and occasionally lawless actions of the English government in Ireland challenged the moral and political legitimacy of English liberalism, a fact unlikely to have been lost upon an Anglo-Irish Liberal and Home Ruler such as Stoker.

This buried sense of disenchantment with the failure of English liberalism to honor its political ideals with respect to Ireland colors Stoker’s portrait of his protagonists. For while it might be implausible to suggest that Van Helsing is intended as a kind of stand-in for the “Old Man,” Gladstone, the vampire killers as a group are nonetheless cast in the role of liberal progressives and imperialist crusaders.<sup>44</sup> For having repelled Dracula from English soil, they subsequently invade a foreign territory in order to rectify its moral and political order according to enlightened British liberal sensibilities. Drawing on Godalming’s vast commercial resources and the aid of foreign allies (Dutch and American), the English protagonists descend upon eastern Europe in the manner of an imperial army. Once in central and eastern Europe, Van Helsing assumes “that personal dominance which made him so long a master amongst men” (*Dracula* 410); his visage takes on the aspect of “a conqueror” (465). As a group, the Victorian crusaders conduct themselves with nearly complete impunity toward local (non-British) laws and customs. As noted above, not only do they evade customs and bribe foreign officials, they also forcibly search the cargo of ships traveling on the Sereth, Biztriza, and Danube rivers, and they impersonate local government agents. Fully prepared to fight Slovaks (who are quite unaware of the impending invasion of the vampire killers into their homeland), they ultimately set violently and without provocation upon the Szgany, who are merely transporting Dracula. These illegalities in turn aim at the forcible seizure and murder of a foreign count and his “women,” as well as the destruction of his political authority over his people — both the local folk living on or near Dracula’s estates and the “Undead” who are bound to him in death.

As protagonists who fulfill the generic heroic tasks of what Patrick Brantlinger (227-53) has called “imperial gothic,”<sup>45</sup> Van Helsing and his allies

might be thought to exemplify Stoker's enthusiasm for the Liberal foreign policies that in Gladstone's time were directed against the repressive governments of foreign — that is, eastern European, Balkan, and Asian — tyrants.<sup>46</sup> Accordingly, Van Helsing, Seward, and the Harkers return obsessively to the theme of obtaining "freedom" for those who are under the thrall of the vampire (276, 308, 423, 428, 440, 441) and, though somewhat less frequently, to their objective of bestowing "peace" upon the slaves and victims of Dracula's tyranny (279, 484). While the narrative context of Stoker's novel insures that "freedom" and "peace" carry theological and romantic connotations, these words nonetheless retain much of their specific political significance. Moreover, their positive rhetorical charge is reversed or negated if they are understood to be issued within the context of political relations between England and Ireland. In this context, the much vaunted claims of the Victorian heroes to liberate an unfree people and guarantee peace through the forceful imposition of English law appear in a far more sinister and morally dubious light. For as we have seen, in their struggle to combat vampirism, the vampire killers themselves become the agents of lawlessness, violence, and repression. Van Helsing, reflecting upon the brutal deeds he has committed at Castle Dracula, speaks more truly than he knows in calling them "butcher work" (477).

The crimes and abuses that the Victorian crusaders commit abroad are matched by a myriad of abuses at home. Indeed, the political logic of their actions accords with that which John Hobson, a contemporary of Stoker, discerned in British imperialism: tyranny abroad leads to the abridgment of democracy and liberty at home (see Hobson 124-52). At best, Mina is subject to increasingly repressive forms of censorship; at worst, she and Lucy are the victims of physical violation. Renfield, who is supposed to be under the protective care of Stoker's progressive and liberal-minded heroes, meets a ghastly end, which, when considered outside a strictly medical or religious context, seems remarkably like that of a political prisoner who dies under mysterious circumstances while in the custody of British authorities. Having previously suffered torture and grievous injuries while being held in isolation, Renfield is subsequently discovered dead in his cell. Since his warders can offer no publicly credible account of Renfield's fatal injuries, they conceal the true circumstances of his death and fabricate an account of his suicide. In order to avoid an official inquest, Dr. Seward, with Van Helsing's collaboration, forges a "certificate of death by misadventure in falling from bed" (*Dracula* 373). (For a reader of *Dracula* today, the similarities between the suspicious circumstances of Renfield's death and those of Steven Biko's are striking.) Given Renfield's symbolic status as violent agitator, religious maniac, and homicidal follower of a foreign lord and master, the casual cover-up of his murder might provide the basis for a subversive interpretation of the justice of British imperial rule.

The Victorian crusaders for peace and freedom thus forfeit their unequivocal claims to moral and political authority; to paraphrase Blake, they become the image of that which they behold. This ironic reversal of their morally privileged position manifests itself through a fundamental narrative conceit of Stoker's work: the most upright, progressive, and liberal-minded Victorian may rapidly and unwillingly find himself (or herself) transformed into a vam-

pire. Lucy and Mina, for instance, literally become vampires, though the latter's metamorphosis remains incomplete. Many other figures, however, are at least momentarily and symbolically linked with vampirism. We have already noted Morris's shadowy association with Dracula. Additionally, Jonathan Harker, the victim of the female vampires at Castle Dracula, expects to see the count in a mirror but instead, discovers only his own reflection (38). Later, when the undead Lucy has begun to attack children and Van Helsing proposes to desecrate her grave and mutilate her corpse, Dr. Seward suspects Van Helsing himself may have been responsible for the "outrages" that have been committed (262). Still later, after the full-fledged holy war with Dracula has begun, Seward momentarily doubts himself and his friends, identifying them all directly with the insane adherent of Dracula, Renfield: "I sometimes think we must be all mad" (353). In political terms, the most insidious threat that the infectious spread of vampirism poses is that even Liberal England, with its commitment to freedom, justice, peace, and the rule of law, will, like the subjugated island across the Irish Sea, become a land of darkness and misrule.

## 7. Nation of the Undead

Van Helsing is the first to appreciate the full measure of Dracula's political ambition: "He is experimenting, and doing it well; and if it had not been that we have crossed his path he would be yet — he may be yet if we fail — the father or furtherer of a new order of beings, whose road must lead through Death, not Life" (389). Dracula is the would-be father of a new nation of the Undead. Like Parnell, the count fails to achieve his ultimate objective, but his tragic story represents a prophetic nightmare of political revolt and independence, a troubled dream of emergent nationhood. Given the roots of gothic fiction in the romantic critique of the European enlightenment, it stands to reason that Stoker's work should draw upon many topoi associated with romantic nationalism. But Stoker's work represents more than a retrospective meditation upon the romantic nationalism of a past era; *Dracula* also rehearses in full dress the myths of a new hybrid nationalism that was to haunt Europe in the first half of the twentieth century and much of the so-called Third World in the second half.

For if Dracula is the charismatic leader of a new order, a would-be father of his country, then he is necessarily a potential tyrant. Despite his suave demeanor, his education and breeding, his manifest familiarity with the institutions and customs of the modern, liberal, democratic West, Dracula is ultimately a murderer and terrorist, a despotic "master" whose power depends upon deceit, cunning, and above all violence. Whatever his noble past, however he became an unwilling convert to vampirism, his rule necessarily promises to be authoritarian. Like the charismatic leader who unites his disorganized followers into a national collective by virtue of their identification with him, Dracula can claim that the nation of the Undead exists only through his direct personal mediation. As such, all citizens in the kingdom of the Undead literally owe their existence to their "father." While Stoker had before him the



Uncrowned King of Ireland as the prototype of the nationalist liberator, his portrayal of Dracula anticipates a far more sinister kind of nationalist leader who comes into his own in western and central Europe after World War I and in many newly independent countries in the postcolonial era.

A portrait of the oneiric landscape of the political unconscious of modern nationalism, *Dracula* returns obsessively to many of the primitive and irrational bases on which the nation founds itself. Prominent among these are blood and soil. For what *literally* links one vampire with another, what unites the entire kingdom of the Undead, is an unbroken blood line. The mystical tie that even Dracula's Victorian enemies feel when they transfuse blood from one to another (225) is the mirror image of the satanic genealogy joining a great nation of vampires together through eternity. These bloodlines can be traced horizontally (among the Undead scattered across Europe who collectively make up Dracula's new order) and vertically (along a historical continuum that joins the Undead of the Victorian age with their most remote ancestors from the middle ages). In a modern secular era in which the stability of marriage and the family is threatened — consider the vast number of dead or dying parents, orphans, and unmarried or childless characters who inhabit Stoker's novel, to say nothing of the many violations of the sanctity of the marriage bed — Dracula offers his followers a bond that is tangible, irresistible, and permanent. As “father” of the new order, Dracula makes good on his implicit promise to join his adherents in a family whose kinship ties are more comprehensive and binding than those of any primitive tribe.

Though the topos is less developed in Stoker's novel than that of *blood*, a common rootedness in the *soil* also serves to unite the nation of the Undead. The vampires must “live” and “die” in close proximity to that ground which is, in a demonic parody of the conventional Christian meaning of the word, “sacred” to them. Even when scattered over the face of Europe, each vampire must continually return to that small volume of soil that is a synecdoche for the sanctified homeland (see Deane 89-90, 93-4). Dracula transports coffins full of Transylvanian earth across Europe so that he might sleep safely upon the very ground that his progenitors trod. His identity as a vampire depends as much upon his nightly proximity to the soil of his ancestors as upon the ancient blood coursing through his veins.

To be sure, vampirism, like any form of “primitive” nationalism, is more than a fixation on blood and soil. It is a religion. Dracula's nation of the Undead practices its own demanding, if peculiar, rituals. Dracula's religion, whether it be understood as a demonic form of Ascendancy Protestantism or a satanic parody of Irish Catholicism, is an inverted or heterodox form of Christianity. Like all of his kind, Dracula must meticulously observe the doctrines, traditions, and practices of the vampiric faith. His existence is bounded by a strict adherence to religious rules and superstitions: he cannot enter a room or dwelling without being first invited; his powers cease at the coming of day; he can only change his form at sunrise, noon, and sunset; he cannot pass running water at low or high tide; he cannot exercise his vampiric powers in the presence of garlic or the crucifix, and so on (308-9). It is finally unimportant whether the religion of the vampires is true, coherent, or orthodox.

What matters is that the Undead are united and strengthened by a religious faith that is communal, ritualized, ancient, elaborated, and not subject to amendment or rational critique.

The mythic infrastructure of the vampire nation includes a *historical* narrative of trauma, enslavement, warfare, and bloodshed that by turns evokes political catastrophe and triumph. Each vampire lays claim to a personal history of victimization; membership in the nation of the Undead requires that every initiate be subjected to a vampiric assault and then enslaved by a progenitor. But having been joined by a “baptism of blood” with the nation of the Undead, the vampire inherits a race of mortal enemies, the living, who would happily see the pale people truly dead, not merely undead. The history of the vampires thus conflates the myth of a people molded into being by force with that of a nation invented out of a shared sense of racial embattlement and mortal peril. The private histories of the Undead are thus coextensive with and reflected by the official political history of the noble race of Draculas. The Undead emerge as a distinctive people out of the religious and political wars of the medieval period. The history that Dracula relates to Harker of his ancestors is a version of romantic national history that predictably focuses on the great racial animosities, the bloody epic struggles, the religious crusades, the perilous defeats, and the heroic resilience of a race that has been nearly exterminated by its political enemies. In the centuries-long narrative of the Draculas, the British are only the most recent in a series of mortal foes that include the Magyars, Lombards, Avars, Bulgars, Turks, and Hungarians. To be sure, the race that the medieval Draculas led, and sometimes shamefully abandoned, was not the Undead per se. There is an elision in the historical narrative that the count relates: he omits any mention of the decisive moment when he became a vampire. But is this not typical of all quasi-mythic national histories? The ultimate ancestry of a nation becomes the more glorious as it recedes into tellurian obscurity. If no contemporary historian could validate the claim that the Undead are the direct descendants of those whom the early Draculas led into battle, the count may nonetheless attest that through him the blood of his heroic ancestors flows in an unbroken stream into the veins of his contemporary adherents. In any case, what matters is that the vampiric nation claims a history that is at once heroic and traumatic, one that defines the Undead as a distinct and embattled race and that thereby legitimates new acts of rebellion, war, and conquest.

One final mythic feature of vampiric nationalism deserves attention. The nation of the Undead is literally immortal. Virtually all modern nationalisms depend upon the mass appeal of a conception of the nation as a transindividual and therefore undying entity. What Stoker has done is merely to incarnate the metaphor: those who belong to the new order of beings live forever as the Undead. To be sure, this peculiarly seductive form of immortality comes at a price: one gives up one’s soul to the racial and ancestral collective. The narrative logic of Stoker’s fiction demands that only those who are annihilated can be torn asunder from the immortal body of the Undead. But the oneiric “logic” of the myth suggests that (only) those who separate from the nation of the dead will perish utterly. The myth of the immortal nation appeals partic-

ularly to those who cannot endure the radical individualism of a secular liberal modernity that offers no solace for the psychic wound of personal finitude.

The political dream-work of *Dracula* thus foreshadows an unsettling portrait of the mythic dimensions of nationalism as it would grow and develop in the twentieth century. But what is finally most arresting about Stoker's portrait of the vampire as nationalist liberator is Dracula's uncanny ability to join the primitive with the modern, the retrograde with the progressive, the living with the dead. As we have seen, Dracula is at home in modern London, a skillful master of the technologies, institutions, and customs of liberal democratic England. Back in Transylvania, he has pored over train timetables, contracted with western solicitors and bankers, and learned to maneuver in modern capital markets as the necessary prelude to his invasion of Britain. In the process, he has studied "history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, and law — all relating to England and English life and customs and manners" (30). As Arata has noted, Dracula seems eager to adapt the modern ways of his adversaries to his own ends (634-45). As we have seen, Parnell provided Stoker with the prototype of a new revolutionary nationalism that fused a post-enlightenment philosophy of national self-determination with a conservative (or romantic) articulation of the archaic myths of nationhood. In Stoker's hands, the Parnellite synthesis undergoes a further gothic mutation to become Dracula's "progressive" vampirism, a hybridized mingling of the modern and the primitive that foreshadows the compelling (if often virulent) forms that twentieth-century nationalism was to assume.

As both supporter of Home Rule and champion of the British Empire, Stoker no doubt responded to the appeal and the threat of emergent nationalism. His appreciation of its seductive power informs the presentiment of Van Helsing: once vampirism gets a foothold in Britain, it will grow vigorously without limit, rapidly claiming one imperial subject after another as its own. In the Professor's view, the vampires "cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiplying the evils of the world; for all that die from the preying of the Un-dead become themselves Un-dead, and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water" (275). Just as vampirism is infectious, so too the contagion of anti-imperial nationalism, once it claims even a single untreated victim, threatens to spread to the far corners of the realm, until the vampiric kingdom of darkness supplants the whole of the British Empire. As it turned out, Stoker's fear that anti-imperial nationalism, once established in countries such as Ireland, would metastasize proved well-founded.

Were the manifestations of vampirism limited to the heroic phase of national liberation and to the dismantling of the European imperium, we should sleep untroubled by Stoker's gothic nightmare. But even in Ireland, the "postcolonial" era of triumphant nationalism proved to be darker than its champions envisioned. Independent Ireland endured a brutal civil war (the effects of which are still felt in Northern Ireland), the passing threat of a military coup, a brief efflorescence of fascist activity, a prolonged period of economic stagnation, intermittent terror campaigns organized by the IRA, religious discord, and several decades of cultural malaise. Nonetheless, Ireland managed to avoid

the most malignant effects of hybrid nationalism that plagued less fortunate countries in Europe and the Third World: economic collapse, totalitarian dictatorship, military rule, the triumph of fascism, war with neighboring countries, ethnic cleansing, and racial genocide. The continuing political relevance of Stoker's gothic nightmare helps explain its power to generate a growing progeny of plays, films, and literary adaptations that remain popular with a global audience. A century after the publication of *Dracula*, the appeal of the vampire refuses to die.

## Notes

1. For the story of Parnell's attendance at the Lyceum, see Bew 102.
2. For a summary of the many models for Stoker's *Dracula*, see Belford 5, 46-7, 65, 184, 238, 258-60.
3. It is curious that even contemporary historians are prone to describe the Home Rule Party, in its efforts to co-opt all other popular movements and groups in Ireland, as vampiristic. For example, Fitzpatrick refers to the "vampirizing" inclination of the Irish Parliamentary Party: "the almost mechanical reaction of Home Rule organizers when confronted by an energetic popular movement claiming to be without politics was to infiltrate it, reorganize it, and add it to the cluster of party auxiliaries" (Fitzpatrick 58, quoted in Foster, *Modern Ireland* 468).
4. One of the foremost Parnell biographers, Roy Foster, summarizes the historical view of Parnell's ambivalent and charismatic character: "He was equivocal by nature — especially in his rhetorical relationship with extremism. Parnell's supposed Fenian connection was really a triumph of language, especially on American platforms; at home he achieved a highly political use of silence. While his record as a leader was ostensibly restrained, except at times of crises, a personality cult developed round him greater than that around any other Irish leader. Inevitably there was a hollowness at the centre. . . . Michael Davitt saw Parnellism as the replacement of nationalism by 'the investing of the fortunes and guidance of the agitation, both for national self-government and land reform, in a leader's nominal dictatorship.' And Conor Cruise O'Brien, in what remains the classic analysis of Parnell's system and ethos, defined Parnellism (after Pareto) as 'a system in which the emotional "residues" of historical tradition and suppressed rebellion could be enlisted in the service of parliamentary "combinations" of a strictly rational and realistic character': adding that, for this to work, 'the ambiguity of the system must be crystallized in terms of personality'" (Foster, *Modern Ireland* 401-2). But for a few minor particulars, Foster's characterization of Parnell would serve Stoker's *Dracula* almost as well.
5. Founded in 1859 by James Stephens and John O'Mahoney, the Fenians were a secret revolutionary Irish nationalist military organization dedicated to driving the British out of Ireland by force. Often identified with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I. R. B.), the Fenians took their name from the Fian-na army of the medieval Irish hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill.
6. For Parnell's problematic and complicated relationship to the violence of the land agitation, see Bew 44.

7. The number of “outrages” rose from 2,379 in the ten months preceding the Coercion Act (March-December 1880) to 3,331 in the ten months following (see Churchill, *Lord Randolph* 206).

8. Oddly, Gladstone, a noted biblical scholar, seems to have altered or misremembered the Biblical passage (Numbers 16: 48) to which he alludes; it is Aaron, not Moses, who stands between the living and the dead and thereby halts the spread of the plague that God has sent to punish those who have rebelled against the leadership of Moses.

9. The phrase, “between the living and the dead,” would have resonated for Stoker, who had heard the line repeated literally hundreds of times by Henry Irving in his role as the Flying Dutchman in W. J. Wills’s *Vanderdecken*, a standard play in the repertoire of the Lyceum Theatre. To the question, “Where are we?” the Flying Dutchman answers, “Between the living and the dead.” For Stoker’s fascination with this line, see Belford 177; and Frayling 348.

10. For a brief discussion of the significance of the cartoon, see Baldick 91-2. A note with skull and crossbones, signed by “Cap’ Moonlight,” lies at the feet of the creature; the monster is thus specifically associated with the violent agitators of the Land War, known as “moonlighters.”

11. For a brief discussion of these references, see Murphy 65. Murphy’s book, while generally focused upon the more positive and heroic images and myths that surrounded Parnell, is especially useful as a collation and statistical analysis of the popular rhetoric that created the “myth of Parnell.”

12. A reproduction of the original cartoon appears in the Duke University Press Catalog for Fall and Winter 1996 (22). It serves as an illustrated advertisement for David Glover’s *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*. Oddly, the cartoon is not reproduced in Glover’s book, nor does he make any mention of it anywhere in his text. The cartoon is republished in Malchow 128. While Malchow identifies the vampire as Parnell, he makes nothing of this fact in his reading of *Dracula* (129-66).

13. Stoker’s earliest notes on *Dracula* are dated March 3, 1890, just a few weeks after Captain O’Shea dealt Parnell’s political career a fatal blow by naming him in the divorce petition. While the days and dates of the events in Stoker’s novel (published in 1897) correspond to the calendar year 1893, Jonathan Harker’s concluding note, which begins, “seven years ago we all went through the flames,” would seem to place the action of the novel in 1890 — the year of O’Shea’s divorce case, the division of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the rejection of Parnell as Party leader, and the virtual collapse of the Home Rule movement. On the dating of events in the novel, see Frayling 339-50, especially 350.

14. For a wide-ranging discussion of Stoker’s liberalism, his lifelong interest in Anglo-Irish political relations, and the bearing of Irish politics on *Dracula*, see Glover, especially 25-57. For other important discussions of *Dracula* within the political context of relations between England and Ireland, see Arata; Schmitt; Eagleton 187 and 215-6; and Belford 16-24, 30-33, 60-64, 77, 130-32, 139, 230, and 275. For Stoker’s own discussions of Parnell and Irish Home Rule, see his *Personal Reminiscences* 1: 343-4, 2: 26-33, and 2: 208.

15. Elsewhere, Churchill describes Parnell’s emergence as a political force: “[He] moved with unconcerned deliberation into the centre of the stage and

dealt with others as though it was his birthright to command and theirs to serve him" (*Lord Randolph* 1: 89).

16. To be sure, Parnell, like Dracula, apparently possessed the chameleon-like ability to present himself as more English than the English themselves, a fact duly noted by Churchill (*Great Contemporaries* 282) and Bew (9). These inconsistent characterizations of Parnell are perhaps to be credited as much to his metamorphic powers as to the differing projections of him insisted upon by contemporaries, whose political views of the man were deeply divided.

17. For one striking description of Parnell's gaze, see Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*: "His eyes blazed ever more fiercely in his pallid face: it was only by an intense effort that he still held himself in check" (293). See also Bew: "Most observers were impressed by the power of his eyes" (8).

18. According to Foster, these "strange, almost supernatural meetings became a set-piece of contemporary memoirs: William O'Brien's disguised encounter in a fog at Greenwich Observatory, Standish O'Grady's meeting on a Wicklow mountainside in a mounting storm, Lord Ribblesdale's surreal railway journey where Parnell talked intensely the whole time but never once looked at his face" (*Paddy* 47).

19. For the connection between *Dracula* and the 1888 murders in Whitechapel thought to be committed by Jack the Ripper, see Tracy 45. For Stoker's comment concerning the relevance of the Whitechapel murders to *Dracula*, see Belford 272.

20. For Parnell's "strange telepathy," see Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* 287. Churchill goes on to note that both Katharine O'Shea and her husband, much like Mina and Jonathan Harker, were "under the spell of the great man."

21. Derrida's conception of the "*pharmakon*," denuded of its anti-ontological implications, might serve to define the symbolic work that the figure of Dracula performs in the arena of politics, religion, and ideology: "If the *pharmakon* is 'ambivalent,' it is because it constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed, the movement and the play that links them among themselves, reverses them or makes them cross over into the other (soul/body, good/evil, inside/outside, memory/forgetfulness . . .)" (Derrida 127).

22. The historical sources for the plagues mentioned in *Dracula* include the Great Famine of the 1840s (which led to the death of nearly a million Irish and the emigration of another one and a half million), the outbreak of cholera in Sligo in 1832 (which Stoker's mother witnessed firsthand as a child), and the widespread crop failures and economic depression of 1878-9 in Ireland. According to Bew, the latter event threatened "the worst economic disaster since the Great Famine" and played a role in Parnell's rapid political rise in the late 70s and early 80s (31). For Charlotte Stoker's letter to her son concerning the cholera epidemic, see Appendix B in *Dracula* (498-506).

23. Such a view necessarily discounts the notion, current during Parnell's lifetime, that the Irish leader was a genuine radical or socialist when it came to property rights.

24. For the view that Dracula represents the depredations of finance capitalism, see Moretti's seminal essay.

25. As Arata notes, Dracula's successful impersonation of Jonathan Harker when his guest is imprisoned in Castle Dracula is an early instance of the count's talent for socio-political masquerade. See also Glover 44.

26. This did not prevent some of Parnell's English adversaries from viewing him as a "foreign" threat to English imperial rule; see Sir Charles Dilke's comments quoted in Murphy 77.

27. Certain particulars of Dracula's attacks, for instance the ever present moon and the seemingly pointless violence against animals — the dead mastiff at Whitby (108), the injured wolf at the London Zoological Gardens (183) — seem to be Stoker's sly way of identifying the vampire as a "moonlighter" in the tradition of the land agitation.

28. For one example of Stoker's embrace of British imperialism, consider his endorsement of Henry Morton Stanley's view of beneficent colonialism (*Personal Reminiscences* 1: 366). To be sure, it was intellectually possible, if politically difficult, to reconcile the notion of greater Irish autonomy with a more capacious concept of British imperial unity; even the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 required that the citizens of the Irish Free State swear allegiance to the British Crown.

29. The reference to Exodus and to the liberation of the Jews by Moses from captivity in Egypt may be meant to echo Gladstone's famous speech at Leeds in which the Prime Minister compared Parnell to a false and demonic Moses. See Morley 3: 61.

30. For Dracula's connection to the "lumpenproletariat" and to the poorest elements within Victorian society, see Croley. She makes the intriguing suggestion that this group was often associated during the period with vagrant Irish immigrants who had come to England after the Great Famine of the 1840s (100, 108).

31. In formulating this point, I have been influenced by Glover's general thesis that Stoker's liberal sympathies were in tension with various contemporary scientific and pseudo-scientific discourses that classified certain groups — women, the Irish, criminals, sexual deviants — as fundamentally incapable of rational self-government.

32. "Morris" appears in Edward MacLysaght's *Surnames of Ireland*, where it is identified as of Norman origin and associated with the tribes of Galway (166). No doubt Stoker knew that Shakespeare chose to christen his stereotypical Irish soldier in *Henry V* "Captain MacMorris." The complex web of connections among the American Wild West, Irish-American immigrants, and late-nineteenth-century Irish culture and politics offers another suggestive context in which to assess Morris's role in the novel. As Stoker was the author of the 1895 western romance, *The Shoulder of Shasta*, and a frequent traveler in America, he was no doubt familiar with the conspicuous role that Irish Americans such as Henry McCarty, a.k.a. "Billy the Kid," played in the international popularization of the American West. For two provocative essays on the connections linking the American West, the outlaw and rebel, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish cultural politics, see O'Toole, and Gibbons.

33. Churchill suggests that "someone detonated [Captain] O'Shea" (*Great Contemporaries* 291).

34. Churchill gives eloquent testimony to this highly romanticized view of Parnell's "tragic" end: Parnell "dedicated himself to a single goal, the goal of Ireland a nation, and he pursued it unswervingly until a rose thrown across his path opened a new world, the world of love. And, as he had previously sacri-

ficed all for Ireland, so, when the moment of choice came, he sacrificed all, even Ireland for love. . . . Such is the tale which comprised all the elements of a Greek tragedy. . . . The loves of Parnell and Kitty O'Shea condemned Ireland to a melancholy fate, and the British Empire to a woeful curtailment of its harmony and strength" (*Great Contemporaries* 295).

35. For a general discussion of the Parnell women, see Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell* 225-84. Anna's reference to W. E. ("Buckshot") Forster was all the more provocative given that there were no fewer than nineteen separate attempts on the life of the chief secretary of Ireland; see Morris 478.

36. A. N. Wilson and Victor Sage prove notable exceptions. For a brief discussion of the significance of Stoker's work within the context of the increasing secularization of late Victorian society, see Wilson xvii-xviii. For a discussion of *Dracula* in terms of the Protestant and anti-Catholic traditions of Gothic fiction, see Sage 50-57. See also Zanger.

37. Some regarded this as merely a reaffirmation of the twenty-eighth of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, which were formally introduced into Ireland in the seventeenth century. As revised in 1563, the relevant portion of the article reads: "Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ: but it is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner: And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith." For the complete article, see Green 217, and Olden 400.

38. Gladstone's repudiation of Parnell was motivated in no small measure by the prime minister's need to placate English and Scottish Nonconformists (as incensed as the Catholics by Parnell's adultery), who provided the Liberals with a crucial bloc of electoral supporters. See Hammond 625-9.

39. Stoker's working papers on the novel confirm the indeterminate character of Dracula's religious beliefs: "he has an ambivalent attitude towards the icons of religion: he can be moved only by relics older than his own *real* date or century (that is, when he actually lived) — more recent relics leave him unmoved" (Frayling 343).

40. One such painting in this tradition is Lucas Cranach the Elder's *The Lamentation* (1538), which depicts Mary Magdalene kissing the bloody wound of the crucified Christ (see Cranach). The relevant passage from the Old Testament is Isaiah 63: 1-4. The *tableau* from *Dracula*, given its associations with breast milk (363), might also be connected to another iconographic tradition of late medieval painting, that of St. Bernard drinking the milk that spurts from the breast of the Virgin Mary.

41. Murphy notes that the most common religious figure to whom Parnell was compared in his day was Jesus but that in latter years comparisons between Parnell and Satan became even more common (52, 93).

42. For a contemporary attack on these "Orange" conspiracy theories, see O'Connor 370.

43. Hammond offers a summary of the act provided by A. V. Dicey in his *Law of Constitution*: "Under the Act of 1881 . . . the Irish executive obtained



the absolute power of arbitrary and preventive arrest, and could without breach of law detain in prison any person arrested on suspicion for the whole period for which the Act continued in force. . . . The Government could, in the case of certain crimes, abolish the right to trial by jury, could arrest strangers found out of doors at night under suspicious circumstances, could seize any newspaper inciting to treason or violence, and could prohibit any public meeting which the Lord Lieutenant believed to be dangerous to the public peace or safety” (211).

44. Stoker’s cryptic note in his working papers on *Dracula* suggests that at some stage of composition he associated the prime minister, in some unspecified way, with his gothic villain. Among a list of attributes assigned to *Dracula* we find: “Immortality-Gladstone” (see Frayling 343).

45. While employing Brantlinger’s terminology, I offer an interpretation of *Dracula* that differs in several critical respects from his (233-4).

46. While readers today might doubt that Stoker’s contemporaries would have been interested in the remote Balkans, what we know as the “Eastern Question” dominated British foreign policy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Given Britain’s rivalry with Russia, Gladstone found himself time and again involved in trying to sort out problems in the Balkans and the Near East.

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