Spirited Away: Dream Work, the Outsider, and the Representation of Transylvania in the Pied Piper and Dracula Myth in Britain and Germany

Count Dracula and the Pied Piper are two of the most powerful archetypes in Victorian literature but they have rarely been considered in relation to one another.¹ The story of the Pied Piper was published as ‘Die Kinder zu Hameln’ by the Brother’s Grimm in their Deutsche Sagen or German Legends (1816-18) and later appeared in verse in English as ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’ in Robert Browning’s Dramatic Lyrics of 1842. An English variant, ‘The Pied Piper of Franchville’ was also anthologised in Joseph Jacobs’s More English Fairy Tales in 1894.² In medieval times, Hamelin was a mill town, a centre for the storage of grain, so there would be a strong likelihood of a rat infestation. The role of the rats becomes more central to the story with Browning, together with the suggestion that the children were taken to Transylvania (this is absent from Jacobs).³ German migration to Romania and transportation by necromancy are given as possible explanations for the children’s disappearance, as I will show. These theories can be found in Richard Verstagen’s Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities (1605), which was sourced by Browning. The Grimm brothers’ Pied Piper, by contrast, is a peculiarly German construct, but with the English retelling of the story by Browning, the figure is transported and relocated to a kind of metaphorical crossroads between Germany, Romania and England. I will explore the effects of this shift and the significance of Transylvania as the supposed destination of the children. I draw some parallels with the Dracula myth, which was transported to Germany from the Britain and Romania of the novel via the medium of film. I employ an historicist method which is illuminating with regard to nationality and otherness but this is shown to be increasingly problematised with every variant and retelling. In the final phase of the argument this approach is supplanted by a desire to redeem the utopian, magical force of the fairy tale in the present.

Browning’s Piper is said to have ‘eased’ a ‘monstrous brood of vampyre-bats’ (line 92) and can charm ‘All creatures living beneath the sun, /That creep or swim or fly or run’.⁴ Dracula can similarly ‘command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat’ (221).⁵ What ultimately connects these characters is their association with Transylvania. Transylvania is the home of necromancy and superstition in the popular imagination of the mid to late nineteenth century; it acts as a trigger to the process of othering in these works. We might think of the ‘other’ as ‘the missing but significant opposite of a sign, a person or a collective identity. The other may not be the opposite at all, but it indicates the assumption of opposition that inhabits any identity’.⁶ There is an allusion of otherness therefore, which is occasionally replaced by an encounter with the ‘other’ as a symbol of true alterity
(eg. Count Dracula). The Piper is subjected to a process of othering by the villagers in all of the versions of the tale (but most notably by Browning’s Mayor and Corporation in ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’), whereas Dracula as vampire is genuinely ‘Other’ (alien and impossible to understand). Present-day readers are more likely to identify with rather than fear the other, a shift in sympathy evident in the evolution from the Victorian to the modern representation of the vampire figure. This reflects changing attitudes towards the outsider (or alien other).  

In the Victorian era, the vampire was the ultimate aggressor and Transylvania was a seat of ‘political turbulence and racial strife’. Stephen Arata has argued that

In Stoker’s version of the vampire myth, vampires are intimately linked to military conquest and to the rise and fall of empire. According to Dr. Van Helsing, the vampire is the unavoidable consequence of invasion: ‘He have follow the wake of the berserker Icelander, the devil-begotten Hun, the Slav, the Saxon, the Magyar’.  

The Count himself confirms that his homeland has been the scene of countless invasions: ‘there is hardly a foot of soil in all of this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots and invaders’, he informs Harker (24). Dracula’s move to London indicates that Britain rather than the Carpathians is now the scene of these connected struggles. In Arata’s essay, the novel is made to represent ‘the late Victorian nightmare of reverse colonisation […] Harker envisions semi-demons spreading through the realm, colonising bodies and land indiscriminately’. Read in this way, the novel appears to be born out of epidemic anxiety resulting from the fear of invasion by a foreign other.  

In F. W. Murnau’s film Nosferatu (1922), the Dracula myth is shifted to the German town of Bremen in the 1830s; thus the action of the film takes place in a period much closer to the publication of the Grimms’ and Browning’s Piper. There is another metaphorical plague and the rats, vampiric totem animals, further connect the narratives. The historical context is crucial to our understanding of the process of othering in such works, shown in the way Dracula resembles more and more the Jew of anti-Semitic discourse on entering film. There is an attempt to penetrate the German soul in Murnau’s retelling of the Dracula myth which appears to resonate with the Grimms’ version of the Pied Piper story, as I will show. Historicising can help lay bare the process of othering in such texts but it can also lead to a loss of enchantment. If we view literature as utopian in the manner of Ernst Bloch, it is not identical with the reality that faces us as nature and society. Gert Ueding, a disciple of Bloch, has
argued that literature is ‘utopia in the very precise sense that its connection to this reality is like that of fulfilment to lack […]. Literature as utopia is generally an encroachment of the power of the imagination on new realities of experience’. In addition, I would suggest that we should not confine our analysis of texts to the exact period in which they are written (as utopia, literature’s temporal form of reference is the future). I will to return to this idea when I examine a twentieth-century manifestation of the Piper myth, Christopher Wallace’s *Pied Piper’s Poison* (1998), in my conclusion. My readings throughout this chapter will shed light on some of these ambivalences and remain open to the fraught relationship between truth and fiction, content and form, context and interpretation.

The legacy of the Pied Piper and Dracula myth can still be found in writings on Transylvania in the present. As recently as 2007, Bronwen Riley claimed that ‘many people believe Transylvania is a fictitious country like Ruritania or Narnia, and know it only as the birth place of Dracula’. Victorian readers would also be familiar with it as the country to which the Pied Piper spirited away the children of Hamelin. Transylvania, ‘The Land Beyond the Forest’, is the expressive name the Hungarians gave to this land, an image that would not be out of place in a fairy tale. The *Land Beyond the Forest* is also the title of the Victorian British writer Emily Gerard’s (1849-1905) two-volume work documenting her travels in this region in 1883 and her overwhelming enchantment with it. Her paper on ‘Transylvanian Superstitions’ (1885) is well known as being one of the primary sources for Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula*. These texts are documented in Stoker’s hand-written research notes for *Dracula* (1890–97). Much scholarly work has been done on Victorian accounts of Transylvania and on Stoker’s sources in an attempt to explain the origins of Count Dracula. It is Gerard, however, who is most present in Dracula’s remarks to Jonathan Harker, ‘we are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things’ (23). This much-quoted line was to signal the popular mythologising of Transylvania for the Victorian novel reader. According to Harker’s journal, Transylvania is in the extreme east of the country, ‘just on the borders of three states, Transylvania, Moldavia and Bukovina, in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe’ (5). The Count goes on to describe Transylvania as a ‘whirlpool’ of European races (6), a metaphor that Stoker borrowed from late Victorian descriptions of the East End of London, home to large numbers of eastern European Jewish migrant workers escaping persecution. It has been remarked that among the ‘great curiosities of Transylvania’ for the visitor are the Saxon towns and villages and fortified churches. The Germans who settled here in the twelfth century are another example of the imaginative ‘whirlpool’ that Dracula speaks of wherein German customs have been transplanted to a seemingly exotic land. As early as the
sixteenth century, a connection was made between Transylvania and the lost children of Hamelin who disappeared from the German town in the thirteenth century (or fourteenth century: the dates differ greatly according the source).

Amongst the sources that Stoker listed (but did not make notes on) was Sabine Baring-Gould’s *Germany Past and Present* (1879).22 The Grimm brothers did much to inspire nostalgia for a German past in the nineteenth century and, like Stoker himself, they were endlessly mythologised. William Hughes has referred to Stoker as a ‘mythicized author’ due to the fact that he appears as a character in so many modern fictional works.23 Whilst English readers would become familiar with the Grimms through the many translations of their tales, such as the two volume *German Popular Stories* translated by Edgar Taylor (1823-26), Joyce Crick argues that ‘to English speaking readers the brothers themselves seem to be as lost in the same sweet airs of distance, in Wilhelm Grimm’s phrase, as the tales themselves, which are so fantastic, so homely, and seem to belong to no time, or to some distant feudal or absolutist time which was once upon a time; and to be set in no where’.24 The stories, then, have a certain universality and transcend time and place rather than being specifically about Germany. It was at first believed that the brothers had collected their tales first-hand from the lips of German peasants.25 Much of this has now been disproved by twentieth-century scholarship, such as the work of Heinz Rölleke, which demonstrates that the Grimms more frequently used genteel or written sources. Jack Zipes has confirmed this in his complete translation of the first edition of the original tales.26 Here he states that, without question, ‘they collected their tales and variants primarily from educated friends and colleagues or from books’.27 John Ellis is been fiercer in his criticism, accusing the brothers of manufacturing the folk spirit of the tales in order to dupe the general public in the name of nationalism.28

What is clear is that the Grimms were idealists and full of curiosity about ancient German and folk poetry. Their grand project was recovering from oral and ancient written sources old German legends, anonymous epics, chapbooks, stories and folksongs. These were loosely called *Sagen*. Their aim was to reveal the deep similarities of ancient mythical content still preserved within them. The first small-scale material the brothers gathered for their great enterprise was published in *Altdeutsche Walder or Ancient German Forests*.29 The title of this miscellany of curious antiquarian lore evokes the mystical woodland setting of many of the tales and is suggestive too of Gerard’s romanticised representation of Transylvania as ‘The Land Beyond the Forest’. Jacob had theorised the early material they collated as emerging pure and anonymous from the folk, not composed by a single author but existing both in
history and outside as myth. All was waiting to be recovered and synthesised into a history of ancient German literature.

It is their attempt to penetrate the German soul, which I mentioned earlier, to which I now turn. Wilhelm Grimm argued in 1811 that ‘poesie is that which only emanates from the soul and turns into words’. A romantic notion of poetry, fancy and spontaneity informs their understanding of the tales. He goes on to state, when considering poetic fancy and folklore, that ‘folk poesie, stems from the soul of the entire community’ (das Ganze). What I call cultivated poetry (Kunstpoesie) stems from the individual. In his most recent appraisal of the Grimms in 2014, Zipes emphasises in particular their nationalistic fervour: ‘their focus on collecting what they thought were “Germanic” tales was a gesture of protest against French occupation and a gesture of solidarity with those people who wanted to forge a unified German nation. In fact most of the tales were regional and emanated from Hesse and Westphalia. There was no such thing as a German nation at that time’. The Grimm brothers have been mythicised themselves in Britain and elsewhere, but they are also myth makers, intent on recovering an ancient mythical German past. The figure of the Pied Piper is one example of this German historical construct.

In Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s collection, the Pied Piper story is entitled ‘Die Kinder zu Hameln’ (that is, ‘The Children of Hamelin’); the emphasis is on the fate of the children and not the misfortunes of the Piper. I am indebted to a translation by D. L. Ashliman for my summary here. The action is familiar: a mysterious Piper arrives in the town of Hamelin in 1284. He is wearing a coat of many colours, and claims to be able to rid the town of rats. He leads the rats, with the help of music from his enchanted pipe or fife, into the River Weser where they all drown. The town is now free from plague but the Piper is not paid well for his good work and leaves the town angry and embittered, returning on 26 June (Saint John’s and Saint Paul’s Day) dressed as a huntsman and wearing a strange red hat. He again sounds his fife in the streets, but this time it isn’t the rats and mice that come to him, but rather the town’s children: they follow him, and he leads them into a mountain, where they disappear. In total, one hundred thirty are lost.

We are told that two children had been left behind and did return (one of them was blind and the other mute). One little boy in shirtsleeves had also gone along with the others, but had turned back to fetch his jacket and thus escaped the tragedy for, when he returned, the Piper and the children had vanished. This is, of course, a way of giving the events the appearance of an eyewitness, first-hand account. The
story claims that the street through which the children were led out to the town gate is called the bunge-lose (drumless, soundless, quiet) street, because no dancing or music is allowed there. We also learn that the mountain near Hamelin where the children disappeared is called Poppenberg and that two stone monuments in the form of crosses have been erected there, one on the left side and one on the right. The Grimms specifically mention that there are local people who say that the children were led into a cave, and that they came out again in Transylvania. According to this account, the citizens of Hamelin recorded the event in their town register, and they came to date all their proclamations according to the years and days since the loss of their children. We are told that a description of the piper leading the children into the mountain was inscribed on the town hall and that the mayor had the story memorialised in 1572 in the church windows. In addition, a coin was minted in memory of the event. There is a strong attempt to authenticate the story using these alleged facts and dates, but there is also confusion as to when exactly these events were recorded or indeed took place, as shown in the confused contextualising of the story, which, when referring to the time when music was forbidden in the town, jumps from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present. What is clear, however, is that there is little sympathy for the Piper; he is demonised as an outsider and traveller to Transylvania.

Following ‘Die Kinder zu Hameln’, the story is transposed to English verse in Robert Browning’s *Dramatic Lyrics*. Browning’s source is not Grimm but two rather obscure seventeenth-century English works: Nathaniel Wanley’s *The Wonders of the Little World; or A General History of Man* (1678) and Richard Verstegen’s *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities* (1605). In Wanley, the story is documented under a reference to Hammel, ‘a town delivered from rats by a piper’. He dates the happenings to 26 June, 1284 (633). The telling of the story is not dissimilar to that of the Grimms but the ending marks an important departure. The Piper, on ridding the town of rats, is denied his full reward, ‘whereupon he began another tune and there followed him one hundred and thirty boys to a hill called koppen, situate on the north by the road, where they perished, and were never seen after’ (632). There is no description of the hillside opening to swallow up the children here and no mention of Transylvania as a possible destination. Instead we are given full closure in the knowledge that the children have perished. There is an attempt to claim that these events actually happened, and we are informed that the story is well documented in the annals of Hammel, in their books, and painted in the windows of their churches, ‘of which I am a witness by my own sight’ (633), asserts Wanley.

However, Browning’s poetic retelling of the tale is more indebted to his second source, Verstegen. Richard Verstegen’s was the earliest account in English of the children’s disappearance, predating
Wanley by around 70 years. In this text, ‘The Pide Piper’ appears in a section on ‘Of Our Saxon Ancestors’. The dates of the events differ from those in other sources, pointing to the difficulties in accurately historicising the tale. Contrary to Wanley, we are informed that ‘this great wonder hapned [sic] on 22. day of July in the yeare of our Lord, 1376’.37 He departs from the later source in his description of the story’s end. In this version, following the lack of a financial settlement on ridding the town of rats, the Piper

betakes him again to his pipe, and going thorow [sic] the streets as before, was followed of a number of boyes [sic] out at one of the gates of the city, and coming to a little hill, there opened in the side thereof a wide hole, into which himself & all the children being in number one hundred and thirty, did enter; and being entered, the hill closed up again and became as before (86).

The events are witnessed by a little lame boy who has been left behind (an image that finds its way into the Grimm. What is new in this version that is crucial to interpreting Browning’s poem is the Piper’s association with Transylvania. Verstegen, Browning’s source, clearly states that ‘this matter came unto my remembrance in speaking of Transilvania’ [sic] (87) and goes on to explain that ‘there are people found among the Saxons in Transilvania [sic] who have the same surnames as the ‘Burgers of Hamel’. From this he concludes that the

jugler or pide Piper [sic], might by negromancy [sic] have transported them thither, but this carrieth little appearance of truth, because it would have beene [sic] almost as great a wonder unto the Saxons on Transilvania to have had so many strange children brought among them, they knew not how, as it were to those of Hamel to lose them: and they could not but have kept memory of so strange a thing, if indeed any such thing had there hapned [sic] (87)

There are many uncertainties and contradictions here. Chroniclers of Transylvania claim that the Saxon’s earliest history of their settlement in Transylvania is disappointingly sparse.38 Importantly, Browning takes up Verstegen’s story (and not that of the later source) – hence his emphasis on Transylvania as the destination of the lost children:

In Transylvania there’s a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterranean prison
Into which they were trappanned
Long ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why they don’t understand (xiv.290-99).

The ‘alien’ people he speaks of are the offspring of the lost German children, now grown into an ‘outlandish’ ‘tribe’. Something of the otherness of the Piper, a wanderer and ‘gypsy’ (l. 162), has been transferred to the descendants of the children, now German migrants to Romania. Many theories have been advanced over time to explain the fate of the missing children. For example, the piper was recruiting for the children’s crusade, a tragic expedition to the Holy Land in which thousands of children embarked from France and the Rhineland in 1212 never to return. 39 Others suggest an obvious metaphor for the plague, symbolised by the rats that carried the children away. The idea of a sinister figure luring people to their deaths would have been familiar through medieval folklore and earlier representations of the danse macabre and the devil is often depicted playing the pipes. 40

Browning’s ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin’ differs in tone from the Grimms’ version. It is written to be read aloud or memorised and contains direct speech. It is addressed to a nine-year-old child named William Macready. 41 Browning changes the district of Hamelin’s location in Hanover to Brunswick. The main departure from the Grimms’ version, however, is that the Piper is presented more sympathetically. It is ambiguous as to whether he is the victim or the villain still but there is more emphasis on the way he is deceived and abused by the Mayor and his Corporation. Justice is thus served when he takes the children from the adults, who appear prejudiced and greedy. Unlike the Grimms’ tale, where the children are feared to have met with tragedy, there is a suggestion that their fate is utopian. This is conveyed to the reader through Browning’s variant of the child who is left behind because he is lame:

“It’s dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can’t forget that I’m bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacock’s here,
And their dogs outran their fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagle’s wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!” (XIII.236-55).

The utopian promise is there, but is it realised? There may be some doubt as to whether the Piper can be trusted (‘For he led us, he said, to a joyous land’ 240). The actual delivery of the promise isn’t revealed but Transylvania is potentially redeemed through this utopian ending – now a plentiful, colourful and ‘joyous land’ – but such is the ambiguity of the poem that Browning could just as easily be referring to a child’s view of death, an imagined heaven where the lame are cured and ‘honey-bees’ have ‘lost their stings’ (XIII.228).42

Browning dates the events the ‘Twenty-second of July, Thirteen hundred and seventy-six (l.274-75)’, showing his debt to Verstegen. His claim that the descendents of the lost children now reside in Transylvania seems to support Verstegen’s view that the Pied Piper ‘might have transported them there by negromancy’ (87). This in turn may have influenced Stoker. In Transylvania, Dracula too has ‘the aids of necromancy which is as his etymology imply [sic], the divination of the dead’ (221). Dracula and the Piper have similar attributes: extreme otherness, command over beasts and humans, the power of necromancy, supposed kinship with the Devil.43 However, the Count does not use the bewitching power of music to spirit his victims away and, unlike the Count, the Piper is not of noble extraction (hence his dismissive treatment by the Mayor and Corporation, who refer to him as ‘the wandering
fellow with gipsy coat of red and yellow’ (1.161-2)). Dracula can ‘appear at will’ (221) and both are associated with uncanny appearances and disappearances. They are connected further by the journeys they undertake. The Count leaves Transylvania for Britain (before returning) whereas the Piper flees Germany for Transylvania (possibly mirroring German migration to Transylvania at the time). Both texts view Transylvania through a British lens.

In the twentieth century the Dracula myth shifted away from Transylvania via the new media of film and was transported to Germany via F. W. Murnau’s film Nosferatu in 1922. The word that gives the film its title was taken from Stoker, who found it in Emily Gerard’s ‘Transylvanian Superstitions’ as a Romanian word for ‘vampire’ but, in fact, the word does not exist in the Romanian language: the Romanian word for ‘vampire’ is ‘vampir’. Gerard seems to have misread or mistranscribed a Romanian word meaning ‘plaguesome’ or ‘insufferable’ (nesuferit). Nosferatu is also close to the Greek word nosforos, meaning ‘plague bearer’. In Stoker, the word is used generically but the makers of Nosferatu give it the status of a capitalised proper name. Vampirism and plague are symbolically combined in the metaphor of vermin characterised by the rats, themes in both Browning’s ‘Pied Piper’ and Stoker’s Dracula.

What is surprising is how the film differs from Stoker’s novel. In Henrik Galeen’s script all the characters’ names have been changed. Dracula is ‘Count Orlok’, Jonathan Harker’s surname becomes ‘Hutter’, and Mina is renamed ‘Ellen’ (though in later prints the names are restored except for Mina, who is named ‘Nina’). Lucy, who is married, has a minor role and Renfield is Hutter’s employer. It turns out that Renfield is insane and enslaved to Orlok. Van Helsing is renamed ‘Bulwer’, and again, in a significant change, is rendered completely powerless against the vampire. There is no ‘crew of light’ in this film: Ellen destroys the vampire through her courageous self sacrifice. The events are shifted into the German towns of either Bremen or Wisborg, depending on the print.

Undoubtedly the most striking feature of the film is Orlock himself, played by Max Shrek (the surname means ‘terror’ in German). He is no Edward Cullen, no R. Patz. He has a bald head, pointed ears, a hooked nose, rat-like teeth. His fangs are set at the front of his mouth (rather than being on either side, as is now familiar), underlining his similarity to the rats he brings in his wake. The film relies for its shock value on the grotesqueness of Orlok and on his association with the bubonic plague, which he brings (unwittingly assisted by Harker) into Bremen. German Expressionist films lend themselves to being read as allegories of contemporary history which speak of the national character and the ‘German
soul’. *Nosferatu* clearly attempts to create a typical German town and juxtapose it against a foreign threat – it is not difficult to place this in the context of attitudes prevalent in Weimar Germany in the 1920s. The Weimar republic sought to create a united Germany. The setting is changed in the film from London in the 1890s to Germany (mainly Bremen) in the 1830s. This, of course, makes it overlap with the period when the Grimm brothers were constructing a German psyche in their mythologies, tales, and dictionaries.

Given the appearance of Nosferatu (his hooked nose) and the connection to Renfield, who helps him to purchase German property, we can see how the film might be seen as anti-Semitic. Shrek’s *Nosferatu* has been described as a ‘Shylock for the Carpathians’ and perhaps Ellen does come to represent the German soul here (at the mercy of the property acquiring Jew-vampire). The famous scene which shows the shadow of the vampire’s arm and hand moving up along Ellen’s body and the fist clenching over her heart suggests that the soul is possessed. There is a connection to my discussion of the Grimm brothers here, as it was the national character and German soul which they most sought to capture and preserve.

Themes around national identity, sexuality, and contagion are successfully introduced in relation to vampirism but the central image of the film will always be the cadaverous Max Schreck. Murnau and Shreck’s characterisation of the vampire as a kind of human vermin draws its energy in part from Stoker but it also feeds on wider fears and collective obsessions around networks of contagion and contamination. A fatal chain of eating and being eaten is explored and, in this work, Nosferatu the vampire is most associated not with bats but with hordes of rats.

In his analysis of the film, Eric Butler argues that ‘the character of the vampire oozes out into other figures and points towards the historical scars that are imperfectly healed’. The film presents itself as ‘A Chronicle of the Great Death in Wisborg in 1838’. This allegory establishes a distant framework for events that conceals their proximity to 1920s Germany. The 1830s town that the vampire attacks represents an idealised picture of simpler times; non-vampire characters such as Hutter and Ellen ‘connote a purer form of Germaness’ than the kind found in the world in which the film was made. The film mirrors the structure of the novel, the first half being set in the east and the second in the west. It sets up an opposition between the native haunts of the vampire and the German town he invades. Nosferatu as plague bearer signifies impurity: his movement from an Eastern realm to a Western one entails the contamination of one world by the other. Orlock, like the Pied Piper, is deliberately othered,
his dress representing an ‘indeterminate foreignness’ that does not fit into a recognisable type, being ‘equally European and “Oriental”’. His journey westward to a German port marks his transformation and compounds his foreign nature (increasingly other). The plague storyline in Nosferatu recalls the fourteenth-century Black Death and the barbarous past increasingly threatens to disrupt the nineteenth-century setting of the film. This is another example of the past intruding on the present, forging a link with a similar trope in the Pied Piper myth, which, as noted, some believe represents the Children’s Crusade (1212) or the Black Death (c. 1350).

In pre-modern Europe, the Jews were often thought to be guilty parties in times of plague. Nosferatu draws on cultural anxieties and uses strategies of representation that inform contemporary anti-Semitic rhetoric and art. The film provides an allegory of the vampire as Jew. The right wing in Germany after WW1 clung to the idea that Jews and communists were to blame for the economic depression and in Mein Kampf (1925) Hitler portrayed Jews as bloodsucking parasites. When the film ‘The Eternal Jew’ (1940) paired pictures of Jews with images of teeming rats, it employed a juxtaposition with Nosferatu equating an undesirable social element with vermin. The film’s title is Der Ewige Jude, the German term for the character of the ‘Wandering Jew’. Stoker had a fascination with this medieval folkloric figure and Judith Halberstam demonstrates how Dracula resembles the Jew of anti-Semitic discourse in a number of ways: ‘his appearance, his relation to money/old gold, his parasitism, his degeneracy, his impermanence or lack of allegiance to a fatherland, and his femininity’. The novel thus evokes a kind of gothic anti-Semitism. Visually, the connection between Dracula and other fictional Victorian Jews is quite strong: Fagin, the notorious villain in Dickens’s Oliver Twist, for example.

Interestingly, twentieth-century manifestations of Fagin deliberately reference the Pied Piper. In the musical Oliver (1968) the actor who plays Fagin, Ron Moody, uses his umbrella as a pipe to lead the children on a dance into the Victorian underworld. Connections can also be made between Murnau’s re-imagining of the Dracula myth in Germany between the wars and the Pied Piper. During the Second World War, the evacuation of children (many of whom were Jewish) was codenamed ‘Operation Pied Piper’. The story’s association with war time refugees was imaginatively developed in Nevil Shute’s novel of 1942. Prior to this, in the 1930s, the retellings of the tale had become increasingly Americanised and innocuous, there is a shift away from associations with Transylvania, for example, and a resolution in a happy ending. The Al Bowlly song, the ‘Pied Piper of Hamelin’ from 1931, for example, focuses on the rats but makes no mention of the missing children. In the Disney animation Pied Piper: A Silly Symphony (1933), the rats are easily controlled by cheese and the children are freed
from a life of hardship in the mills when the Piper opens up the mountain to lead them to a happy and joyful land.\textsuperscript{66}

These cosy resolutions are short-lived as the second world war marks further changes in the reception and understanding of the tale. Maria Tatar asserts that ‘the Grimm’s volume was denounced in the aftermath of the second world war, as a book that promoted cruelty, violence and atrocity, fear and hatred for the outsider, and virulent anti-Semitism’.\textsuperscript{67} However, it has, in an odd twist of fate, also become a book whose stories have been used, both in German speaking countries and in the Anglo-American world, to warn of the horrors of the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{68}

Many fairy tales exhibit a deep-rooted anxiety about the figure of the incomer, the outsider, the creature or person from elsewhere.\textsuperscript{69} And by way of conclusion I want to demonstrate how the tale is further redeployed in an analysis of European paranoia surrounding migrant workers and asylum seekers in the present. \textit{The Pied Piper’s Poison} by Christopher Wallace was published in 1998.\textsuperscript{70} Wallace cleverly reworks the familiar story, using the narrative structure of an academic research paper cited within a retirement speech by a professor. The paper rejects the fantasy element of the folktale as handed down through the generations: its author finds instead a disturbingly material explanation for the events suggested in the story, retrieving the socio-historical context of The Thirty Years War in Europe in the 1630s. The novel’s professor, Arthur Lee, suggests that Hamelin was not besieged by rats: instead, it speculates that the town was under siege from a troop of Spanish soldiers. It is these ‘rats’ which the piper offers to rid Hamelin of. He views the Piper as an outsider, possibly an Eastern migrant worker in seventeenth-century Europe. If we embrace rather than fear the ‘other’, we can even view Dracula as the ultimate asylum seeker, fleeing his homeland, carrying his native soil in a box, connecting him with this sympathetic contemporary reading of the Pied Piper as migrant.

Wallace’s quasi-Marxist analysis of the Pied Piper mythology serves to shed light on the second time period in the novel, WWII (the social hardship is akin to Hamelin, bringing the two time frames together). The book’s academic protagonist, Arthur Lee, finds a troubling parallel to the folktale in the twentieth-century practice of torture in wartime. In this version of the Pied Piper story, the children are not seduced by the melodies of a travelling minstrel and transported to Transylvania: they are eaten by townsfolk during a severe state of famine. The people are reduced quite literally to the condition of rats or vampires by their situation.\textsuperscript{71}
The unreliability of the historical archive is stressed at various points in the novel. This is seen when Lee considers the possible reasons behind the name ‘Pied Piper’:

‘Pied’ could conceivably be a corruption of the French ‘à pied’, meaning ‘on foot’, indicating that this man was by nature a traveller. It could also imply the kind of clothing he wore, ‘pied’ meaning mottled or spotted, with the kind of bright and gold colour associated with a jester or clown. Finally, the word could be a corruption of his real name, particularly if this was Arabic in origin and therefore difficult for an uneducated German speaker to pronounce.\(^72\)

The speculative nature of this historicising problematises the very act of attempting to contextualise or historicise myth. If fairy tales and folktales make themselves particularly available for continuous rewriting, it is partly because of their essential abstraction from a specific context. Angela Carter has argued that ‘Although the content of the fairy tale may record the real lives of the anonymous poor with sometimes uncomfortable fidelity […] the form of the fairy tale is not usually constructed so as to invite the audience to share a sense of lived experience’.\(^73\) The limitations of tying such tales historically to a specific context are here laid bare. The tensions between form and content explain why the villages, forests, and monsters of fairy tale exist seemingly nowhere and yet everywhere in terms of applicability and relevance. The Pied Piper and Dracula myths are perpetually caught up in an endless cycle of storytelling, mythologizing, and historicising. We may question the representation of Bram Stoker’s and Robert Browning’s Transylvania but we need to be careful with our contemporary desire to tie the texts too closely to their socio-historical contexts. This approach has proved insightful with regard to otherness, but it can constitute an attempt to rationalise the gothic elements of a novel or fairy tale, dispelling, too, the enchantment evoked in the phrase ‘once upon a time’. Viewed in this way, we can concur with Bloch that ‘literary activity becomes a special form of dream work’.\(^74\) Our understanding of these texts is enhanced if we are able to set a reading which uncovers the progressive potential of their visionary character against the kinds of reading which situates them in location and history and uncovers their social function. This is, following Fredric Jameson, to consider the dialectic between the ‘utopian’ (after Bloch) and the ideological.\(^75\) If we can embrace both approaches, then we can truly be spirited away, remaining open to the wonders of ‘The Land Beyond the Forest’ whilst acknowledging the dark intrusion of the past onto the present.

Notes
For example, Radu Florescu has published *In Search of the Pied Piper* (2005) and *In Search of Dracula* (1972), but he does not seem to have analysed the connections between these characters or forged any sustained links beyond the fact that one of Vlad the Impaler’s fiefs at the time was known to the German settlers as ‘Hamlesh’, which he says is ‘reminiscent of Hamelin’ (*In Search of Dracula* (Twickenham: Athena Press, 2005), viii).

2 Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916), a distinguished Jewish historian and folklorist from Sydney, published *English Fairy Tales* in 1890. *More English Fairy Tales* (1894) includes ‘The Pied Piper of Franchville’ and his source is Abraham Elder’s *Tales and Legends of the Isle of Wight* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1839). He adds that a Mr Nutt has abridged and partly rewritten the story, introducing ‘touches from Browning’ (Joseph Jacobs, ‘Notes and References’, in *More English Fairy Tales* ([1894] Milton Keynes: Pook Press, 2010), 218). In this version, the story is set in Newtown or Franchville and Piper leads the children into the forest where they disappear. There is no mention of the mountain or of Transylvania.

3 Radu Florescu argues that ‘Hamelin was known as Quer-Hamelin in the Middle Ages which means “mill town”’ (*In Search of the Pied Piper* (London: Athena Press, 2005), 197). He also claims that there was a rhymed saga entitled ‘The History of Hamelin’, written in high German by an anonymous author in 1589 which focussed on rats (200). This is in agreement with Wilkening, who claims that the late 1500s is when stories of rat catchers in towns around Europe first appear. See Christoph Wilkening, ‘The Pied Piper of Hamelin: Germany’s Mystery of Missing Children’, *The World and I* 15 (2000): 178-87 (181). Florescu informs us that, interestingly, according to ‘German folktale tradition in Transylvania’, making a flute out of the vertebrae of a rat king and stretching its skin into a drum, would allow one to control rats (191). No date is given for this story, however.

4 Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 221. All further references are to this edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.


7 We now have the reluctant or sympathetic vampire rather than the monstrous folkloric one. This can be seen in contemporary texts from Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) to Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* (2005) and HBO’s TV adaptaion of Charlaine Harris’s *Southern Vampire Mysteries* (2001-13) as *True Blood* (2008-14). See Margaret L. Carter, ‘The Vampire as Alien in Contemporary


10 See also the Count’s midnight conversation with Harker on Transylvania and the history of his race, Dracula, 30-31


12 There are, of course, many other ways of reading the novel. For a brief summary of how Terry Eagleton, Michael Moses, and Roy Foster have read Transylvania as a masked Ireland in a very convincing way and for a contrasting reading of the novel in relation to the ‘Eastern Question’, see Matthew Gibson, ‘Bram Stoker and the Treaty of Berlin’, Gothic Studies 6, no. 2 (2004): 236-51.

13 David J. Skal makes this point, referring to the retelling of Dracula in Nosferatu as ‘a Shylock for the Carpathians’ and a ‘cinematic anticipation of Hitler’. See Hollywood Gothic (Faber and Faber: New York, 1990), 86. Judith Halberstam claims that in Tod Browning’s Dracula (1931), the medallion around Bela Lugosi’s neck resembles ‘a star of David’ (Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 87). Dracula’s Jewish appearance is thus exaggerated or deliberately referenced in early film adaptations of the novel.


16 Riley, Transylvania, 11.


18 Stoker’s working notes for the novel are housed in the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia. The museum only acquired them in 1970. They were originally sold at Sotheby’s by Stoker’s widow Florence in 1913. Sir Christopher Frayling was the first scholar to have access to the


William Hughes, ‘Mythical Space and the Mythicized Author: Bram Stoker as Fictional Protagonist in Modern Fiction’ (paper presented at Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture Conference, University of Timisoara, June 25-27, 2015).


Zipes argues that their primary method was to invite storytellers to their home and have them tell the tales aloud, which the Grimms then noted down. These people were not peasants, however, and Zipes adds that ‘most of the story tellers during this period were educated women from the middle class or aristocracy’ (Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to Modern World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), 28).


29 Joyce Crick, *Selected Tales*, xvii.


32 Jack Zipes, introduction to *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales*, by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, xxv.


34 There are many variants; the hill is called Koppen in Wanley and Koppelberg Hill in Browning.

35 Germany gave us the first poetic rendering of the Piper by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1803. He also referenced the story in *Faust*.

36 Nathaniel Wanley, *The Wonders of the Little World: or A General History of Man* (London: C. Taylor, Holborn & T. Thornton, 1678), 632. All further references are to this edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

37 Richard Verstegen, *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence: in Antiquities. Concerning the most noble, and renowned English nation. By the study and travell of R.V.* (London: John Norton, for Joyce Norton and Richard Whitaker, St Paul’s Church-yard, 1643), 86. All further references are to this edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

38 A point made by Browen Riley, who argues that ‘there is no evidence of any specific group of settlers arriving from one particular town in any of their histories’ (*Transylvania*, 25).


41 ‘The poem was composed for Willie Macready, son of the famed actor William Charles Macready. The boy, sick at the time, was given the poem to illustrate’, *Robert Browning’s Poetry*, note 1, 103.

42 William Macready, the child that Browning sent the poem to, was very sick, and may have been close to death.

43 ‘he is devil in callous’, Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 221.

44 It is worth noting that more recent theories have traced the children to other areas of central and Eastern Europe, such as Moravia. Radu Florescu had suggested in his book *In Search of the Pied Piper* that the children were taken away to be settlers in the newly formed Baltic states but were lost at sea. According to Riley, Jurgan Udolph, a linguist at Leipzig university, claims that they settled in the state of Brandenburg, north of Berlin. So again there is no agreement or consensus. For a discussion of these theories and a comparison between them see Riley, *Transylvania*, 28.

45 The film premiered in March in 1922 at the Berlin Zoological gardens, where the screening was accompanied by an orchestra, playing an original score from the composer Hans Erdman.


Reinhart Fuchs [Reynard the Fox] (1834); Deutsche Mythology [German Mythology] (1835), Tales, 2 vols (1837). After this, they moved to Berlin to work on their German Dictionary.

The phrase ‘Shylock of the Carpathians’ is employed in Skal, Hollywood Gothic, 52.

Butler, Metamorphoses, 156.

Butler, Metamorphoses, 157.

Butler’s phrase, Metamorphoses, 157. He is wearing a long black coat and a hat which vaguely resembles a turban.

Jewish people, it was assumed, had rejected Christ’s teachings and handed him over to the Romans for crucifixion (thus they were outsiders in Christian doctrine). Because Jews already stood out in the social body as unassimilated they were subject to persecution when any unexplained affliction beset a community.

Butler, Metamorphoses, 162. The Eternal Jew was directed by Fritz Hippler in 1940. The screenplay is by Eberhard Taubert. The film anti-Semitic and can be seen as Nazi propaganda.

Halberstam, Skin Shows, 92.

Halberstam declares, ‘I am not claiming a deliberate and unitary relation between fictional monster and real Jew, rather I am attempting to make an argument about the process of othering’ (92).

Both have hooked noses, bushy eyebrows, shifty eyes, claw-like hands and long pointed nails. According to the nineteenth-century pseudo-sciences of phrenology and physiognomy, these shared features also represent degeneracy and criminality. See David Glover, Vampires, Mummies and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 36.


In Shute’s novel an Englishman who is stranded in Nazi-occupied France attempts to take a number of children over the borders to safety. See The Nevil Shute Norway Foundation, accessed 1st October, 2015, http://www.nevilshute.org/index.php. The story was filmed in 1942 by Twentieth-Century Fox.
(director, Irving Pichel) and in 1990 as an adaption for television (‘Crossing to Freedom’, Proctor and Gamble Productions, directed by Norman Stone) [necessary?].

65 Albert Allick ‘Al’ Bowlly (1898 - 1941) was a popular jazz guitarist, singer, and crooner in the 1930s, making more than 1,000 recordings between 1927 and 1941. His Pied Piper song is available here: ‘Al Bowlly - Pied Piper Of Hamelin 1931 Ray Noble’, YouTube, accessed 1 October, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7xG5zWQicI.


68 Maria Tatar, preface to The Hard Facts, xx

69 Julie Sanders makes this point in Adaptation and Appropriation (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 87. See also Margaret L. Carter, ‘The Vampire as Alien’.

70 Christopher Wallace, The Pied Piper’s Poison (Woodstock and New York: Overlook Press, 1999). All further references are to this edition.

71 Wallace’s novel is discussed briefly in Sanders, Adaptation, 84-6.


73 Angela Carter, The Virago Book of Fairy Tales (London: Virago, 1990), xi.

74 Ueding, cited in Zipes, introduction to Bloch, Utopian Function, xxxiii.

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