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National Identity as a Base for Inequality Presented in Dracula and Shackles

Novels and Stories authors usually present a point in their writing. They present literature with different themes aimed at unfolding the society’s way of life. The society is faced with many challenges sourced from the people’s view of others. Governments have different rules and impacts on people coming from other countries. One theme that has attracted writers and authors of short stories and novels is national identity. Since time immemorial, people have moved from one place to another and one country to another. The movement, although legal, has been due to various reasons in the mother nation. Some people have migrated to seek asylum, some seek education, medication, while others migrate for leisure. Life in a different country or nation is different from home country, with different rules to follow. The Dracula novel by Bram Stocker and the Shackles short story by Melatu Okorie are the stories that talk about the theme.

In the Dracula novel by Bram Stocker, an Irish author presents a fictional story of a character he names Count Dracula. In the novel, Bram Stocker presents the story of Dracula trying to move from Transylvania to England. Dracula wants to distribute his cursed blood in England since he is a vampire. In the urge to spread the curse, Dracula faces opposition from a Professor by the name Abraham Van Helsing who leads a small group of people. Dracula is faced with unending battles from Professor Abraham Van Helsing’s group who are the vampire hunters. Dracula’s reign in Transylvania, where the curse had been absorbed, had become normal way of vampire life. Dracula desired to find new blood in England where he could spread the curse and create an empire of vampires within the territorial boundaries. These threatens human life in England hence signifying the work of Professor Abraham Van Helsing’s vampire hunters group.

After he had threatened Harker, Dracula essentially invaded England via Lucy Westenera, who is Physical embodiment of the west. The moment Dracula bites her, “he is physically invading the golden female symbol that represents England and as well as England being invaded” (Kern 15). Furthermore, the novel demonstrates the spiritual aspects of Dracula. It is worth noting that Dracula is regarded as to be unholy in the Eyes of Christian England. Her spiritual beliefs are not in line or consistent with those of other Christians; “hacker is just a male personification of a vulnerable English empire” (Kern 16).

In the Shackle’s short story, Melatu Okorie, presents a shackled lifestyle of a male character she names Osita. The story tells of the confinement, restrictions, and frustrations Osita faces in Dublin while staying in a hostel. Osita’s hostel life in Dublin does not only affects him but also his family made of a pregnant wife and a daughter. Okorie’s work shows the challenges faced by migrants in their new countries despite their statuses in home country. The author presents Osita’s life in Dublin as a hard life together with a fellow migrant she names. The story by Okorie presents the different national identity theme in the literature with the help of the Nigerian migrant. The characters in the story reflect on their home country’s view about their life in Dublin.

There is a great similarity between the Dracula novel and the Shackles short story. In both the novel and the short story, the authors’ works reflect on the Irish way of life and view on migrants. Bram Stocker is an Irish writer whose literatures have had great similarities with another Irish writer on the Vampire genre. Melatu Okorie’s life has a history a migrant life where she lived in Ireland in an Asylum center.

The Irish life in a hostel lived by Okorie is indirectly reflected in Shackles story of Osita. The authors presents the Irish view of people with different national identity in Ireland. The authors have had a life in Ireland and they have produced the stories based on their view or other people’s view on the Irish takes on migrants. The authors have had first-hand lifestyles in Ireland as a home and a migrant thereby knowing the way the Irish people believe on migrants. The authors work hence are similar in conveying the message using different storylines.

Another similarity between the novel and the short story is on the use of characters. The authors in both literature works use family as a direct link of effects. They both show that the impact of any decisions on an individual affects his or her family. Okorie’s hostel life in Ireland affected his family since she was pregnant. In the story, Okorie presents Osita’s family struggles and difficulties descending from him. In the Dracula, Count Dracula’s vampire family is hunted on his account of migration to England. Both authors’ works present diversities in the society on matters of national identity. In presenting the main theme, the novel and the story communicates in different times but similarly in context.

Stocker’s novel and Okorie’s short story have some differences in the way they present the theme highlighted. The Dracula novel dates back in May 1897 when it was published. The novel story thus dates back in the nineteenth century’s people’s view of migrants. Shackles story is a twenty first story highlighting the century’s view on migrants in Ireland. They all present different centuries with a full century apart. The Dracula story is presented as vampire or horror literature telling the Transylvania tales and folklores. The Shackles story on the other hand talks about personal lifestyles presenting Osita’s lifestyle in a new country. The national identity theme in the Dracula story is different since it is protected in human life protection characteristics and attributes. The theme is directly visible in the Shackles story with the Character’s way of life in Dublin. They both present characters with different origins who face the same problem in the world society implying it as a global society problem.

The novel presents education and medicine themes on opposition side while the short story presents the gender role. The novel’s story is characterized by wars and battles, ending with deaths and murders while Okorie’s work purely talks of the lifestyle and perplexities of life. The many challenges and difficulties experienced by Osita’s life as a migrant are not similar to the battles and opposition from Professor Abraham Van Helsing’s group of vampire hunters. The authors’ works does not appear in the same timeline since Stocker’s story is built from organized tales and pieces of stories earlier written. The novel presents many themes and pieces of information from the society while the short story presents a single point from the author. The stories present the different view of the society governed by governments on migrants. The literature highlights the deficit in consensus on matters equality and human rights protection. The national originality or identity of an individual should not be a reason of hatred, sidelining, or bias in a global society of mankind.

In summary, the paper has compared and contrasted Bram Stocker’s novel Dracula and Melatu Okorie’s short story Shackles. The main theme investigated is inequality or bias in the society stemmed at national identity. The stories have highlighted the authors’ perspective on migrants in other countries. Both others have had first-hand life in Ireland, one as a national and another as a migrant, which makes them familiar with the Irish life. Although the stories theme revealed is national identity, they are presented differently in the stories.

As discussed, the Dracula novel’s national identity theme is not disposed to the reader while it is easily visible in the Shackles story. The essay highlights some differences in the authors’ works in presenting the theme including timelines, characters, originality, and story compliments. The authors’ styles of presenting the society and matters that affect the society differ due to setting, environment, and originality. However, the authors present the same society problems which can help people understand the situations and provide solutions.

**Works Cited**

Kern, T. (2020). The Dracula Difference: Bram Stoker's Dracula and the Threat of the Other. Volume 25 (2). Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1132&context=articulate>