

Dracula and Christianity

- *Dracula* addresses the fear of things we cannot prove scientifically and rationally, and the ways we still rely on faith to comfort and even to save us in an age of scientific curiosity and achievement.



- The invasion of Dracula suggests that people may be pompous and pretentious to believe they can know and control everything: there are mysteries which perhaps cannot be fully grasped, including God.

Dracula and Christianity

- Dracula, ironically, may be the only one in the novel who truly believes in God.
- He may have renounced Him, but Dracula would not deny His existence, or relegate Him to superstition like some of the other characters.

Dracula and Christianity

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- He may have renounced Him, but Dracula would not deny His existence, or relegate Him to superstition like some of the other characters.
- On the other hand, Dracula moves to Carfax, an old abandoned Church that may show that God is no longer present, no longer a part of our spiritual lives because meaning has been replaced by materialism.
- This is why Dracula is allowed in to spread evil.
- In other words, meaning is AMBIGUOUS.



- In Stoker's time, most people were devout Christians, and in many ways the novel is a deeply religious book. How has the Christian connection changed in some of the versions you have seen?
- Is the cross now just a prop, not a potent symbol of Christ's suffering?

Dracula as the Anti-Christ

- References in the Bible to the anti-Christ are not focused on specific characterizations per se.
- Instead, the anti-Christ is one who spreads lies about God, as noted in John 4: 2-3.
- By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

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- Stoker uses many references to Christianity to display numerous amounts of Anti-Christian values, superstitious beliefs of the protection towards evil, and to compare and contrast the powers of God with those of Dracula.

Dracula as the Anti-Christ

- God is frequently referred to as the “light,” which symbolizes happiness or life.
- Dracula's powers are limited during the light and his powers are stronger in the night, during darkness, which symbolizes evil.

Dracula as the Anti-Christ

- Dracula has several powers that no one but God can control.
- Dracula can control the weather, wild animals, change form, and has the power of necromancy (communicate with the dead).
- Through communion, we receive everlasting life with God in heaven. However, Dracula is undead, and must consume the blood of the living to survive and to build his strength.

Dracula as the Anti-Christ

- Through communion, we receive everlasting life with God in heaven. However, Dracula is undead, and must consume the blood of the living to survive and to build his strength.
- By this, Dracula is relying on humans to restore his life after death and not concentrating on God as the source of life.
- We must let God into your heart, but Dracula may not enter someone's home unless they let him in.

Dracula as the Anti-Christ



- Dracula has many followers. Renfield wants to walk by Dracula's side and calls him Master.
- Renfield also repeats the phrase "the blood is the life" as a form of communion prayer.



- Lucy is also a follower and a fallen woman.
- Why do women vampires eat children, and not men? Stoker may have seen it as an abomination of their role as childbearers, and Lucy is punished when she has premarital sex for other than procreative purposes.
- She cannot be saved because her potential saviours (Van Helsing, Seward) are human, not divine.

Dracula as the Anti-Christ



- Lucy may have been led astray, but one could also argue that she wanted to follow Dracula.
- On the other hand, Mina is a dutiful wife and potential mother. Her reputation and goodness is untarnished, and although she may be attracted to Dracula, she is not a follower.
- She is attractive, but this is not what attracts men, and her loss to Dracula would have terrifying repercussions for society.

But Is Dracula Truly Evil?

- Although he retains his lordship in Transylvania, the world around him has changed and grown significantly.
- The “glories” of days gone by now belong to other families and other races and other countries.
- Indeed, when the Count discusses “the crowded streets of your mighty London,” we sense that he lusts for power and blood, but is also humbled: “I long . . . to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that makes it what it is. But alas!”
- In this light, Dracula becomes not simply a creature of fathomless evil.

But Is Dracula Truly Evil?



- Rather, he is a somewhat sympathetic and more human creation, determined to regain his family's lost power.
- Why must he be left behind?
- Isn't he the one that truly has a need for human company ? Isn't he lonely?

Technology



- Stoker's characters are in love with modern technology: with telegraphs and trains, with typewriters and gramophones and primitive recording devices.

Technology



- In many ways, their invention is not just for convenience, but to dispel the mysteries of life.
- Dracula is one of these mysteries who will not go away.

Technology



- In Chapt 3, Dracula relates the proud but disappointing history of his family.
- He speaks of the “brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship.”
- The Count notes the power his people once held, but laments the fact that the “warlike days are over,” just like his once hip suit.

So who is the hero of the novel?



- Van Helsing?
- Mina?
- Harker?
- Dracula?
- Technology?
- The middle class and capitalism?

So who is the hero of the novel?



- Or is it simply good triumphing over evil?

So who is the hero of the novel?



- Okay, who ordered the steak?