

## “Suspect Grounds: Temporal and Spatial Paradoxes in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*: a Postcolonial Reading”

Robert Smart

*Quinnipiac University, Connecticut*

Michael Hutcheson

*Landmark College, Vermont*

Gothic, in truth, may not belong to the dispossessed but to the paranoid possessors, the out-of-control controllers, the descending Ascendancy. . . . Thus, a ‘colonial’ history, Protestantism, and the fear of marginalization—rather than marginalization itself—are central features of the Irish Gothic Tradition.

Jarlath Killeen

Jarlath Killeen’s reconstruction of the debate over whether there is in fact a “Gothic tradition” in Irish literature invites readers to cast a wider critical net in understanding how these texts work within the “political and geographical space” of colonial Ireland (*Gothic Ireland* 1). A new reading of what is arguably the nineteenth-century masterpiece of the Irish Gothic—Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel *Dracula*—is of particular interest to readers of Ireland’s colonial history, since Stoker’s vampire tale has become emblematic of the Irish Gothic tradition in the decades following its publication. The popularity of *Dracula* as a novel, and as the inspiration for a veritable industry of vampire stories, movies and websites make Stoker’s novel a logical and promising candidate for a rereading of the kind Killeen suggests.

While Stoker’s novel was initially perceived as a “failure” by the reading public in late Victorian England (Seed 195), its eventual success after Stoker died in 1912 suggests that there is a greater complexity and depth to the story than the novel’s first readers had recognized. In fact, we argue that *Dracula*—read from within the broader perspective described by critics like Jarlath Killeen—is an early example of postcoloniality in the modern Irish Gothic tradition. Such a re-reading of *Dracula* requires that we trace three lines of argument, each of which extends the boundaries of critical understanding to create a new context for the story. The first argument explores the types of historiography provided in the novel as temporal modes of sense-making that would have been familiar to most Victorians. In this critical application, all of the characters’ attempts to “tell the story” fail to bring order and sense to a world which is turned upside down in the novel. The second argument in this re-reading of the novel maintains that these various ways of telling history “fail” because the “real story” in *Dracula* is neither historical nor temporal: it is

spatial, logged and preserved in cultural memory which the principals of Stoker's story are continuously enjoined to ignore or forget. Imperial narratives, whether historical or fictional, are arrangements of detail and events to serve a purpose: casting events and their causes into a progressive chronology which argues for the greater good of the colonial enterprise. Thus, in failing, the historical stories in *Dracula* point to the one tale they cannot or will not tell. This subversive tale is hidden in cultural memory and becomes the third argument in this interpretive triangulation: it is about the Great Hunger or Famine of 1845-51, which had remained unmentioned in public discourse for over forty years by the time Stoker published his masterpiece. At the core of this strategy of re-reading is our claim that the Gothic, as practiced by Stoker, requires a spatial as well as a temporal mode for understanding the story. Moreover, reading a novel like *Dracula* as a postcolonial text requires us to understand how these two modes are often, perhaps always opposed: the colonial enterprise works temporally, arranging things to show how colonization brings improvement, while the postcolonial enterprise works spatially, raising to the surface of discourse all the negated histories buried by imperial narratives. Thus, within the narrative of *Dracula* we discover a map of misreading of Irish history and memory, something that the novel ultimately tries, unsuccessfully, to correct. As David Punter explained in his *The Literature of Terror*, "Gothic has been, over the last 200 years, a mode of history and a mode of memory" (188). In this case, we argue, it is a "negated" cultural history which is limned by Stoker's narrative in spatial terms which contradict and subvert the temporal layers of the story.<sup>1</sup> Therein is created the postcoloniality of the novel.

Popular tradition maintains that after Bram Stoker's mother, Charlotte Thornley Stoker, read the manuscript of *Dracula*, she exclaimed, "I have read much but I never met a book like it at all" (Belford 274). As an avid reader (and she was), there was much in fact about her son's new book that should have seemed familiar to her, especially the uses that Stoker made of Victorian historical writing. First, we encounter the memoir, a travel memoir, which by 1897 had become a venerable historical narrative form for Victorian readers. As Mary Louise Pratt argued persuasively in her study of travel literature, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, reports from "imperial scouts" traversing the length and breadth of the empire were popular with the English reading public.<sup>2</sup> Their function was in part to make the unusual and exotic seem familiar or at

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<sup>1</sup> This term was coined by David Spurr in *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing*: historical "negation acts as a kind of provisional erasure, clearing a space for the expansion of the colonial imagination and for the pursuit of desire. In this way, the structures of discourse . . . recapitulate the historical process of establishing and maintaining colonial rule" (92-93).

<sup>2</sup> See also editor Glenn Hooper's *The Tourist's Gaze: Travelers to Ireland, 1800-2000*, especially the first three chapters on the willingness of English readers to believe nearly anything fantastic about their western neighbors.

least comprehensible, which explains why the travel convention has become such an integral part of the Gothic tradition.<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Harker's travel history, in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, bears all the hallmarks of a businessman's journey into the wilds of Transylvania, the "land beyond the forest." Harker notes (in shorthand) the times, places and details of his trip from east to west, stopping occasionally to complain about the lack of British Ordnance Survey maps for the area: "there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey maps" (27). Harker is an excellent "imperial scout" who keeps his diary both as a record of his first major business trip for Peter Hawkins, his employer, and as a memoir collection of little things he would like to share with his fiancé, Mina Murray. For example, of a recipe for paprika chicken Harker notes, "*Mem.*, get recipe for Mina" (27). By the end of his adventure in Transylvania, Harker's memoir will have become the nightmare journal of a man trapped in Dracula's castle, left, presumably, to die there: "At least God's mercy is better than that of these monsters, and the precipice is steep and high. At its foot a man may sleep—as a man. Good-bye, all! Mina!" (75). Even as the events that Harker records become more and more unbelievable, he maintains his detailed account, pausing to annotate the more incredible passages with claims that he "must have fallen asleep and kept dreaming of the incident, for it seemed to be repeated endlessly" (38). When Harker's intuition tells him that he should exercise more caution in his activities, his attention remains focused on the literary qualities of his memoir: "I began to fear as I wrote in this book that I was getting too diffuse; but now I am glad that I went into detail from the first, for there is something so strange about this place and all in it that I cannot but feel uneasy" (49). The clarity and detail of his account, he believes, will eventually illuminate what he does not presently understand.

Within Harker's memoir is nested another well-worn example of Victorian historical narrative, the family history, which is provided by Dracula himself. At the point when Dracula's idiosyncrasies and oddities, including his dress, manner of address, reference, seem oddest to Harker, Dracula offers a brief historical account of his family, ranging from his identity as a member of the Szekely tribe and their descent from "the Ugric tribe . . . their Berserkers" (53) and the Huns, including the notorious Attila. The material is actually a synopsis of material gathered by a real historian, Armenius Vambery,<sup>4</sup> with whom Stoker had conversed when Vambery was in London on a speaking tour to promote his history

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<sup>3</sup> For a lucid exploration of this structural convention within the Gothic, see William Hughes.

<sup>4</sup> While ultimately, we cannot be completely clear about exactly how much information about Vlad Tsepes, the Impaler, Vambery gave Stoker, we are sure that the two men met, conversed at length at least twice during the Hungarian philologist's visit to London, and Stoker's fond mention of him in his *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, which would suggest that indeed, the Irish novelist's ideas about the blood drinker were fired by his conversations with Vambery (Murray 187-88).

of Transylvania. The person Vambéry described was Vlad Tsepes, Vlad Dracul,<sup>5</sup> the historical leader of Wallachia, a small kingdom in the perennial shadow of Hungary and strategically placed on the front line before the advancing Turkish armies threatening Christian Eastern Europe. This Dracula, Voivode of Wallachia and protector of Eastern European Christianity, was a real person, the notorious Vlad the Impaler.<sup>6</sup> Both within Harker's memoir and within the novel as a whole, this family history is intended to clarify what Harker finds strange or unclear for himself and for the reader, but in fact this family history provides no real explanation whatsoever. Just after Dracula finishes his history early in the morning hours, Harker notes coldly, "It was by this time close on morning, and we went to bed" (54). No reflection, no speculation and no sudden flash of understanding follows Dracula's long and detailed explanation, only an ominous note comparing Harker to Shakespeare's Hamlet on the eve of being visited by the ghost of his murdered father.<sup>7</sup> Nothing we know about the historical Vlad Dracul would suggest that he had any of the supernatural powers witnessed by Jonathan Harker or described later on by Abram Van Helsing. These are two different characters.

A third kind of history is provided by Abram Van Helsing, Stoker's analogue in the novel and Dracula's alter ego. After Harker's personal memoir, the story moves closer to home, set in the intimate world of Mina Murray and her rich friend Lucy Westenra, whose correspondence is usually about men, sex and marriage.<sup>8</sup> This part of the story recounts how Lucy has been proposed to by three of the eventual band of vampire hunters: John Seward, M.D.; an American—Quincy Morris, whose presence in the story is provocative but never satisfactorily explained (Moretti 9);<sup>9</sup> and the one who eventually wins Ms. Westenra's hand, Arthur Holmwood, a member of the English nobility. Parallel to these developments, Dracula arrives in England via Whitby town, and stalks and attacks Lucy, who then starts to act strangely. This is one of the

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<sup>5</sup> It's after his conversations with Vambéry and after reading his book that Stoker changed the title of his manuscript from *The UnDead* to *Dracula*.

<sup>6</sup> Vlad Dracula's story is catalogued by Radu Florescu and Raymond McNally in *Dracula, Prince of Many Faces: His Life and Times*. The particular purpose that Stoker might have had for including the historical material on Vlad Tsepes is not adequately covered, but the meeting with Vambéry is as well as the particular borrowings that Stoker used from Vambéry's work.

<sup>7</sup> Since Harker, and Mina for that matter, is an orphan, the ominous reference to Hamlet and the Oedipal construct of his relationship to his father and mother raises some interesting speculations about how Harker understands his own place in the struggle he has only just begun to perceive.

<sup>8</sup> It's worth noting that before the inevitable round of marriages which will make each girl a proper English wife, both are of Irish descent, Westenra being the name of a well placed Irish landowning family near Roscommon. See Alison Milbank.

<sup>9</sup> Franco Moretti, in "The Dialectic of Fear," speculates that Morris is in fact a vampire himself, since he seems often to be in the right place (where Dracula strikes) at the wrong time; the argument is ultimately unconvincing.

intersections with Jonathan Harker's memoir, since Lucy's strange behavior sounds vaguely like some of Harker's experiences an entire world away. John Seward, who runs an insane asylum in a London suburb, is Van Helsing's protégé and the one who calls him into Lucy's case when her affliction confounds all of Seward's medical knowledge and training. The epistemological mismatch between what Seward knows and what is actually happening to Lucy provides the entrée into Van Helsing's part in this historiographic catalog: what Seward does not know is precisely what can and will kill Lucy—that she is the victim of a vampire attack.

Jonathan Harker has also returned after throwing himself off the top of Castle Dracula, Mina having been summoned by Catholic sisters to her future husband's bedside for a quick marriage. Once back in London, he is weak and frail and far less naïve about the potential threats to the empire of which he is a sterling exemplar. Upon his return, Harker gives his new wife his memoir, telling her what had happened to him because "there should be no secret, no concealment" (122) between husband and wife. The secret to his "great shock" is in the memoir and he would rather have Mina discover it on her own, saying "I do not want to know it" (123). This handoff of Harker's memoir to Mina (something he clearly did not intend to do at the beginning of the story) is important, for it marks the beginning of Mina's reconstruction of what happened while he was in Eastern Europe. A fourth history is being constructed here, but we do not become aware of it until later, when all the principals have become acquainted through the trial of Lucy's "illness" and death. All that we have been reading was constructed by Mina Harker, as a means of trying to make sense of this fantastic story. Mina, we later learn, has arranged all the available letters, her husband's memoir and various bits and pieces of business correspondence and newspaper clippings into a narrative that she believes creates sense out of chaos, that lends meaning to otherwise unconnected and confounding events. This text, this *de facto* history, is critical for our rereading of the novel. While Mina's text purports to fill in all the missing pieces from the story, it, in fact, points to how all of these stories fail to get at Ireland's missing cultural memory of the Great Famine. Melissa Fegan's observation about the porous boundaries between history and literature in Famine narrative is important in this context: "history is primarily a literary construct, wholly dependent on documents, and textually complicit" (23). Because Mina is the "literary construct[or]" of our story, she becomes the historical analog in it and the dismissal of her narrative at the end of the novel calls into question all the other attempts to make sense of what happened to Jonathan Harker and Lucy Westenra. We are literally "reading" Mina as she puts together all the disparate pieces she now has.

In this regard, the key exchange between Van Helsing and Mina occurs near the end of chapter fourteen, when Mina hands over her typed manuscript to the strange doctor from Amsterdam, after which Van Helsing assures her that the events recorded by her husband in his memoir

are strange and “terrible as it is, it is true!” (196). From Mina’s work, Van Helsing is able to counsel the vampire victims into becoming vampire hunters, first by describing what is wrong with their epistemology: “You are clever man, friend John [Seward]; you reason well, and your wit is bold, but you are too prejudiced. You do not let your eyes see nor your ears hear, and that which is outside your daily life is not of account to you. Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot?” (200). Van Helsing’s account is yet another type of history, a secret history, a sort of Gnostic primer that contradicts the rational progressivism of the good Doctor Seward and imposes a supernatural explanation on the tragedy that has befallen the small group of friends. It is a strange brew, however, that Van Helsing provides the group. He begins with references to early psychologist Jean Charcot and then moves to conundrums and mysteries of The Bible (Methuselah), of folklore (large Spanish spiders) and of vampire bats which “come at night and open the veins of cattle and horses and suck dry their veins” (201), on the assumption, presumably, that these associations will bring understanding. Van Helsing’s natural history lesson, flawed as it is, continues into chapter fifteen, concluding with a thinly veiled reference to Lucy’s having become a vampire herself and with a challenge for all of them to accompany him to Lucy’s bier to see for themselves what Van Helsing has suggested about their dead friend.

Van Helsing is right, of course, and the gruesome proof that he provides of Lucy’s vampire life after death leads to the second, longer section of his secret history of the vampire in chapter eighteen. In it, he provides the vampire hunters with a different, corrective family history from the one Dracula had given to Harker earlier in the novel: “The Draculas were, says Arminius,<sup>10</sup> a great and noble race, though now and again were scions who were held by their coevals to have had dealings with the Evil One” (245). So now, according to Van Helsing, the vampire expert, not only is Dracula the descendent of Vlad Tsepes (“Voivode Dracula”), but he consorts with Satan as well as with a shadowy consortium of satanic scholars (“the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due”). At the same time, Dracula and his sort are “known everywhere that men have been” (243) and he is the vague result of some biological evolution that has produced him as a partial human being with animal characteristics (244) who can move up and down the food chain, taking the form of a bat, a wolf or a dog. This secret history is a mishmash of popular natural histories, misconceptions and superstitions circulated by travelers and adventurers,<sup>11</sup> but confirms for Mina and the others everything in Harker’s memoir—which is still the only eyewitness version

<sup>10</sup> This is the same Arminius Vambery that Stoker had met in London in 1890, and who had such a powerful influence on Stoker’s plan to complete his novel.

<sup>11</sup> Those familiar with early travel texts by travelers to Ireland will recognize these fantastic tales of monsters and natural oddities as the stock in trade of such “reports” about the strangeness and “Otherness” of England’s first colony.

of Dracula's vampire activities. It also provides those who loved Lucy with a clear enemy to hunt down and kill as reparation for the death of their friend. By chapter eighteen in this circular tale, three different historical accounts have been offered to the reader and all three have been contradicted by a fourth, wholly unreliable account by Van Helsing, who is less than completely reputable.<sup>12</sup>

Mina's history, though, is by far the most interesting and problematic, although not through any overt design on her part. Hers is the fifth reconstruction of events in the novel as well as the most important one, since in the conceit of the narrative, this is the version we are reading. Unfortunately for Mina, the closer the vampire hunters get to Dracula, the greater danger she is in, culminating in the "blood baptism" scene of chapter twenty-one, in which he anoints her his "bountiful wine-press for a while; and shall be later on my companion and my helper" (288). Having drunk Dracula's blood, Mina will become a vampire "wife" whom Dracula can claim later. This will be a significant point later in this exegesis. Fortunately for Van Helsing and the other men, Mina's "baptism" gives her direct access to Dracula's thoughts and feelings, which under hypnosis can be used to direct the hunters towards their prey. Mina's access to Dracula, however, also means that she cannot be taken into any of the hunters' confidences since her mind can be read as easily by the vampire. She does something remarkable at this stage of the novel, however. In chapter twenty-six, Mina decides that her examination of some new papers that have been produced by the search for Dracula have led her to make "a new discovery" (344), which inspires to construct a new version of events, one that requires maps to verify. Notice the powerful break with the histories in the tale thus far—what has been cross referenced temporally will now be reframed spatially, on a map. This is key, for it contradicts the historiographical premise of the novel: within the larger narrative structured by Mina around the trip by her husband to Transylvania, his return to London, followed closely by Dracula's arrival in London, and now the chase back to Transylvania, the search shifts from time/chronology to place/space.

Mina's spatial narrative is preceded by a number of observations, which she renders under the hypnotic suggestion of Dr. Van Helsing. The details are obscure and meaningless to the rest of the group since they are sensory and personal instead of objective and calculating: "All is dark. I hear water swirling by, level with my ears, and the creaking of wood on wood. Cattle low far off. There is another sound, a queer one like" (340). In a clear defiance of the usual limits on space and time, Mina is in fact where Dracula is at the same time that he is there. It remains for Mina to

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<sup>12</sup> Several critics, including Margaret Carter and Franco Moretti, have noted that Van Helsing's unexplained wealth of knowledge about the vampire and his kin, along with some esoteric bits of information about the doctor himself make him someone to question in the storytelling of the novel, especially if that storytelling is meant to explain and illuminate, rather than obscure and mask.

bring the two kinds of data together, the sensory and personal with the measured and scientific, which she does after she has been left alone to rest:

Ground of inquiry.—Count Dracula's problem is to get back to his own place.

(a) He must be brought back by some one. This is evident. For had he power to move himself as he wished he could go either as man, or wolf, or bat, or in some other way. He evidently fears discovery or interference, in the state of helplessness in which he must be, confined as he is between dawn and sunset in his wooden box. (344)

In her list of “facts” about Dracula, Mina Harker draws no distinction between the actual and the supernatural, such as Dracula’s ability to move about as a man and his supernatural ability to move through this “suspect terrain” as a wolf, a bat or some other Gothic revenant. The inability of her companions to “see” Dracula through this strange “double vision” has hampered their efforts to thwart the Count’s design. Jonathan Harker’s wife is not limited by the historical and epistemological myopia of her protectors. Mina can “see” Dracula this precisely because she is working spatially. She continues:

(b) How is he to be taken?—Here a process of exclusions may help us. By road, by rail, by water?

1. By Road.—There are endless difficulties, especially in leaving the city.

(x) There are people. And people are curious, and investigate. A hint, a surmise, a doubt as to what might be in the box, would destroy him.

(y) There are, or there may be, customs and octroi officers to pass.

(z) His pursuers might follow. This is his highest fear. And in order to prevent his being betrayed he has repelled, so far as he can, even his victim, me!

2. By Rail.—There is no one in charge of the box. It would have to take its chance of being delayed, and delay would be fatal, with enemies on the track. True, he might escape at night. But what would he be, if left in a strange place with no refuge that he could fly to? This is not what he intends, and he does not mean to risk it. (345)

Mina’s central question—“But *what* would he be” [emphasis added]—is an odd one, set as it is within her Thomistic logical analysis, and it is a rhetorical question left hanging in the middle of the passage. Several possible answers come to mind. Mina may still be working within her earlier list of possible incarnations for the vampire Count (man, wolf, bat, etc.), in which case the logical pronoun reference would have to be “what” and not “who.” Another possibility is that she recognizes the reversal of roles implicit in the helplessness of the vampire: he would become the prey and the vampire hunters the predators, thus reversing the polarities at the opening of the novel. If this is true, then it suggests that once within Gothic space, on suspect ground, the vampire is weaker and



more vulnerable than the powerful Mina, who can negotiate both the literal geography of England and Central Europe and the suspect terrain of the Gothic. She simply “sees” and “knows” more than he does, and so she can devise a strategy to catch and destroy him. She knows where things and memories are hidden and the others do not. The geographical reference points in Mina’s strategizing are also peculiar. The rhetorical context is logical, evidential and precise, but the actual locations are not: “a strange place” in number two on her list, and “unfriendly land” in the passage below. Even placing what “must have happened” before everyone arrived in the Carpathians into a familiar chronology does not make these events familiar or recognizable to anyone but her. Mina is not constructing an Ordnance Survey Map of Transylvania; she is limning the boundaries of the Gothic terrain.

Mina continues:

3. By Water.—Here is the safest way, in one respect, but with most danger in another. On the water he is powerless except at night. Even then he can only summon fog and storm and snow and his wolves. But were he wrecked, the living water would engulf him, helpless, and he would indeed be lost. He could have the vessel drive to land, but if it were unfriendly land, wherein he was not free to move, his position would still be desperate.

We know from the record that he was on the water, so what we have to do is to ascertain what water.

The first thing is to realize exactly what he has done as yet. We may, then, get a light on what his task is to be.

Firstly.—We must differentiate between what he did in London as part of his general plan of action, when he was pressed for moments and had to arrange as best he could.

Secondly we must see, as well as we can surmise it from the facts we know of, what he has done here . . .

That, so far, his plans were successful we know . . . That the Count’s arrangements were well made, has been proved. Hildesheim cleared the box, took it off, and gave it to Skinsky. Skinsky took it, and here we lose the trail. We only know that the box is somewhere on the water, moving along. The customs and the octroi, if there be any, have been avoided. (346)

Why does Mina say “here we lose the trail?” Does she mean the logical trail, the ladder work of deductions and impressions that so far have brought her to a fuller understanding of Dracula’s method of operation than anyone else—including Abram Van Helsing? Or is she thinking of the physical journey, the careful and desperate steps that allowed Dracula to elude capture while in England? Or does she mean both, in which case we would have to surmise that either the impressions and details she has gathered through her hypnotic “visits” with Dracula are incomplete, or that the physical record of the Count’s movements in England as he

prepared for his escape is spotty. Soon, however, Mina regains her confidence and her stride:

Now we come to what the Count must have done after his arrival, on land, at Galatz

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My surmise is this, that in London the Count decided to get back to his castle by water, as the most safe and secret way. He was brought from the castle by Szgany, and probably they delivered their cargo to Slovaks who took the boxes to Varna, for there they were shipped to London. Thus the Count had knowledge of the persons who could arrange this service. When the box was on land, before sunrise or after sunset, he came out from his box, met Skinsky and instructed him what to do as to arranging the carriage of the box up some river. When this was done, and he knew that all was in train, he blotted out his traces, as he thought, by murdering his agent. I have examined the map and find that the river most suitable for the Slovaks to have ascended is either the Pruth or the Sereth. I read in the typescript that in my trance I heard cows low and water swirling level with my ears and the creaking of wood. The Count in his box, then, was on a river in an open boat, propelled probably either by oars or poles, for the banks are near and it is working against stream. There would be no such if floating down stream. (346)

By this point, a phrase like “I have examined the map” resonates with greater meaning. The entire novel has become a kind of “map,” especially when we recall that the narrative as it is published was Mina’s construction in the first place, at least in Stoker’s adoptive conceit. It is not coincidental that Stoker should entrust his task as novelist to the capable hands of his Irish compatriot, since it is she who will reveal the limitations of all the other attempts at imposing order on the supernatural, the Gothic. Mina’s successful arrangement of the various bits and pieces of evidence and story marks the turning of the tide in favor of the young English vampire hunters. This “map,” of course, is nothing like the Ordnance Surveys longed for by Mina’s husband Jonathan, since the landmarks of this geography are visible only to one who straddles both the Gothic world of the vampire and the “real” world of her human companions. Thus, Mina can conclude her inquiry with the confidence of someone who knows exactly where to find the prey that she has successfully trapped:

Of course it may not be either the Sereth or the Pruth, but we may possibly investigate further. Now of these two, the Pruth is the more easily navigated, but the Sereth is, at Fundu, joined by the Bistritza which runs up round the Borgo Pass. The loop it makes is manifestly as close to Dracula’s castle as can be got by water. (346)

In these passages, Mina Harker “reads” the place where the vampire moves when those she is advising—her husband and his friends—can only follow her direction. Dracula is not moving in time—this is suggested by his being “invisible” to the vampire hunters up until the time that Van Helsing educates them about the secret and hidden world that they have ignored to their peril. Where she is taking them is back to the beginning of the story, Transylvania, using the spatial logic of memory: the information that Van Helsing gleans from her under hypnosis comes back to her as memories, things felt and recalled, rather than as a chronology. This

distinction accounts precisely for her ability to “see” Dracula and her friends’ inability to navigate the trip without her. Once Dracula is cornered and his demise appears all but inevitable, Mina is once again pushed aside as a potential liability as Dracula is presumably killed by Jonathan Harker in a Gothic romance trope that would have been familiar to all Victorian readers. As payment for the violation of his wife, Jonathan Harker gets the chance to kill the vampire with his kukri knife, even while the outsider Quincy Morris dies in the bargain, providing the now pregnant Mina and her husband with the perfect name for the soon to be born child.

All of which leaves us with several unresolved problems at the end of the novel, instead of the neatly wrapped up romance narrative that Mina, sticking with the conceit of the narrative, has constructed. The first problem comes in the enigmatic “Note” at the end of the story, where Jonathan Harker, with an unusually mute Mina Harker sitting silently nearby, pronounces as useless everything that Mina and her cohort have constructed: “I [Harker] took the papers from the safe where they have been ever since our return so long ago. We were struck with the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed [namely, the novel we have just finished reading], there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting” (368).<sup>13</sup> In short, everything that came before is meaningless, inauthentic, leading us to several important questions: is Dracula in fact dead, since earlier in the story, Van Helsing told everyone that killing a vampire is a much more complicated task than simply cutting the creature’s throat?<sup>14</sup> Is Mina herself a vampire, since she underwent the same process that Lucy suffered earlier and which turned the unfortunate girl into a vampire? Is the child that Mina bore a vampire, presuming that there is good evidence that his mother is a vampire? Instead of offering any answers to these questions, Harker’s final “Note” allows Van Helsing to reassert the romance chronology /narrative: “We want no proofs; we ask none to believe us! This boy [the Harkers’ son, Quincy] will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is. Already he knows her sweetness and loving care; later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake” (369). Given the questions already raised by this final sequence of events and declarations, the pat conclusions offered by the romance ending invites a revised reading of *Dracula*, one that moves beyond the temporal conventions that have been sampled and rejected in the novel.

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<sup>13</sup> Given the fact that typing the document, a relatively new task that would surely have been completed by a woman, perhaps even a “New Woman” like those that Mina decries earlier in the novel, this characterization of the story is a criticism of both Mina and her spatial orienteering.

<sup>14</sup> Lucy Westenra, it will be recalled, had her heart staked, her head chopped off, her mouth stuffed with garlic bulbs and her heart cut out before she could be guaranteed eternal rest.

This revised reading is a spatial one which is connected to the powerful mode of memory, cultural and national. In *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination*, Gerry Smyth explores this conundrum in terms of what he calls the “paradox of Irish Studies”:

I want to signal the existence of a paradox concerning the relationship between time and space at the heart of Irish Studies. This paradox resides in the fact that although the formal study of Irish culture [which includes, naturally, the study of literature, history and theory] has been dominated throughout the modern period by a methodology organized around issues of chronology, duration, order, frequency, disruption, inheritance—in other words, issues of history—the subject matter of that study has been invariably geographical, concerned (even when it seemed not to be the case) with the existence and influence of a ‘special relationship’ between community and environment permeating Irish life. (19)

Smyth’s diagnosis of the “paradox” lurking at the heart of Irish Studies concerns the opposition between history—issues of time—and place—issues of space. This is why Mina Harker’s eureka moment in *Dracula* comes with the phrase, “I have a map!” Dracula will not be located along some chronological matrix since he transcends all the measures we use to parse time into chronology. He exists before and beyond time, and so Mina has to catch him in space, in memory, where time turns into space. This is an issue captured and explored very productively by Jarlath Killeen in *Gothic Ireland: Horror and the Irish Anglican Imagination in the Long Eighteenth Century*, in which he examines the limitations of historiographical practice concerning Ireland’s “long” eighteenth century. Arguments about the “real” beginning of this critical period in Irish history belie the inadequacies of chronological (“issues of history”) interpretation of a century which is permeated by memory, in this case, Anglo-Irish memory (real or constructed) of the 1641 rebellion. Referring to what he calls the “internal geography” (13) of the Anglican mind—a pointed reference to the spatial, not chronological nature of the problem—Killeen argues persuasively that the “Irish Gothic is the means by which late eighteenth-century Irish Anglicanism expresses itself” (13). Then, in a powerful methodological prescription for any cultural interpretation of Ireland’s eighteenth century, Killeen claims that the Gothic “is itself the best methodology to examine an elite which has too often been squeezed into monolithic interpretations, whether those interpretations see Ireland in colonial or *ancien régime* terms” (13).

Like Stoker in *Dracula*, Killeen rejects the episteme<sup>15</sup> of modern historiography because it insists on “monolithic interpretations” of periodization and makes it impossible to address the function of memory in the construction of culture. Dracula slips by the best strategies of the vampire hunters because none of the historical paradigms proffered in the

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<sup>15</sup> This is Michel Foucault’s term, which Killeen has adapted in this context to mean “the basic language in and through which Irish Anglicans understood the world in which they lived” (9).

story can catch him. If we return for a moment to a scene in Jonathan Harker's memoir, there is a moment when the difference between memory and history comes sharply into focus. The scene occurs in chapter four, after Harker has watched the vampire, who was holding him captive, slink down the outside wall of the castle dressed in Harker's own traveling clothes. It is clear to Harker what Dracula intends: "There could be no doubt as to his quest, and in my garb, too! Thus, then, is his new scheme of evil: that he will allow others to see me, as they think, so that he may both leave evidence that I have been seen in the towns or villages posting my own letters, and that any wickedness which he may do shall by the local people be attributed to me" (67). In this scene, obviously, monster (the vampire) and victim (Harker) merge into one being, something that the memoir/history that Harker is writing won't let him acknowledge—the shape of his narrative (a "monolithic interpretation") is maintained by the difference, not sameness, between the perceived victim and monster.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after this, Harker notices a woman outside the window where he has been staring out at the moonlit landscape:

There, indeed, was a woman with disheveled hair, holding her hands over her heart as one distressed with running. . . . When she saw my face against the window she threw herself forward, and shouted in a voice laden with menace: --'Monster, give me my child!' She threw herself on her knees, and raising up her hands, cried the same words in tones which wrung my heart. Then she tore her hair and beat her breast, and abandoned herself forward, and, though I could not see her, I could hear the beating of her naked hands against the door. (68)

Here is where memory—the eternal rapacity of the vampire in his home territory—meets history, the specific moment when Harker is confronted by the mother of Dracula's latest victim. And he backs away, hides himself from her, presumably because facing her and her anguished accusations would force him to address the conflation of the vampire with the innocent English traveler. Add to this the very real probability that Transylvania is in fact Ireland, and the possibilities multiply. Stoker had no physical sense for the geography or the ethnography of Transylvania, the land he chose as the setting for the story. As Alison Milbank has observed, "the milieu in *Dracula* has significance...in relation to its reference to Ireland" (20). Notwithstanding what David Glover has called Stoker's "troubled relationship to the Irish question" (13), it was quite common for English publishers of Irish Gothic writers like Sheridan LeFanu and Stoker to insist that settings not be in Ireland, but in less problematic and neutral places like Stygia in LeFanu's "Carmilla" and Transylvania for *Dracula* (McCormack 238). Changing the setting,

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<sup>16</sup> Laura O'Connor has provided an interesting and provocative context for Dracula's early insistence on speaking English fluently, not merely correctly: speaking without a brogue or accent in Victoria's Britain was a mark of social class, an accent being "a highly charged signifier of ethnicity, class, and of the cross-wired conflation of class and ethnicity which regulates [...] social differentiation" (9).

however, does not change the terrain or what happens there: it merely calls Ireland by some other name. Transylvania, we can legitimately argue, really is Ireland. Because Ireland had been associated with cannibalism and blood drinking for centuries before this point (in works by Fynes Moryson and Edmund Spenser, for example), the geographic slide from Ireland to Transylvania would have made a certain kind of sense to English readers.<sup>17</sup>

The spatial nature of this story, the Gothic story, is directly connected to the oft-noted subversiveness of Gothic literature in general, and in the political and cultural/historical spheres, of Irish Gothic in particular. The Irish Gothic, as W.J. McCormack has noted, “is remarkably explicit in the way it demonstrates its attachment to history and to politics” (833). Killeen sums up the subversive elements of Gothic by noting that while “Gothic literature itself often seeks narrative closure and a re-inscribing of these cultural distinctions [between good and evil, man and beast, men and women, animate and inanimate], the very act of challenging them in narrative leaves the arbitrariness of the divisions exposed and so in permanent disarray” (16). In this observation we can discern Killeen’s rejection of “arbitrary” divisions (like the histories inscribed in *Dracula*) and his embrace of the “permanent disarray” created in those historical paradigms by the powerful intrusion of memory within the narrative. For Killeen, the most powerful memory is of the 1641 rebellion, which through Sir John Temple’s *The Irish Rebellion* inscribed sectarian violence permanently into English writing about history and cultural identity in eighteenth-century Ireland: “If violence did not always manifest itself in bodies and bloodshed its rhetorical power in the texts of the period ensured that it was never far from the surface” (12). The 1641 rebellion and the constructed memory of Catholic cruelty and perfidy in the century after lie at the base of much Anglo-Irish writing up to the 1801 Act of Union: “A version of Irish Catholicism as the monstrous stranger will be strongly implicated in this mental infrastructure, a version so powerful as to shape Anglican history itself throughout the eighteenth century” (9). Thus, every discussion of just how “long” Ireland’s eighteenth century really was reveals the fundamental problem with this sort of positivist historiography. It is all, ultimately, beside the point, so long as the key memory at the heart of those constructions is not addressed, in this case the terrors that lie at the center of constructed memory about the 1641 rebellion. This memory requires a spatial, not chronological history since its parameters are embedded within cultural memory and cannot be parsed arbitrarily into decades or centuries.

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<sup>17</sup> This particular transformation in Bram Stoker’s novels has been discussed at greater length in Robert Smart and Michael Hutcheson “The ‘Unborn and Unburied Dead’: The Rhetoric of Ireland’s *An Gorta Mor*” in the collection titled *Ireland’s Great Hunger: Silence, Memory and Commemoration*, edited by David Valone and Christine Kinealy.

A quick return to Stoker's *Dracula* reveals that he was willing to abandon realistic narrative practice for a narrative mode that was very different from his contemporaries (like Wilkie Collins, for example).<sup>18</sup> In fact, the unusual historical framework described earlier in this essay would have required significant reworking of the Victorian realistic novel form. As Terry Eagleton so aptly notes in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, "If the realist novel is the form of stability, it is also the home of totality" and such "an Olympian standpoint is harder to come by in a divided society" (150), like nineteenth-century Ireland (and by extension, London for an Irishman like Stoker). Eagleton continues, "Realism aspires to a unity of subject and object, of the psychological and the social; but these in Ireland tend to split into separate genres, with the naturalism of a Carleton or Lever aligned against the exotic fantasies of so-called Protestant Gothic" (149). The realistic novel depends for its efficacy on the "assumption that the world is story-shaped—that there is a well-formed narrative implicit in reality itself, which it is the task of such realism to represent" (147), and this very assumption is what Stoker assails in *Dracula*. Representing this "story-shaped" world requires an omniscient narrator, an "Olympian" narrator, able to reassure the reader when things seem too far outside the "well-formed narrative" of reality. No such character/narrator can be found in *Dracula*: we are left to build linkages and conclusions from the juxtaposition of materials ranging from memoirs to newspapers to bills of lading. Neither is the presentation of materials strictly chronological, as this "story-shaped world" requires; as demonstrated, the materials in the story are recursive and contradictory, forcing the reader (and Mina, the presumed architect of this text) to piece some things together and leave some things out when they are contradictory. This is how memory is elided by narratives that insist on chronology as the means to represent history and reality. As Van Helsing asks his protégé, John Seward, early in the novel, "Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot?" (200).

In Killeen's reassessment of eighteenth-century Irish historiography and literature, the memory which is repressed and denied is the constructed history of the 1641 rebellion, in which presumed Catholic atrocities committed against Protestant settlers inscribed violence at the center of all Anglican cultural production. By 1897, this early rebellion had been displaced in cultural memory by the Famine, the Great Hunger, and by its repression, is inscribed a powerful ambivalence regarding England, the Act of Union between Ireland and England, and the profound neglect and disregards that England showed its oldest colony during those

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<sup>18</sup> Critic Carol Senf argues "Stoker's narration is intended to prove that the impossible is possible and, thus, to draw readers away from their ordinary, rational, scientific, and legal world into a world in which the impossible is believable"(32). This would also argue that Stoker has not pursued the "story shaped" narrative that Eagleton talks about.

terrible years 1845-1851.<sup>19</sup> It is this pervasive and negated cultural memory that Alison Milbank has in mind when she describes how “Dracula’s control over the wolf-hordes becomes a means of imaging the violence produced in Ireland by the ‘roofless villages’ of its devastated countryside” (15). This is a Famine landscape and its cultural memory, we argue, lies at the heart of Stoker’s novel, and is the main reason for Stoker’s narrative experiment. One of the more interesting notes in Jonathan Harker’s memoir early during his trip to Transylvania is his note that the land he is visiting has recently been ravaged by famine: the devastation he witnesses has been “assisted by famine and disease” (6), the hallmarks of those miserable years between 1845 and 1851. Stoker’s narrative experiment presented the story through several modes of historical representation, all of which are subverted by the end of the tale, leaving room for a story of reclaimed memory—a spatial and literary narrative<sup>20</sup>—to be inscribed among the competing chronologies. Ultimately, we argue that the long silence after the Famine, as well as the contradiction that a powerful memory like the Famine posed to the imperial narratives of English beneficence towards Ireland led Stoker to create a postcolonial narrative in which the primary modes of reading and rereading require us to follow ambivalent and doubled meanings to the truth. As Seamus Deane recently observed, “The historical debate about nationalism and colonialism, which is also a debate about modernity and atrocity, of which the contemporary version known as revisionism is a reprise, begins with the Famine. It is a debate generated by the question of what the Famine meant” (110).

One of the places in *Dracula* where the presence of this occluded Famine memory is most pronounced occurs when Mina Harker, not long after her demand that the vampire hunters shoot her should she exhibit signs of becoming a vampire, evinces a paradoxical sympathy for her victimizer: “I suppose one ought to pity anything so hunted as the Count” (251). Later, when her husband and friends declare their desire to “destroy that earthly life of him,” she poignantly rebukes them, ostensibly because she too might be killed should her transformation into a vampire be inevitable: “Oh hush! Oh hush! in the name of the good God. Don’t say

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<sup>19</sup> Consider, for example, the observation by Catherine Nash that the “colonial mapping of Ireland in the nineteenth century, the concurrent Anglicization of Irish place names, and the decline of the Irish language provide the historical background for the expression of themes of cultural loss and recovery in contemporary Irish culture” (40). What happened in the England-Ireland story during the nineteenth century became the contested center of this repressed cultural memory.

<sup>20</sup> As Melissa Fegan notes at the end of her introductory survey of writing about the Famine after 1848, the “Famine had ceased to be historical [in the sense that any historians were writing about it], and begun to be literature” (9), Gothic literature in particular. See chapter 5, page 159 et passim in Fegan’s study for a catalog of the number of Gothic revenants used in Famine literature to characterize either those who would prey on the most vulnerable in the population, or to evoke the qualities of the pestilence that scoured the land and its people.



such things, Jonathan, my husband, or you will crush me with fear and horror. Just think, my dear—I have been thinking all this long, long day of it—that . . . perhaps . . . some day . . . I too may need such pity; and that some other like you—and with equal cause for anger—may deny it to me!” (306-307). Mina’s late affinity for the vampire who attacked her is important, for it reveals that she is the key to understanding him within a postcolonial context. As Joseph Valente noted in regard to the political and cultural significance of Mina’s character in *Dracula*, “The appendage of the name Wilhelmina to the name Murray thus encrypts the Irish history of ethnosectarian conflict and dispossession in two diametrically opposed forms: it either signals the imposition of an alien symbolic order or law upon the native patrilineal culture, positioning Mina as another personification of the defeated Erin, or it commemorates the foremost champion of the settler class, William [of Orange], positioning Mina as a living emblem of his triumph” (66). Mina Murray was Irish before her marriage to Jonathan Harker. Marriage was a common metaphor for the 1801 Act of Union, and the unfulfilled expectation of what that union became a source of anguish when Great Britain, as the richer and more powerful of the two “equal” partners, failed to feed hundreds of thousands of starving Irish peasants who died within three hundred miles of the richest country on the planet. Mina Harker is Ireland in this colonial relationship, and as Stephen Arata sums it up in a postcolonial reading of Stoker’s novel, it is “not just, *Dracula* is to England as Ireland is to England, but, *Dracula* is to England as England is to Ireland” (120). In other words, the contemporary depiction of Ireland as a parasite surviving on the life-blood of England ignored the vampiric role of England.

There is also a peculiar irony in Mina Harker becoming more closely identified with Ireland as she becomes more and more like *Dracula*: nothing in this centuries old colonial equation is simple. Consider, for example, the powerful Gothic innovation of tying the vampire to his native soil for survival. Many observers of the Famine in the South and West of the island noted the recalcitrance of cottiers to leave their small plots of barren land, preferring to die on the spot where they had lived—however tenuously—rather than moving somewhere where there was at least the possibility of survival.<sup>21</sup> Consider also the ubiquitous coffin, which is probably the most resonant image from the Great Famine, and the abundance of Catholic accoutrements which are used to vanquish the vampire from the heart of this Protestant empire. In no other vampire tale in the tradition—either in England or in Ireland—does the coffin, fifty of them in this case, play such a visible role in marking the movement of the vampire from Eastern Europe to England. To someone acquainted with the many Famine scenes in which coffins are piled outside of cottiers’ houses, or on wagons being led to overflowing cemeteries, the number of coffins

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<sup>21</sup> This is a point made by nearly all Famine historians, including Christine Kinealy, Peter Gray and Noel Kissane.

that Dracula prepares for his colonization of England and the West resonates with cultural memory. As Laura O'Connor rightly points out, "The revenant is a vehicle through which the past can be made to 'appear' in the present. The figure of the revenant, the one who returns after death or long absence, is an apt trope" for the process of cultural recovery that this reading describes (15).

Stoker's own situation as a transplanted Irishman who first worked for the most obvious symbol of English colonial power in Ireland—Dublin Castle—and then as the beleaguered manager for the imperious actor Henry Irving, has invited several critics to speculate about whether his sympathies were for Union or more in line with the Home Rule faction of Irish politicians that dominated Parliamentary politics during the years that he wrote *Dracula*. We may in fact never really know the answer to this question since there is little in the way of autobiographical material that would reveal his position either way. But there is room for plausible speculation. Joseph Valente sums up the "discursive agenda" of *Dracula* this way: "to critique the racial assumptions and attitudes of these respective communities [Irish and English] without forfeiting the author's self-styled membership in them" (80). Moreover, as Stephen Arata notes, the "ill-will characterizing Anglo-Irish relations in the late-nineteenth century, exacerbated by the rise of Fenianism and the debate over Home Rule, far surpassed the tensions that arose as a result of British rule elsewhere" (119). Thus, it is not difficult to suggest that, as a stranger in a strange land—like his monster—one who moreover did not try to hide his thick brogue or his Irish roots, Stoker would have been acutely aware of the paradoxes and contradictions that attended his conscious conviction that the Union between Ireland and England would yield fruit for both. The significance of the Gothic in our analysis lies in its ability to allow contradiction and paradox to persist in the narrative, as a means of creating a multiplicity of times, spaces and meanings. The past is never really passed, localities are layered with conflicting historical resonances and what might appear to mean one thing also means its opposite. These narrative features form the peculiar power of the Gothic genre to render its subject through a postcolonial reading. As William Hughes and Andrew Smith have noted, "the Gothic is, and always has been, *post*-colonial, and this is where, in the Gothic text, disruption accelerates into change, where the colonial encounter—or the encounter which may be read or interpreted through the colonial filter—proves a catalyst to corrupt, to confuse or to redefine the boundaries of power, knowledge and ownership" (1).<sup>22</sup> In the Gothic, narrative complexity and apparent contradiction do not stand in the way of understanding and meaning. Thus, as Colm Tóibín observed about Famine reporting, many eyewitness reports of Famine suffering are

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<sup>22</sup> Note that Hughes and Smith highlight the dangers of accepting postcoloniality as a final or next to final stage in the colonial history of an occupied and settled nation, one of the "pitfalls" that Anne McClintock described in her analysis of the field.

“chilling and as ‘convincing’ as anything in Sheridan leFanu or Bram Stoker” (23). Tóibín’s use of literary references to characterize actual reporting about the Famine illustrates well how one can easily conflate the two realms of literature/fiction and history/journalism. With regard to the repressed cultural memory of *An Gorta Mor*, there is little epistemological difference between the two.

Because of its ability to raise submerged landscapes to the surface, as well as its tendency to retrace political and cultural boundaries, the Gothic has become an accepted construction in postcolonial theory. William Hughes, for example, states, “Gothic *has* to be the face of the postcolonial because the culture of Gothic—grandiose, oppressive, deviant, and yet awesome in the power of its presence—is somehow not merely the face of the past but of the imperialist past also” (89). Fred Botting, in his seminal examination of the Gothic tradition, also describes the means by which imperial history is problematized by Gothic narrative:

It [the Gothic novel] involves a pervasive cultural concern—characterized as postmodern—that things are not only not what they seem: what they seem is what they are, not a unity of word or image and thing, but words and images without things or as things themselves, effects of narrative form and nothing else. Unstable, unfixed and ungrounded in any reality, truth or identity other than those that narratives provide, there emerges a threat of sublime excess, of a new darkness of multiple and labyrinthine narratives, in which human myths again dissolve, confronted by an uncanny force beyond its control. (171)

Noteworthy in Botting’s formula is the emphasis on absence (“images without things”) and on the creation of multiple realities and multiple senses of time (“unstable, unfixed and ungrounded in any reality”), both of which have become staples of the postcolonial discussion since Patrick Brantlinger’s groundbreaking analysis of imperial fears and doubts in Victorian literature. Brantlinger offers what he terms the “imperial Gothic,” characterized by the three themes of “individual regression or going native; an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism; and the diminution of opportunities for adventure and heroism in the modern world” (230). He sees this as a response to racial fears in England that hordes of “murderous, primitive, apelike . . . stereotype[s] of the Irish hooligan” (233) would make citizens at the center of the Empire become barbaric or “native,” thus diminishing the vitality and creativity of the imperial architects of the world’s largest empire. These racialized bodies, many of them refugees from the Famine-ravaged South and West of Ireland,<sup>23</sup> represent a much deeper and more complex postcolonial story. As Luke Gibbons has suggested in his recent study *Gaelic Gothic*, it

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<sup>23</sup> According to Davenport-Hines, these racialized images in the British popular press represent “the vindictive, destructive, ignorant, dirty Irish poor threatening the social poise, mental equilibrium and political powers of the Anglo-Irish gentry” (317). This process of racializing the Irish was first examined by L. Perry Curtis, Jr. in *Apes and Angels*.

is upon these bodies that the subversive colonial history of Ireland was written, and the Gothic lexicon provides the means by which to hear the story: “By redressing rather than disavowing the sins of the past, Gaelic Gothic rattled the skeletons in its own vaults, thus going some way towards exposing the calcified cultural deposits that underlie the ideology of race itself” (16).

Fred Botting’s description of how realist narratives become unmoored by the emergence of previously denied and repressed cultural memories, creating “multiple and labyrinthine narratives,” returns us to the idea that what emerges finally from the contradictions in the Gothic narrative is something like narrative space, something measurable and tangible which transcends time. It is an issue even larger than place, in that place within cultural studies usually has its particular episteme in identity, national or ethnic. As Catherine Nash notes, this sense of cultural memory—especially in Irish Studies—as being something positional rather than a moving story limned by chronology is implicit in much contemporary critical writing, which abounds with “spatial metaphors—the terms position, place, site, space ground, field, territory, terrain, margin, periphery and map” (39). To return to *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker panics when in chapter four he discovers fifty “great boxes,” which he notes are “coffins, on a pile of newly dug earth.” What Harker saw and felt likely parallels, both in detail and in effect, the impact of seeing piles of coffins and newly dug earth in Skibbereen in 1848, for example, or of reading harrowing accounts of Famine related deaths in the *Cork Examiner* in 1847-8:

In Belmullet, County Cork, a starving woman lay in her hovel next to her dead three-year-old son, waiting for her husband to return from begging food. When night fell and his failure to return led her to imagine him dead in a ditch, she lay there in the faint light of the fire’s dying embers, caressing with her eyes her dead son’s face and his tiny fists, clenched as if for a fight to get into heaven. Then slowly, with death searching her, and now with her own fists clenched, she made one last effort to remain alive. Crawling as far away from her son’s face as she could, as if to preserve his personality or least her memory of it, she came to his bare feet and proceeded to eat them. (Gallagher 88)

The spatial nature of Famine memories creates their affective transcendence—the pictures, images and scenes hold the same evocative charge that they did in the moment when they were first conveyed. The persistence of these memories is the point. While historical narratives had relegated them to either the convenient past or to the silence that was the particular fate of that terrible story, Gothic novels such as *Dracula* raised them to the surface of the narrative, moving them from the margins of legitimacy to a new position at the center of postcolonial discourse.

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