

## Monstrosity and Ecophobia in *Frankenstein*, *Moby Dick*, and *Dracula*

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### Abstract

Since ancient times, images of monsters have appeared in many works and served as embodiments of human fears and sources of ecophobia. Monstrosity evoked contempt, hatred, and ultimately ecophobia, which Estok describes as irrational fear, contempt, or lack of mindfulness toward the natural environment. This paper explores the character of the monster as an embodiment of ecophobia in three Gothic novels: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), by interpreting monstrosity in socio-cultural contexts. The following questions will be addressed: How is monstrosity represented? How do monsters exhibit ecophobia? What role does the monster play in creating ecophobia? This paper concludes that monstrosity reflects nineteenth-century preoccupations such as human corruption and scientific excess. It also concludes that viewing monstrosity from an ecocritical perspective highlights the need for harmony in humans' relationship with nature, suggesting that humans should develop a naturalistic understanding and embrace and preserve all aspects of the natural world. Tracing the interconnections between monstrosity and ecophobia epitomizes the writers' distinct concerns about inappropriate human behaviors in both the real and fictional worlds.

**Keywords:** Monstrosity, Ecophobia, Gothic, Nineteenth-Century Literature, *Frankenstein*, *Moby Dick*, *Dracula*.

## 1. Introduction

Monsters have permeated numerous literary masterpieces and stories in many national works of literature. They usually appear in horror stories, science fiction, and often in oral literature and they have a specific set of qualities. Usually, the words "monster", "monstrous" or "monstrosity" denote something ugly, brutish, evil, or frightening such as vampires, basilisks, or dragons, and are not natural categories; thus, they become a source of ecophobia for both characters and readers. In addition, a monster can be the product or symbol of the prevalent culture, and it represents its fears, anxiety, desires, and fantasies. Often, creating monsters in literature is meant to reassess the readers' social conception of morality. Even though society deems murder as an immoral act, the killing of a monster can be justifiable or noble for many reasons such as for self-defense or for overcoming ecophobia because monsters usually serve as symbols of people's

repressed thoughts and deep-rooted anxieties. Moreover, they represent the unknown and people's darkest fears or darker sides of the human psyche and display humans' potential to become inhuman.

Monsters usually appear as powerful people or animals that cannot be controlled, instigate many problems, and ultimately generate ecophobia in the story by their physical deformity at first sight. Bizuleanu (2015) suggests that "the myth of the monster has been constantly reformulated over centuries, especially due to causes leading to the emergence and perception of what is monstrous" (p.209). Monsters have attracted and fascinated people's minds for centuries and we usually find them playing the leading characters in many fairy tales, ballads as well as horror stories. According to Eppard (2015), "monsters have existed in myths, legends, and folktales for thousands of years. While most people accept that monsters are not real, many insist that they exist." (p.4). Often, monsters explain some unusual occurrences beyond their understanding or because of people's imagination. Hamilton (2007) says that "people began to explore the world around them, the unknown held both excitement and fear. [...] Mariners returned from ports unknown with tales of giant sea monsters" (p.5). Therefore, tales of monsters permeated both literary and cultural productions, were transmitted orally, and were later recorded. Hamilton also asserts this idea of "stories of never-before-seen creatures were often exaggerated, turning the animals into monsters of folklore and legend" (p.5). Moreover, Tonelli (2012) defines the word 'monster' as 'to show' (monstrare) and to 'warn' (monere) and that the word 'monster' was later used with a different meaning to describe "any dreadful or mysterious event, thing or person" (p.121). According to Tonelli, the monster can be regarded as "an unknown or imaginary animal, often described in poems or mythological stories, as mermaids, sphinx, griffons, harpies, centaurs and hags, all with metaphorical and symbolic significance". (Tonelli, 2012) Moreover, a monster can carry "further connotations essential to the development of the Frankenstein myth, the essence of which is that they are not physiological but moral in their reference" (Baldick, 1987). From this perspective, we can associate the presence of the monster in Shelley's *Frankenstein* as an embedded criticism of society through the monster's appearance but more importantly through his anti-social actions.

The lexical meaning of monstrosity denotes a deviation from the normal. Usually, this malformation is a source of fear because of its difference in terms of size, force, or complexity. Shelley's monster, for example, incorporates all the points of this definition; he comes to the world because of his creator's experiment, deformed, structureless, and strong as well as having a huge frame and a killer who has no scruples in killing his creator's family members and friends. Additionally, Melville's phantom giant whale is also terrifying and evokes ecophobia because of its size, colour, and force. However, there are slight differences in how authors portray the monster because Stoker's *Dracula* is more of a traditional villain, malicious, and uncanny. The definition provided by Foucault and quoted by Wright (2013) outlines the monster as a mixture "displaying all kinds of morphological abnormalities" that is in some respect "unclassifiable" (p.49). Wright states that the monster from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century is essentially a mixture of two kingdoms, the animal and the human: the man with the head of an ox, and the man with bird's feet. It is also the blending of two species, two sexes, or life and death. Consequently, the transgression of natural limits, the transgression of classification, of the table, transgression of the

law as a table; this is the real question of monstrosity as Wright suggests (p.48). Furthermore, Wright explores examples of abnormality, freakishness, madness, and otherness along with monstrosity to demonstrate how the monster is effectively a social and cultural construct. Moreover, Wright interprets and analyzes some notions of Foucault and Kristeva regarding the cultural aspects of monstrosity. (Wright, 2013)

Halberstam (1995) explains that the gothic novel produces symbols for "interpretive mayhem in the body of the monster" (p.3), and specifically focuses on explorations of 'Otherness' by using "the body of the monster to produce race, class, gender..." (p.6) Thus, the psychological relationship of the humans to monsters can be understood oppositional and appositional where humans experience fear, tension, and anxiety to control what is strange and "unnatural". Halberstam details how 'Otherness' has its origins in the gothic monsters of the nineteenth century, where representations of monstrosity serve to metaphorize "modern subjectivity as a balancing act between inside / outside, female/male, body/mind, native/foreign, proletarian/aristocrat" (p.1). Therefore, the oppositional relationship is manifested when the self defies the other and attempts to annihilate the 'Other' through ongoing tension with it because of its dissimilarity, strangeness, and exoticism without an attempt to build bridges for understanding. By the same token, the appositional relationship is built when the self relies on the 'Other' to constitute the superficial characteristics of the self-image through a relationship of inner difference to validate the existence of the self as a distinct and superior entity.

Shelley's *Frankenstein* focuses on the social and psychological need for the creation of a hideous monster through scientific experimentation. Then, the protagonist, Victor, attempts to create life through macabre, galvanism (the stimulation of muscle by an electric current), using body parts that he has gathered through the criminal practice of grave-digging. This gothic novel explores the "imaginary" line between life and death and the "monstrous" results that could ensue. Stoker's gothic novel *Dracula* focuses on one of the most popular literary monsters, Count Dracula (the vampire). The fictional character has similar attributes found in folkloric depictions of monsters; vampires were known as immortal creatures, or demons, that feed on the blood of the living to survive. Moreover, Melville's *Moby Dick* is an American gothic novel that depicts one of the most terrifying monsters; a whale that has terrorized the seas and was known as Moby Dick. Ishmael, the narrator, describes it as having two prominent white areas around "a peculiar snow-white wrinkled forehead, and a high, pyramidal white hump" (p.188). The narrator claims that it was the largest sperm whale that ever lived, and the beast was taking pleasure in getting revenge on the whalers who tried to hunt it relentlessly. The legend was metaphysical and approaches the paranormal because sailors reported seeing it at different places in the world -at the same time. Yet Ishmael insists that what invested the whale with "natural terror" was that "unexampled, intelligent malignity" (p.188) that he had shown in his assaults and his defiance of what Ishmael wanted to observe as normal.

The writers coming from different national backgrounds offer multiple portrayals of monstrosity to show how the monsters' characteristics evoke terror and ultimately ecophobia which is manifested in fear, anxiety, contempt, and hatred towards the natural world or aspects of it. Thus, characters are often at war with the monsters in the story as it becomes inevitable for them to overcome their ecophobia. Monsters in literary works are more rememberable than protagonists

because these creatures represent long-buried aspects of our psyche, thereby speaking to humans on a primal level. In other words, monsters reflect the darkest side of the human psyche which can be brutish, ugly, aggressive, and cruel. In addition, monsters may also serve as incarnations of the other; emissaries from the world that remain just out of sight. The idea of blending two species, two sexes, or life and death in monsters sounds terrifying and intimidating to the human mind. Therefore, monster tales represent the fears, anxieties, and conflicts that culture has towards differences where the creatures are shown as threats and permanent dangers as they do not fit into the accepted natural categories and thus, they generate ecophobia. Tonelli (2012) states that the word 'monster' describes "any dreadful or mysterious event, thing or person" (p.121). The analysis that follows provides an overview of the different versions of monsters and their conflict with society/nature in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, and Stoker's *Dracula*.

Many scholars have investigated and depicted the concept of monstrosity in these selected gothic novels. For instance, Skalosova's study (2015) discusses various interpretations of the monster in literary history and defines what kind of monstrosity is represented in the novel (p. 2). Moreover, Poulin's article (2020) investigates Melville's experimental and associative structure and epistemological methods in depicting the multiple implications of the whale's physical presence to challenge the fundamentalist modes which are employed in seeking to understand reality (pp. 131-137). In addition to these studies, Trueba (2016) has explored the representations of monsters in *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and highlighted their roles in nineteenth-century English Society. A central point of departure for this study is providing insightful interpretations and analyses of the representations of monstrosity in these selected gothic novels from an ecocritical perspective to illustrate how these representations evoke feelings of ecophobia.

## 2. The Representation of Shelley's Monstrous Creature in *Frankenstein*

Mary Shelley conceives her monstrous creature at the height of the period called Romanticism. This period has witnessed many changes including the political (French and American revolutions), economic (urban economy and the industrial revolution), and scientific dimensions (discoveries in medicine, neurology, electricity, and chemistry). Shelley involves most of these changes in her novel. More specifically, Shelley depicts the life of Victor, a man who tries to uncover the essence of existence. Shelley describes Victor's struggle of finding the truth behind the physical world. Nevertheless, he suffers from emotional and psychological threats after he creates his wild creature. Throughout the novel, Shelley relates the incidents to the situation of society during the nineteenth century through the changes in people's approach to how they view science, the role of women, and how they viewed their new position in the universe as enlightened individuals. More specifically, Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a construction of social views and enlightenment ideals. Randel (2003) believes that "Victor now resembles the European intellectuals who flirted with or actively promoted radical ideas at home but were aghast when overseas colonies chose to apply Enlightenment notions of human rights to their own condition." (p. 469)." Randel argues that Victor represents the social enlightenment of his era through his determination to unleash the secrets of life when he tries to deconstruct the traditional perspectives of people towards the existence of humans. Shelley utilizes Victor's traits to demonstrate the idea

of the birth of science as the instigator of intellectual enlightenment. Thus, the novel illuminates a period in history that shows new shifts in the structure of civilization.

Moreover, Shelley's novel through the structure of Victor's creature shows a Marxist way of thinking toward society. The monstrous appearance of Victor's creature hinders him from becoming a real human because the creature is an "unfinished citizen" due to his appearance, so he cannot obtain the rights of human beings and becomes an outsider. Thus, Shelley's *Frankenstein* depicts the sociopolitical, historical, and psychological context of the nineteenth century in many aspects—the importance of social class, the power of knowledge, and new enlightened modes of thinking through the concept of monstrosity where Shelley highlights the significance of *Frankenstein* as a narration of social issues during the period of 19th century—the period of revolution.

Monsters measure the status of 'the human' both in terms of appearance and ethical choice for a variety of reasons. Monstrosity in *Frankenstein* is associated with the ugliness of both his appearance and actions toward ordinary people. However, *Frankenstein's* monster is unique because it formulates the tensions arising between nature and nurture as well as self and society. Such is the power, resonance, and horror of Victor's monster that he takes over the narration, and his frightening nature permeates the novel. This section examines crucial aspects of the creature's monstrosity – the physical construction, the representation of his fiendish acts of murder, and his justifications for those murders. The fact that the monster does not have a proper name has to do with his creation from different parts of other unidentified people's bodies. Following this aspect of namelessness, Baldick (1987) states that the monster's namelessness "helps to dislodge him from that traditional notion of the monstrous which fixes its objects with a moral label or caption" (p.45). Perhaps Shelley intended to make her monster like a ghostlike which is supposed to be enigmatic, unsightly, and abhorrent, and immediately evokes fear upon first sight. To bring such a monster to life, Shelley employs Victor, an inexperienced scientist, to make him responsible for the monster's existence. The narrator points out his lack of morality because he "found so astonishing a power placed within his hands" and endowed with "the capacity of bestowing animation" (p.53). Victor decided the appearance and structure of the monster's body and his creation had been defective and deformed from the start because he violated the creation laws of God. Therefore, Victor has contributed to making his creation monstrous in appearance and manners and he is a culprit and criminal. In Victor's opinion, the monster is a living thing or "one of simpler organization," so there is no trace of the idea in the novel that the monster could be a man in principle but a "being" (p.53). Victor intends to impart to the reader that the monster is like an animal "but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complete and wonderful as man." (p.53). This indicates that the creation of the monster has been a result of the absence of a moral sense, a lust for fame and glory, and a blind moral consciousness to the type of creation and its impact on others. The lack of morality stems from the fact that the monster had been assembled from old body parts and strange chemicals, and that he was also animated by a mysterious spark. He is eight feet tall and enormously strong but with the mind of a newborn. The monster is a defect that threatens humans around him and thus generates fear and makes Victor ecophobic; as the monster pursues him

relentlessly and murders his brother William, friend Clerval, servant Justine, and his wife and ultimately turns his life into misery, spending his rest of life escaping from him until his death.

Walton, the polar explorer, describes his first encounters with Victor who achingly searches for a runaway, and the narrator shows that Victor is referring to him as a “daemon” (p.18). At this point, the reader accepts the fact that this creature is a representative of evil and assumes negative features. Both Walton and Frankenstein express their fear by indicating that the monster is both a “being” (p.15) and a “daemon” (p.18) and the reader feels that fear in Walton’s letters to his sister. Although Frankenstein calls the monster a “daemon”, he knows that there is nothing demonic in connection with the structure of his monster; the creature “is not literally a paid-up and fork-carrying member of that order” (p.41). Baldick (1987) mentions that Shelley puts a lot of effort into creating a monster of such ugliness and she pays attention to all details to impress the reader as well as to evoke an atmosphere of terror. The monstrosity of the murderous character lies in his physical appearance. Baldick questions the monster's ugliness even though his creator has aimed at perfection. In addition, Baldick states that the monster's ugliness is because of self-loathing and that his appearance is an indication of the unhealthy conditions of his production. Moreover, Victor neglects to pay attention to his experiment as he does not consider how the monster will use his energy and especially his brain. What Victor strenuously searches for is the appropriate materials and inventing methods. In the role of a scientist, Victor is more concerned with the possible existence of the monster than with his behaviour. Baldick asserts this idea and mentions that Victor is more impressed with the material rather than with the result of the “moral ugliness”. (p.35)

Victor’s creation is not natural, the reformation and reanimation of pieces of the dead are against the natural process of decomposition. Victor intends to create a beautiful creature as he “selected his features as beautiful” (p.58) However, the creation process is not natural and is born in darkness, with Victor delving through graves and bone houses, lacerating and desecrating corpses. This creature, upon the re-animation of the newly stitched whole, transfigures itself from “the beauty of the dream” into something, in Victor’s eyes, of “horror and disgust” (p. 59). Victor’s dream evaporates and the result is an ugly gigantic mess. Reflecting upon the physical makeup of the creature now of animation, Victor’s reaction is one of repulsed horror and the monster evokes fear in the characters and readers.

Victor gives a good example of the idea that any individual, sooner or later, pays for any transgression toward nature. Victor, for example, has been punished for his monstrosity which was a result of his lust for knowledge and glory that destroys everything around him. Victor breaks the laws of nature and puts himself in the position of God. Victor avidly creates a monster that was intended to become his masterpiece, but his invention has become the source of his destruction that has broken “his spirit” (p.22) as Victor becomes a slave of his desire for creating and controlling new life and destroying his morality on the path to glory and fame.

### 3. The Monstrous Image of *Moby Dick*

*Moby Dick* is a story of monomania aboard a whaling ship. It functions at once as a documentary of life at sea and as a vast philosophical allegory of life in general where Melville satirizes the sociopolitical circumstances of his nation. More specifically, he does not only mirror

the craziness of insurgency but also the moral (d)evolution of his society. Ahab's imaginary struggle with the whale stems from speculations concerning both Melville and America as a nation. He composes his novel of a mimed and deranged captain in pursuit of revenge against his frightening adversary, the white whale, parallel to the South's weighing of revolt against the North. Melville tries to unmask reality by giving a satirical frame to this ideological conflict. Thus, casting aside traditional narrative forms presented in his novel would conceal the truth and uncover many major historical inconsistencies: the concurrence of democracy and slavery in America.

*Moby Dick* is an allegorical novel about Captain Ahab's search to kill the enormous white whale which was based on real-life events. In 1839, Melville has read a magazine article about a sperm whale called Mocha Dick, famed for its deadly attacks on whaling ships trying to hunt it down. Unlike Moby Dick, however, Mocha Dick is eventually killed and used for oil. The author Herman Melville grew up during the peak of American dominance of the whaling industry, the period between 1820 and the Civil War. He creates his masterpiece by weaving contemporary accounts and his own experiences as a whaler. Furthermore, Melville is inspired by the story of Essex whose former captain is George Pollard. Essex *has been* rammed by a sperm whale and abandoned thousands of miles from land when Pollard and his crew escape in lifeboats and suffer from sickness, starvation, and cannibalism. In addition, Melville has long admired Hawthorne's psychological depth and gothic grimness. Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* influenced Melville in the writing of *Moby Dick*. Although the works of Shakespeare and Milton and stories in the Bible have influenced *Moby Dick*, Melville does not look exclusively to celebrated cultural models. He drew on contents from popular culture such as whaling narratives which were popular in the nineteenth century.

Melville's *Moby Dick* depicts a monster that leaves readers feeling ambiguous about nature. The novel's whale has a monolithic force that confuses our understanding, as it "resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition" (Cohen, 1996, p.7) Moby Dick is a hybrid image; it can be understood through its biological classification, rational analysis of its presence, the sublime whiteness, and the overwhelming nature of the whale's semiotic elusiveness. The narrator presents a documentary about the whale as a biological entity. This part is a bit confusing and disturbing as Melville presents a practical discussion through Ishmael, the narrator, in multiple chapters to describe the advantages of the whale for making dishes, oil, and many other usages and thus he transfers the whale's mythical existence to a practical one through lengthy, detailed and extended passages. However, the justification of the whale's existence is the main source of its mystery and monstrosity as it is an unbeatable and supernatural whale. Melville's descriptions of the whale's whiteness confuse the reader because of their contradictory denotations, with whiteness taking on paradoxical meanings to induce terror by its monstrous appearance. Ishmael mentions that the color white usually refers to pure and innocent things but once associated with a creature, it creates a horrific feeling which complicates the concept of fear. Ishmael relates the fear of the unknown to the whiteness of the enormous whale since "by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe...that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color" (p.198). The whiteness of Moby Dick represents the terrors in the deep oceans moving and threatening all the sailors and whalers in the three oceans of the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic. Furthermore, whiteness is utterly

sublime; it is an indication of danger but also a distinction of beauty, somehow both sinister and pure; it is horrifying but inviting. According to the science of optics and reflection, the color white is the simultaneous presence of all colors. In other words, white reflects all colors, and Moby Dick also reflects all ideas that are projected onto it. For the monomaniac Ahab, the whale represents redemption and vengeance. Ishmael writes that “all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale’s white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down” (p.189). Moby Dick’s whiteness draws attention to the whale as a symbolic monstrous metaphysical force that demands explication.

Melville focuses on the portrayal of the physical appearance of the whale at the end of the novel where he depicts its sublimity through not just his dread-inducing immanence, but also his enormous physical presence which becomes visible. Together, these two elements (the dread-inducing immanence and enormous physical presence) present a complicated reading of the unnatural state of the enormous white whale. The whale offers endlessly polysemic and symbolic interpretations, from an embodiment of nature to a mythical leviathan or even of a twisted fate. The white whale is a fearsome monster that defies Captain Ahab and makes him ecophobic. The white whale’s appearance is terrifying as it is an exceptionally large sperm whale that is also cruel to people and sailors because it attacks and destroys their boats. When engaged with the crew of the Pequod, it dives and then jumps out in its midst before they can escape or counter its attack. It is also maleficent because it uses the attaching ropes to whiplash and in the final battle with the Pequod, it crashes into the bow of the Pequod and sinks it. In addition, this white whale is a creepy phantom; the encounters with this monstrous whale are dreadful and ill-fated in nature and this justifies for Captain Ahab his monomaniacal quest to kill it. The mystery for the reader and the sailors is how it always stealthily lurks underwater watching the Pequod. The malicious acts of the whale haunt Captain Ahab and make him extremely mad. Captain Ahab believes that the white whale is a monstrous creature that is the main source of all evil in the world, and therefore, it must not be respected and left alone.

Moby Dick embodies the source of terror in the novel for the Pequod’s crew who project their fears onto this whale. The crew’s anxieties and fears are brought out due to their dangerous and frightening jobs. The tales about the whale allow the crew to confront their fear, manage it, and continue to defy and beat the monstrous whale despite knowing that the whale acts only malevolently toward the men who initiate the chase. Captain Ahab, on the other hand, believes that Moby Dick symbolizes all that is evil in the world, and he feels that it is his destiny to eradicate this evil. The white whale can be read as an allegorical representation of nature because it has a massive incomprehensible force that cannot be defeated only avoided. The hunt for the whale symbolizes an interpretation of man’s place in nature who intends to reign over nature by taming or conquering it. Some believe that man must try to understand nature and live in peace. Others, like Captain Ahab, seek to destroy it at any cost to get rid of their hatred and contempt for the natural world and overcome their ecophobia, which is “the horror of an invasive and hostile nature” (Estok, 2009, 210). Estok also adds that the cultural control of nature to achieve civilization creates contempt for savagery and barbarism and thus generates ecophobia. Furthermore, he asserts this idea by arguing that ecophobia is a term that implies “the primary way that humanity responds to

nature.” (p. 210) This primary way is the fear of nature, including its inhabitants and habitats of oceans, lands, mountains, and forests. Nature is unpredictable, dangerous, and malicious for those who do not understand it, and ecophobia ensues when humans violate natural laws or exceed ethical limitations.

Melville sets Captain Ahab and Moby Dick against each other to represent the consequences of the opposition between man and nature. The conflict between Captain Ahab and Moby Dick accelerates Captain Ahab's and the other shipmates' destruction. Ahab's nemesis, the white whale, symbolizes forces beyond human control, including nature, God, and fate. As Ahab's antagonist, it works against the free exercise of human will. In Chapter nine “The Sermon”, Father Mapple preaches a powerful sermon on the topic of obedience to God, noting that “if we obey God, we must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists of.” (p.54) In Father Mapple's sermon, the whale is an agent of God's wrath and a call to repentance, and he introduces very significant themes concerning humans' arrogance and pride which ultimately leads to destruction. Captain Ahab tries to follow his plan rather than obey the Pequod's mission which is to hunt whales for profit, and which does not include the pursuit of Moby Dick. Ahab's arrogant behaviour reflects his irrationality, insanity, and pride. Captain Ahab is punished by a great whale acting as an agent of God or nature.

#### 4. Monstrosity in Stoker's *Dracula*

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* belongs to nineteenth-century gothic fiction in which Stoker combines old-fashioned romance with mysterious and supernatural elements within the realistic portrayal of events that define English literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Stoker reflects his awareness of contemporary issues occupying Victorian England in writing his novel. *Dracula* is situated within Britain's imperialism and imperialist sentiments when the British people feel a sense of racial superiority, which has heightened their distinctive superiority by having a clean and pure British race and their fear of racial contamination and invasion from close European neighbors and that of the Other (the people within the fringes of the British Empire and strange predilections). Therefore, Stoker taps into the fear of racial contamination, upturning the social order and regular conceptions of morality and decency in his novel. Count Dracula symbolizes the epitome of evil; not only is he a monster himself, but he also turns other people into monsters against their will. Regarded in this way, Dracula is evil that spreads all over Europe until he is defeated by the Crew of Light.

Monsters became symbolic in the eighteenth and nineteenth century works of literature owing to developments in theories surrounding human evolution and behavior, such as Darwin's and Freud's works. Within *Dracula*, Stoker creates characters with dual natures that reflect his anxieties about the situation at the end of the nineteenth century, as well as creating microcosms of social and cultural attitudes towards the issues of class, race, class, and gender. Monstrosity, within Stoker's *Dracula*, is a symbol through which all the social and cultural issues are put under a microscope and examined throughout his novel. Count Dracula, and the vampires, are monstrous because they weaken natural and social boundaries, cross borders of life and death, and blur the distinction between humans and animals, acting as beings to be both the desired and the feared. Monstrosity is the continuous crossing of borders between not only geographical spaces but

metaphorical ones. Many boundaries and borders are crossed, blurred, and deconstructed in Dracula; Dracula is especially prolific in crossing borders- between past and present, life and death, literal and spiritual spaces- as well as forcing others to cross them too. For instance, Count Dracula dons Harker's clothes before leaving his castle to enact his 'new scheme of evil' and allows any of the 'wickedness' he does to be attributed to Harker. This action leads Harker to cross borders and become 'monstrous' in his cross-country journey to the castle. People refuse to answer Harker's questions regarding Count Dracula and make the sign of the cross to protect themselves from his evil. This heightens his sense of unease, and he tries to dismiss this as superstition but admits that this experience is extremely overwhelming.

When Harker enters the castle, which is the boundary between life and death, he is brought into the world of life/death, monster/human. The evil plan is evident when Count Dracula blurs the boundaries between himself and Harker by pointing to the distinction between Transylvanian and English. The Count reminds Harker that "we are in Transylvania, and Transylvania is not in England. Our ways are not your ways..." (p.20) Count Dracula intends to make 'his ways' like 'Harker's ways' to learn how to speak, behave and move like an Englishman. Dracula wants to blur the border between mortal and immortal or living and undead and force the monstrous into Harker's world. Therefore, Dracula appears to readers as evil incarnate; he knows what he wants and usually gets it. Few can resist his charms and seductions. He is also deceptive and malicious as he has supernatural powers of shapeshifting into a handsome young man or animal as a wolf or bat. Moreover, he has also the power of hypnotizing humans and controlling animals. Dracula, as a vampire, is a perfect manifestation of monstrosity and he represents the scariest entity in existence who seduces humans, drains them of blood, and murders them. Additionally, his powers generate ecophobia as he inflicts fear on the natural world including humans and animals, and he even controls the weather.

The novel explores vampires which are a special kind of monster that appears in folk stories. The idea of 'monstrousness' has become inextricable with the subhuman 'other' and otherness becomes evident through both the physical appearance and actions of an individual. From this perspective, Stoker's Dracula embodies the fears of the inner and outer monstrosity of people. Stoker's Dracula is tainted and contaminated from the inside out and this has alienated him from humanity and transformed him into another. The fear of the 'other' is manifested in the vampire Dracula who reflects the Victorian anxieties about monstrosity which is associated with maliciousness, exploitation, and criminality. Stoker paints a vivid and visual portrait of Dracula's monstrous appearance exemplified in the "sharp white teeth", "cruel looking" mouth, "red eyes" and "extremely pointed" ears (p. 110) construct the image of a monster whose face has an unnatural color, so it makes him "extraordinary pallor" (p.269) Such a description dehumanizes Dracula by aligning his features with distinctly low-class animals. Stoker uses Dracula to instill trepidation and fear into the readers through Count Dracula's physical deformities; these deformities indicate the Count's evil intentions and ward off potential victims. From these descriptions, Stoker directly associates monstrosity with a physical deformity reflecting a deformed psyche. He is morally corrupted, self-centered, and ethically contaminated state as a vampire. Count Dracula's features of glowing red eyes deformed facial features, photosensitivity, and devolved physicality embody one of the major preoccupations of late nineteenth-century blood medicine porphyria.

What makes Dracula intimidating is his shadowy and illusive presence throughout the novel although he rarely appears in a visible form to the characters. Dracula gets enraged easily but also maintains a both haunting and strangely charming or desirous façade. His supernatural powers of hypnotizing people make them succumb to him. Moreover, Dracula becomes representative of both the old world of the value of superstition, mystery, and the unknown parts of Eastern Europe, whilst maintaining a threatening presence as he embodies many aspects of evil. His actions cause the suffering of Jonathan, Lucy and Mina. When Dracula escapes from Van Helsing he remarks, "My revenge has just begun". (p.287) This reveals that he has an ulterior motive, perhaps the longing for a return to the glorious past centuries. This illustrates him to be a supernatural creature of fathomless evil who subjects people to his dark vision and fantasies.

It is noteworthy to mention that Stoker's *Dracula* embodies the nineteenth-century fears of inner and outer monstrosity which are apparent in other aspects of culture. His *Dracula* is thoroughly contaminated from the inside out, and this contamination alienates him from humanity, transforming him into something subhuman, even devilish. Very clearly, Stoker conveys the message that Christianity is good, but black magic which was prevalent during that time was harmful and cursed. Harker does not heed the warnings when the townspeople arm him with Christian symbols as soon as they know of his mission to go to Count Dracula's castle. Harker says: "she put the rosary round my neck and said, 'For your mother's sake,' and went out of the room...the crucifix is still round my neck." (p.6) The crucifix is a cross with a depiction of Jesus used to ward off the Un-Dead throughout *Dracula*.

## 5. Conclusion

The concept of the monstrous permeated nineteenth-century culture and literature as apparent in the works of Mary Shelley, Herman Melville, and Bram Stoker. The indisputable monstrous feature of Shelley's creature is his gigantic and deformed unnatural body compiled out of several entities of human and animal parts, which is where his namelessness arises from. It is integral to the gothic novel to include monsters, scenes in churchyards, corpses, and vampires. *Frankenstein* introduces themes of fear, darkness, horror, and ecophobia through the monstrous creature which reflects the ecological crisis caused by Victor's misuse of science and breaking the natural laws by playing the role of God and creating a creature. Victor demonstrates the pursuit of science and technology without regard for societal consequences which can have disastrous results. He epitomizes the concept of unrestrained science. When he discovers how to animate non-living material, he becomes obsessive, working non-stop to complete his creation. Victor does not stop for a second to consider the bad consequences of his actions. Furthermore, Moby Dick's monstrosity lies in its ambiguity, enormousness, whiteness, unpredictability, and cruelty. It is a mystery and thus trying to interpret it, as Ahab does, is futile and fatal. Melville wants readers to reconsider their perceptions of knowledge because the concept of monstrosity is an attempt to shock people into becoming more environmentally aware of the real definition of monstrous. Moreover, Stoker's attempt to explain monstrosity as a subhuman condition highlights Dracula's acts as criminal and his acts of violence result from his animalistic drive for blood and survival. Therefore, Dracula is a subhuman because he is corrupt and deformed, just as Victorians viewed criminals as subhuman. (Flanders,2011) Dracula kills because his moral compass is absent and has no power to make him act humanely. Dracula's supernatural powers of transforming into the shapes

of humans, animals, or mist, his facial features, nails, and behavior are all designed to evoke terror in the hearts of his victims.

The concept of monstrosity in the novels shows the writers' attempts at restoring tranquility in humans' relationship with nature. From an ecocritical perspective, humans must embrace all aspects of the natural world and preserve them. The irrational and self-centered intentions of humans create fear, anxiety, and even horror of the natural world. When humans rationalize their interests, control their desires, and learn to live within the resource limits of nature, they can recognize how they become environmentally aware citizens who value nature. A new way of observing nature allows humans to set and determine the regulations for utilizing the natural resources and preserving them, and this is the core objective of ecocritical studies which seek healthy "Eco bonding," condemning the evil practices towards nature and calling for broad changes in humans' ethics and behaviors.

### Conflicts of interest statements

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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