

CONTENTS

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION	How to study a novel	5
	Reading <i>Dracula</i>	6

PART TWO

THE TEXT	Note on the text	12
	Synopsis	12
	Detailed summaries	
	A note	14
	Chapters 1–5	15
	Chapters 6–10	35
	Chapters 11–15	54
	Chapters 16–20	76
	Chapters 21–5	87
	Chapters 26–7	98
	Note	103
	Extended commentaries	
	Text 1 – Chapter 3, pages 32–5	104
	Text 2 – Chapter 8, pages 75–8	107
	Text 3 – Chapter 21, pages 238–40	109

PART THREE

CRITICAL APPROACHES	Characterisation	112
	Themes	
	Religion and the supernatural	128
	Science and modernity	131
	Law and civilisation	132
	The New Woman	133
	Madness	134
	Narrative techniques	
	The epistolary novel	135
	Time and place	136
	Structure	137
	Language	137

PART FOUR

CRITICAL HISTORY	Original reception	141
	The twentieth century	142
	Recent critical reviews	143

PART FIVE

BACKGROUND	Bram Stoker	145
	Other works	145
	Literary background	
	The Gothic tradition	146
	The vampire in literature	147
	Historical background	
	The end of an era	148
	Chronology	150
	FURTHER READING	154
	LITERARY TERMS	157
	AUTHOR OF THESE NOTES	158

CRITICAL APPROACHES



QUESTION

Character development is a crucial aspect of any narrative. Which characters are permitted to develop the most in *Dracula* and in what ways? What constraints or limits are imposed upon character development by the style of the narrative?

CHARACTERISATION

Stoker gives sparing detail in his description of the main characters. There is little to form a picture of the men or the women beyond their status, their opinions and their actions. Physical appearances are noted mainly by the characters who take an interest in physiognomy, a popular pseudoscience of the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The details they select for comment prejudicially associate certain features with good or bad moral traits. Each **narrator** tends to be preoccupied with interpreting their own sensations or reporting events. The pace of the narrative is rarely held up by descriptive passages that illustrate a character or define a location. Stoker relies on certain key words and occasional personal foibles to anchor the personalities that appear in this fantasy in the reader's imagination. Sometimes this understated approach can make a reader feel a particular phrase or expression is being overworked, but it generally serves his narrative purposes quite effectively.

The characters are noted here in order of their relative contribution to the forms of the narrative structure.

DR JOHN SEWARD

Known to his friends as Jack, this character carries the main burden of the narrative. He is an ambitious member of the medical profession, specialising in the treatment of insanity. His name is of some significance: Seward can be interpreted as guardian of the sea or of victory. A commander of the English army of the same name features in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Siward). It suggests that this character might be expected to fill the role of defender of the realm. It is also an allusion to the tradition of British dominance as a naval and maritime power. But Dr Seward hardly seems the warrior type. His main role in the novel is to provide a sounding board for Van Helsing's explanations and arguments.

Dr Seward is introduced by Lucy as her first unsuccessful suitor: 'a poor fellow ... all broken-hearted' (Chapter 5, p. 49). Her report of his 'strong jaw and ... good forehead' is confirmed in Mina's impression of him later: 'a man of noble nature' (Chapter 17, p. 184), 'good and thoughtful' (p. 186). His own first words are not so engaging: 'Ebb tide ... Cannot eat, cannot rest' (Chapter 5, p. 52); he is the picture of a man lacking spirit, complaining of an 'empty feeling'. His 'whole life ended' following Lucy's rejection, he is 'hopeless', a lacklustre sort of man (Chapter 6, p. 61), and has to find solace in work, in particular his study of Renfield. His unrequited love for Lucy presents him some 'little difficulty which not even medical science or custom can bridge over' when his friend asks for his advice (Chapter 9, p. 93).

Having failed to win Lucy's love, Seward fails to protect her from Dracula. He seems to be offering the reader some kind of warning about the perils of neglecting the proper duties of a man. He is identified with the modern aspects of society in the novel. He records his diary on a phonograph 'where the romance of my life is told' (Chapter 13, p. 147). As a man of science, he is unable to protect Lucy or comprehend what is happening to her. A misdirected telegram means he is not around to help when she is attacked. He is 'so bewildered' (Chapter 12, p. 125), and like Jonathan Harker he fears for his sanity: 'I am beginning to wonder if my long habit of life amongst the insane is beginning to tell upon my own brain' (Chapter 11, p. 112). His reaction to the imminent death of Lucy is sombre and depressing. He is 'sick of the world and all in it' (Chapter 12, p. 132).

Although he is observant of detail and possesses a great range of knowledge, Seward often mistakes or doubts the evidence of his senses. He is trusting and mistakes the maid's avaricious purpose for devotion to her dead mistress (Chapter 13, p. 138). He only belatedly discovers the real significance of Renfield's madness, and though he rightly suspects that the Count and Renfield are in contact, he is as wrong in keeping Renfield in the asylum as he is wrong in keeping Mina out of the hunt for the Count. He has very traditional views about 'men of the world' and women in general (Chapter 19, p. 213). He speaks of being careful not to frighten Mina Harker, who is probably much more resilient in her nature than Seward.

CONTEXT

Dr Seward fulfils much the same function as Dr Watson in the Sherlock Holmes series by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The companion or 'sidekick' who fails to grasp the point is a familiar sight in many detective novels. As the expert explains to the companion, we are invited to feel superior to the companion in our understanding of the situation.

World events	Bram Stoker's life	Literary events
<p>1802 Development of steam locomotive</p> <p>1818 First successful human blood transfusions at Guy's Hospital, London</p> <p>1819 Birth of future Queen Victoria</p> <p>1832 First Reform Act increases electorate to about half a million</p> <p>1837 Queen Victoria's coronation; first telegraphic communication</p> <p>1838 The People's Charter published as start of the Chartist movement for political reform</p>	<p>1847 Born 8 November at Clontarf near Dublin</p> <p>1847–54 First seven years troubled by ill health</p>	<p>1813 Lord Byron, <i>The Giaour</i></p> <p>1818 Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus</i></p> <p>1819 John William Polidori's 'The Vampyre' published</p> <p>1839 Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher'</p> <p>1847 <i>Varney the Vampire</i> published; Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i></p> <p>1848 Emily Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i></p> <p>1851 Alexandre Dumas, <i>Le Vampire</i></p> <p>1855 Walt Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass</i></p>
<p>1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish the <i>Communist Manifesto</i>; Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood formed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt and Sir John Everett Millais</p> <p>1851 Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace, Hyde Park</p> <p>1853 The hypodermic syringe is introduced</p>		

World events	Bram Stoker's life	Literary events
<p>1861–5 American Civil War</p> <p>1867 Second Reform Act doubles electorate from 1 million to 2 million; Karl Marx publishes first volume of <i>Das Kapital</i></p> <p>1870 Elementary Education Act introduces School Boards</p> <p>1871 Trade unions granted legal status; population of Britain now c.26 million</p> <p>1876 Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India</p>	<p>1863 Studies at Trinity College, University of Dublin; president of the University Philosophical Society</p> <p>1869 Becomes amateur theatre critic for <i>Dublin Evening Mail</i> and editor of <i>Irish Echo</i></p> <p>1870 Employed as a civil servant in Dublin Castle</p> <p>1872 First story 'The Crystal Cup' published</p> <p>1875 'The Chain of Destiny' serialised in four parts in <i>The Shamrock</i></p> <p>1876 Meets Henry Irving in Dublin</p>	<p>1859 John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>; Charles Darwin, <i>On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection</i></p> <p>1860 Wilkie Collins, <i>The Woman in White</i></p> <p>1864–5 Charles Dickens, <i>Our Mutual Friend</i></p> <p>1865 Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i></p> <p>1869 John Stuart Mill, <i>On the Subject of Women</i></p> <p>1872 Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, <i>In a Glass Darkly</i> (collection of stories which includes 'Carmilla')</p> <p>1875 Anthony Trollope, <i>The Way We Live Now</i></p> <p>1876 Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i></p>