

Of Monsters and Migrants: On the Loss of Sanctuaries in Literature as a Parable of Biopolitics in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

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The recent image on the cover of *Time Magazine* of Trump facing a crying Mexican child tells an old story of sovereignty and human abjection that never goes away. According to Carl Schmitt, the sovereign is the one who decides on the state of exception, a scenario that becomes easily recognizable in this image (Schmitt 19-21). It is a story of mythical proportions that determines world politics and literature as a reflection of it. In this essay I examine the process of monsterring alterity in three nineteenth-century canonical texts and how they can serve as parables to understanding contemporary mechanisms and narratives of dehumanization in the migrant scenario. In order to comprehend the use of dehumanizing metaphors in current populist rhetoric it is beneficial to revisit the literary uses of such metaphors in the context of migration, xenophobia, and the notion of sanctuary, which Anni Greve has defined as “places set apart” (68-69) and Jonathan Darling sees as a “space of refuge and welcome towards asylum seekers and refugees” (125). Rereading Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1830), and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) in view of these scenarios will reveal three different links between the monster and the sanctuary: while Shelley’s novel shows us the classical scenario of the undesirable as being banned from the human community, Stoker’s vampire breaks into the sanctuary of both city and nation state, reflecting time-worn fears of invasion and contamination of the racial Other. With Hugo’s novel I have chosen a canonical French text because it demonstrates a third common form of the undesirable within the sanctuary: Michel Foucault’s concept of inclusion within the city while also being excluded from it. These texts reflect three prominent scenarios in the perception and treatment of migrants today: their perceived threat to the city and nation state (Stoker), their expulsion from the city/nation state into a condition of abjection where they are permanently without home and peace (Shelley), and their inclusion within the city/nation state while also being excluded from it (Hugo).

Investigating such contexts comes at a critical time in view of ongoing debates over migration in Europe, the racially charged political climate in the US, and the global spread of neo-fascist groups spewing hatred and racism. Populist discourse on the topic of migration abounds in discriminating language comparing immigrants and refugees to animals considered

dangerous and parasitic, infecting or infesting the home territory, or even denouncing humans in search of better lives as monsters.

Among these animal metaphors, the time-honored wolf metaphor in particular has found renewed use in the media, from attention-grabbing headlines (“*Donald Trump supporters tell immigrants ‘The wolves are coming, you are the hunted’ - as race hate fears rise,*” *The Independent* 9 Nov. 2016) to articles on “lone-wolf” attacks (“*We Must Track and Trap Lone Wolf Terrorists,*” *The Observer* 25 Nov. 2014). As wolves are once again entering Central Europe, sparking heated debates as to whether they should be protected or hunted down and driven away, some right-wing populist groups have likened them to the new surge of migrants, labeling them both as trespassers, parasites, and as unreformable. The right-wing website *Die Bürgerstimme*, for example, mentions in particular Muslim migrants whom it compares with marauding wolves, claiming that both need to be hunted down and removed from German soil.

The trend in current populism and among politicians of employing metaphors for the purpose of dehumanizing migrants is not a new phenomenon. We do not need to go all that far back in the history of persecution of undesirables to see how such metaphors have contributed to genocide, if we think of Nazi ideology labeling Jews and other undesirable social groups as typhoid-spreading rats. While the Third Reich drew on positive images of the wolf as leader and warrior in Germanic mythology, a different animal metaphor was reserved for those the Reich deemed undesirable and as *lebensunwertes Leben*, “life not worth living”: the metaphor of the insect, the louse in particular. In the final solution, various practices of dehumanization and killing, above all the gas chambers, point to this conceptual eradication of humans as lice. It is what in the first sentence of *Metamorphosis* (1915) Franz Kafka calls the *Ungeziefer*, the animal that in its etymology implies not being clean enough to be sacrificed but being suitable for eradication by anyone with impunity, that forms the basis of this ideology of hatred in Nazi Germany towards traditionally migratory groups such as the Jews and the Roma people. In the current political climate, as toxic discourses are being mobilized, the use of discriminating language to compare immigrants to animals—David Cameron’s misnomer of migrants “swarming” into the UK, or Donald Trump labeling undocumented immigrants as “animals that slice and dice beautiful teen girls” (Gupta)—are sinister reminders of that connection.

It is this link between the sovereign ruler, the human seeking sanctuary, and the sanctuary itself that forms the core of analysis for the three novels selected here. Philosophers ranging from Aristotle to Giorgio Agamben have linked the notion of sanctuary specifically to inclusion in

versus exclusion from the city. Exclusion from the city, the *polis*, has traditionally resulted in a loss of peace. One of the consequences of such individuals excluded from political life is their biopolitical abjection to the level of animals through dehumanizing metaphors. Agamben describes this in some detail in his chapter “The Ban and the Wolf” in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. He argues that this reduction of human political life to bare life, from *bios* to *zoe* can be a principle not just outside of the city but also “internal to the city, [and] appears at the moment the City [or nowadays the state] is considered *tanquam dissoluta*, as if it were dissolved” (27). Consequently, even in the city the state of nature can correspond to the state of exception (compare Agamben, *State of Exception*) and the state of war.

Exclusion from the *polis* as well as within the *polis*, which nowadays functions as the larger polity, the nation state, has been a biopolitical process from antiquity on. Aristotle distinguished those humans living in Athens from the “*idiotes*” outside who did not hold any political office and were speechless. Aristotle thought that a person who says nothing is a vegetable (8), a thought that may evoke the speechlessness of the migrant and recalls myths and literature of metamorphosis from ancient Greek myths to Kafka and beyond. The motif of expulsion has found its way into world literature, from the myths of Lycaon, Callisto, Io, via Greek tragedies such as Sophocles’s *Antigone*, Old Norse saga, the picaresque tradition of the early modern age, to nineteenth-century fiction.

In the myth of Lycaon, as the Roman poet retells it, this exclusion from the city as the community of men happens at the moment when Jupiter turns the Arcadian king Lycaon into a wolf. As Ovid describes it,

Frightened *he runs off to the silent fields and howls aloud, attempting speech in vain; foam gathers at the corners of his mouth; he turns his lust for slaughter on the flocks, and mangles them, rejoicing still in blood. His garments now become a shaggy pelt; his arms turn into legs, and he, to wolf while still retaining traces of the man: grayness the same, the same cruel visage, the same cold eyes and bestial appearance.* (Ovid 13, emphasis added)

Lycaon shares the moment of “running off to the silent fields, attempting speech in vain” with Callisto turned into a bear and Io turned into a heifer. It is of particular interest as it defines the moment of exclusion from the human community as one in which a human being is deprived of speech/*logos* while retaining an animal voice (howl), a process we also see in Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*, for example.

Storytelling and biopolitics then converge in a distant echo of these myths in the medieval act of proscription that entailed the lupinization of humans, humans perceptually reduced to the level of feared and despised animals. The history of migrating individuals criminalized by the *polis* and described as beasts infesting the community at large thus has its beginnings in these early forms of expulsion. In the early Germanic Middle Ages these criminals were considered wolves to man, and they became outlawed as lycanthropes, the so-called *vargr*, signifying both “wolf” and “outlaw.” If such an outlaw tried to return to the human community he was labeled a *vargr i veum*, “a wolf in the sanctuary” (Grönbech 130). Like Lycaon or Callisto, those proscribed by the sovereign—in myth the sovereign is a god—were no longer protected by the human community, hence their animal shape, and were condemned to an existence in the state of nature.

Echoing these biopolitical practices, the wolf appears frequently in literary representations of marginalized individuals associated with a migratory lifestyle, whether as Jews, the Roma and Sinti, or Slavs. The human wolf migrating from the wilderness back into the city as *veum*/sanctuary seems to be a culturally deeply engrained metaphor that accompanies us to date from Old Norse sagas, via the picaresque tradition in early modern period until early-twentieth-century novels such as Hermann Löns’s *Der Wehrwolf* (1910), reflecting time-worn fears and xenophobia, and anticipating the populist voices of today. Current fears of lone wolf terrorists and populism’s comparison of migrants with packs of wolves or swarms of insects entering our fortified Western cities and nation states with their well-protected wealth based on exclusivity emerge from this dire cultural-political history.

In Old Germanic law the notion of peace (*Friede*) is key in linking the migrant to the wolf metaphor, as the *vargr i veum* who threatened the peace of the community from which he was expelled was deprived of his own peace. These expelled criminals on the run were also known as *Friedlos*, implying an existence in a permanent state of war. If we apply this concept to today’s refugees, then the space and time between their loss of home and finding a new home resembles the exile of the *Friedlos*, literally “without peace” as they tend to come from war-torn countries. Contemporary migrants remain *friedlos* if kept in a space that prevents them from going both back and forward. That space does exist currently, for example, in the detention camps off the Australian coast, in which refugees are detained for undetermined periods of time. These people could indeed be described as modern-day *vargr*/*Friedlos* in a state of exception that, paradoxically, has the tendency to become the norm. They find themselves in what Marc Augé has termed non-places (*non-lieu*), places that are set apart and sanctuaries but without the protective function

of a sanctuary. They are spaces of exception, a term that is highly ambivalent, as are sanctuaries. Like the state of exception the sanctuary can both provide shelter from violence as well as be the location where violence reigns supreme. We can observe this ambiguity in the myth of Callisto, the nymph who gets raped by Jove inside the grove (the grove being the classical sanctuary of Greek antiquity), and we can observe it in the three novels I am looking at here.

Monsters in the state of nature: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)

Like few other novels in the nineteenth century Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* tells of the monstering of a human being cast out beyond the pale of civic society. That the "monster" is a creature not quite human in form but intensely human in soul and spirit, with a capacity for love, empathy, and learning, is evident throughout much of the narrative. Shelley's novel is a narrative about processes of criminalization, animalization, and segregation from the community—the community as nation, city, even family—resulting in a complete loss of sanctuary and freedom from the social contract. It is a dubious kind of freedom that implies that the law does not protect the *homo sacer* from being killed. The *homo sacer* shares this freedom with the sovereign, in this case the creator of the monster. Prometheus-like, Frankenstein adopts the sovereign power of a god by creating a human being of monstrous proportions, thus condemning him to an existence outside the human community. Regretting his mistake he and his creation are both in need of sanctuary and confined to a space of exception; that is, taken outside of (*excipere*) the social contract (*Homo Sacer* 27). In that sense both are *homines sacri*, "cut off from all the world" (146) and resembling predatorial beasts (*vargr*), without peace (*friedlos*), but free in their sovereignty beyond the reach of the law; both are outlaws to do unto each other whatever they wish and with impunity.

In Shelley's novel the two positions of *homo sacer* and sovereign are thus fluid and, to an extent, interchangeable. "You are my creator, but I am your Master—obey!" (172). The monster who abandons the human community ("Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind?" [145]) for survival in the state of nature is also sovereign in his power to destroy, and the creator Frankenstein, who displays the sovereignty of a demiurge in his Promethean act, ends up as *homo sacer*: "I [Frankenstein] felt as if I was placed under a ban" (50). It is this ban they are both placed under that expels them from the *polis* into the state of nature, and in both cases this expulsion coincides with a loss of empathy for others.

It is his loss of empathy and love that turns Frankenstein's creature into a monster, not his exterior shape. Initially full of love for humanity and seeking the love of others, the creature turns to hatred when his affection is not returned and Frankenstein refuses to dissolve him from his complete isolation by creating a female partner. He suffers from the solitude of a species of which there is only one specimen. The text demonstrates how even monsters are being constructed rather than created *ab initio*. The creature, however, tries to resist this act of monstering by learning to speak, read, and appreciate music, displaying the fruit of learning and a rich emotionality. This happens in particular in the scenes that show the creature observing the apparent bliss of the small family inhabiting an idyllic cottage, a sanctuary in the ancient sense of the mythical Greek grove. Here he insists on his *Menschwerdung* (becoming human), trying to resist the monstering process (his lupization). However, it is a sanctuary he has no access to due to his monstrous appearance. His liminal status due to the tension between nature and culture, his beastly physique and emotional intelligence, makes him continuously explore his identity: "Was I a monster? . . . Was I an animal? . . . What was I?" (119), the sort of metaphysical reflection that is typical of the *homo sacer*, whose expulsion from the human community throws them into doubt about their own degree of humanity. Although labeled a "vile insect" by his creator (97), the creature quickly internalizes his own non-human hideousness after—Narcissus-like—seeing his own reflection in the water. He starts wandering "in the woods . . . like a wild beast" giving "vent to my anguish in fearful howlings" (136).

Persecuted by his creator, the monster is on the run across the planet, hiding in its northernmost reaches and driven by his desire to revenge himself upon Victor Frankenstein. Migration, the search and loss of sanctuary are central motifs in this text. The state of nature into which both sovereign and *homo sacer* are thrown in this novel, that arctic Hell they traverse, is a sanctuary offering both protection and precarity. What is a sanctuary to the creature is not one for his creator, whom he tells: "I seek the everlasting ices of the north, where you will feel the misery of cold and frost, to which I am impassive" (211). Due to the creature's superior strength it is not clear who in the end is the hunted and who the hunter. "Who can follow an animal which can traverse the sea of ice, and inhabit caves and dens, where no man would venture to intrude?" asks Frankenstein (206), and yet he, too, blurs the limits of his humanity, first as a godlike creator and eventually through his predatorial existence in these vast expanses of uninhabitable wilderness.

Frankenstein is traumatized by the ban he imposes on himself and his subsequent "bare life" in the state of nature, which contrasts sharply with his

upbringing in the “genial and sunny climate” of Geneva (213). While, paradoxically, the state of nature becomes the only sanctuary for the monster, it is diametrically opposed to the city of Geneva as sanctuary. The city closes its gates at 10 p.m. every night, leaving those who do not make it back in time at the mercy of the beast *ante portas*. It is a fitting image for how the city is *tanquam dissoluta*, completely dissolved as a potential sanctuary. In the end, both are *homines sacri*, abandoned outside the *polis* due to the crimes they have committed, Frankenstein’s crime of creation and his creature’s murders. Expulsion causes long-lasting trauma in the *homo sacer*, which does not improve his nature. The state of nature in this novel does not reflect the Rousseauian concept of it as a peaceful, primordial place where civilization has not yet caused any damage, but it resembles the Hobbesian state of nature where man is a wolf to man, a place of permanent war. This relentless state of nature as sanctuary echoes the grove or woods in Greek myth, Callisto’s and Io’s inability to find protection in them as the God Jupiter rapes them and brings about their transformation to hide his crime. Jupiter beckons Io with the idea of a sanctuary offering shelter, and hiding his violent intent: “‘come find some shade,’ he [Jove] said, ‘in these deep woods’” (Ovid 24). It also echoes current migration scenarios, the child facing Trump, and the precarity of sanctuaries in the nation state today.

Unreliable sanctuaries in Victor Hugo’s *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831)

The set-up is different in Victor Hugo’s novel *Notre Dame de Paris*, where those considered alien reside inside the city while also being excluded from it. Hugo’s rewriting of the Beauty and the Beast shows us the close symbolic union between Quasimodo, the Gypsy child (182-84), taken in and raised by Frollo, the priest, and Esmeralda, Pâquette La Chantefleurie’s daughter, abducted as a young girl and raised by Gypsies. Set in the Middle Ages, the text reflects its superstitions and racism towards the Sinti and Roma, who are accused of child abduction and believed to devour children. Quasimodo and the allegedly Gypsy girl Esmeralda are targets of this folk superstition, which marginalizes them within the city.

The name Quasimodo is a reference to Low Sunday, the Sunday after Easter on which the malformed (Quasimodo literally means “almost in shape”) boy was found by Frollo. Hugo repeatedly refers to his liminality between the animal and the human. Like Frankenstein’s creature, with his superior strength and animal features he resembles Rousseau’s *l’homme naturel* more than *l’homme civil* (compare Cantor 252-69): “He was too far from the social state and too near the state of nature to know what shame was” (Hugo 195). Dehumanization and demonization conjoin in the derision and physical

violence he experiences at the hands of the people of Paris, who see in his animal ugliness an incarnation of the devil. However, unlike the human wolf of medieval proscription, the *vargr* (wolf/outlaw) banned from and feared within the *veum* (sanctuary), Quasimodo is the *homo sacer*, who finds a sanctuary inside the Cathedral of Notre Dame, where persecution and even the communal law do not reach him. His sanctuary includes him within the city while also excluding him from it, as the outlaw is never entirely outside the law but always tied to it so that exclusion never works as being excluded from the law.

Although traditionally the grotesque or monstrous is excluded within the city by being relegated to the marketplace, where it can be displayed outside the sacred realm, Quasimodo, Lord of Misrule with “the ugliest face” (36), seen as the Devil incarnate (40), is, paradoxically, given shelter by the Church. He is a monster and a saint, subhuman and superhuman at the same time with “awe-inspiring vigour, agility and courage” (40). His dual position of being crowned and uncrowned, Prince of Fools one day (in the opening scene) and tortured the next (191), ironically evokes the duality of the beast as sovereign ruler and demon underdog. The carnival scenes of the novel, however, are ritual replications of the original ban (Agamben, *State of Exception* 71-72). It is through these anomie acts that the city with its law and order as part of the social contract becomes temporarily dissolved, since as a state of exception carnival acts never last long. It could be argued persuasively here that the carnival rite is in itself a sanctuary—one, however, that is diametrically opposed to the kind needed by Quasimodo. Carnival rites are sanctuaries from the oppressiveness of Church and State, a security valve for the people at large, their sinister side drawing on rituals of expulsion of those the people singled out as scapegoats.

Quasimodo’s position inside the cathedral, which he comes to resemble in all its grotesque hybridity of architectural styles ranging from the Roman to the Gothic—Hugo elaborates on this extensively—is necessary as the Church wants to control evil. His sanctuary thus has the twofold purpose of protecting him from outside and of protecting the Church from the evil that may assail it from the secular realm. In that sense he functions very much like one of the Notre Dame’s stone gargoyles he also resembles in his hybrid physique.

Although Quasimodo is described as a raging predator who “roars, foams, and bites” (61), he is extremely sensitive and loving. He is filled with great devotion for Frollo, the priest and true monster of the story, and he is the only one capable of truly loving Esmeralda, whom he rescues and carries away into his sanctuary. The constellation here is, therefore, very similar to

Frankenstein, where the creature is less of a monster than his creator. Like Saint Christopher, who is depicted as a cynocephalus (dog-head) in Eastern Orthodox icons, Quasimodo is associated both with the Devil and saintliness, truly the *homo sacer*, as the one set apart from society as sacred in the sense of being cursed. Both the monster and the saint fall under this principle of exclusion. Monster and saint, Quasimodo becomes the protector of Esmeralda in life and beyond, when at the end of the story his skeletal remains are found in an embrace with her in their tomb (429). As such a protector on the threshold of the temple he also resembles Anubis, the jackal-headed god who protects the dead on their journey to the afterlife: "Egypt would have taken him for the god of this temple" (130). This, too, is a reference to his Gypsy/Egyptian background, as is his love of Esmeralda.

She, too, is in the position of *homo sacer*, but rather than being expelled from the city she is tied to it, as the city needs her as a permanent scapegoat. Persecuted as a witch because of her alleged Gypsy background Esmeralda becomes the victim of sacrificial violence, but when Quasimodo carries her into his ecclesiastical sanctuary, she is also temporarily immune to that violence: "When once he had set foot within the asylum the criminal was sacred; but he must beware of leaving it; one step outside the sanctuary and he fell back into the flood" (308). Their sanctuary in the church, where they are immune to community law, emphasizes their animal nature: "occasionally," the narrator points out, the tradition of sanctuary even "extended to animals. Anymoin relates that a stag, being chased by Dagobert, having taken refuge near the tomb of Saint Denis, the hounds stopped short, barking" (309).

The novel is set around the time when the *Malleus Maleficarum* appeared (1486), the cause of condemnation of thousands of women as witches in Germany and France. Esmeralda's goat, Djali, is part of this scenario of purported devil worship, and it points to her position as sacrifice as does her sympathy with Quasimodo pilloried in the market square "like a calf whose head hangs dangling" (192). Esmeralda becomes the sacrificial victim for the Parisian mob, the community's sacrifice to restore order. She is literally the scapegoat, that outcast for the community first mentioned in *Leviticus* and then ritualized in ancient Judaism (Yom Kippur), and her sidekick as she performs magical tricks, the goat Djali, reinforces this impression. In line with this sacrificial aura Esmeralda ends up in the vault of Montfaucon, "an edifice of strange form, much resembling a Druidical cromlech, and having, like the Cromlech, its human sacrifices" (428).

Claude Frolo embodies Jacques Derrida's wolf as sovereign. The priest who takes Quasimodo in after he is abandoned by Gypsies is truly

demonic. He stabs Phoebus Apollo, Esmeralda's great love, and manages to direct the blame for his deed onto her. Moreover, his secret alchemical studies evoke the pact with devil, in his resemblance with Dr. Faustus (223). Hugo's account of the fifteenth century makes abundantly clear that while the art of magic was condoned in men it brought women to the stake. As Kurt Baschwitz pointed out, magicians and other devil worshippers were generally not feared and hated, while witches were shown no mercy (51).

Like Quasimodo, who "stole with the stealthy tread of a wolf" (422), Frollo is also repeatedly likened to animal predators, birds of prey and tigers (252). Like them, he is a "nocturnal prowler about the streets of Paris" (244), reminiscent of Poe's "Man of the Crowd." Frollo is the true monster of the story, and the roles of monstrous-looking but gentle-hearted Quasimodo and the priest become completely reversed when upon Esmeralda's appearance in the church Frollo loses his mind and tries to rape her (326). He is the *vargr i veum* in Hugo's novel, reminiscent of Jove in the grove in myth, the sovereign god in this case a representative of God breaking into the sanctuary and spreading violence inside it. In contrast, Quasimodo, upon seeing her beauty, is overcome with modesty and, as is typical of the lycanthrope, stays on the threshold. In this carnivalesque inversion the priest is the monster, the monster is the saint. Frollo is the wolf in sheep's clothing, Quasimodo the sheep in wolf's clothing. Hugo's two characters reflect the sanctuary's ambiguous nature of providing shelter and precarity.

The wolf metaphors in this novel extend even further, to Pâquette La Chantefleurie, who has "the wild air of a caged she-wolf" (284). In her hatred of the Gypsy girl she is the devourer but also nurturer of her own daughter. When her daughter disappears as a little girl, Pâquette goes insane and hates all Gypsies whom she blames for her loss. They are child-stealers in her eyes, and from her underground cell she keeps watching Esmeralda in the market square, not knowing that she is her daughter.

"Father," asked she, "whom are they about to hang yonder? . . . There were some children that said it was a gypsy woman." . . . Then Pâquette La Chantefleurie burst into a hyena-like laughter. "Sister," said the archdeacon, "you greatly hate the gypsy women then?" "Hate them," cried the recluse. "They are witches, child stealers. They devoured my little girl, my child, my only child! I have no heart left, they have devoured it." (284)

The two traditional roles of the wolf perceived in most cultures as both nurturer and devourer clash at the moment when she finally recognizes her daughter. Her emotions swivel from hatred to love but it is too late for the

mother and daughter to be reunited, as King Louis XI has ordained that Esmeralda be killed, seeing in her the cause of the mob's insurrection, which needs to be crushed. Upon entering Pâquette's cell to take her daughter, Esmeralda, the henchman Tristan, the executive of the King, is also described as a wolf, his face resembling that of a wolf when he grins (413); the enraged mother ends up calling him "thou he-wolf" (416). Both the henchman and the criminal whom he kills are set aside by the community as no longer among the living. The henchman is temporarily pronounced dead by the community, while the criminal is permanently pronounced dead.

One may wonder why Hugo addresses the late medieval persecution of minorities like Gypsies and the physically deformed in the 1830s. The text with its realistic tapestry of social classes, even featuring beggars, which no other novel had done before in France, is first and foremost a reaction to the July 1830 revolution, which deposes the Bourbon family and tries to reassert the values of the 1789 revolution: the liberty, equality, and brotherhood of all citizens. These were ideals the restorative monarchist period after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815 had been trying to sweep under the carpet. Hugo thought that the 1830 revolution did not go far enough in establishing a constitutional monarchy and would have preferred to see a republic, hence his depiction of social classes and the inequality that reigns between them in his novel. What he describes for the late fifteenth century still held true in the early nineteenth century to a certain extent, thus his message, but the racism towards Gypsies and physically deformed outsiders is only one aspect of this widespread absence of the great ideals of the 1789 revolution.

By the late nineteenth century the image France and Germany had of the Romanies was almost entirely negative, and the rationalists saw in them "depraved vagabonds, deprived outcasts or a 'useless race'" (Clark 239). While the fairy tales show the wolf as a seducer outside of the context of race, in the second half of the nineteenth century the motif of the seduction of innocent youth, especially the dutiful bourgeois daughter, is performed by Romanies, Jews, and Slavs. Hugo contextualizes this racism and xenophobia in his portrait of Paris and specifically the Cathedral of Notre Dame as chief protagonist of the novel and sanctuary to the undesirable monstered by the community. As a portrait of the *vargr i veum* as the wolf who has found a fragile sanctuary in the city, a portrait of individuals deemed alien to the community and its *polis*, Hugo's novel on xenophobia and anti-ziganism still has much to offer us today as migrants are seeking sanctuaries in the western world.

Foreigners as blood-sucking vampires: Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)

Bram Stoker's famous invocation of the bloodsucking vampire invading England, "where perhaps for centuries to come, he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless" (45), is a projection of late-nineteenth-century Victorian fears of invasion, contagion, and racial pollution, of the nation being drained by Eastern European immigrants, primarily Jews and Gypsies. As Jules Zanger argues, "*Dracula* derived a significant portion of its power from its ability to dramatize in a socially acceptable form a body of hostile perceptions of the newly arrived Jews" (36). The novel is clearly the product of the discourse on racial hygiene and eugenics that emerges at the end of the nineteenth century in Germany, France, and England, the basis for fascist ideology of the twentieth century, but of the three texts analyzed here it is the one that most saliently reflects current fears of migration seen as the infestation of our closed nation states. This is a fear that has led Fintan O'Toole to describe our age as a "new pre-rather than old post-fascist" climate. According to the prominent Irish journalist, we live in a new era of preparation for widespread fascism and political violence towards minorities. He defines fascism as building "a sense of threat from a despised out-group" in the context of Trump's recent claim that "immigrants 'infest' the U.S. . . . , a test-marking of whether his fans are ready for the next step-up in language, which is of course 'vermin'" (n. pag.). Once that has happened, O'Toole says, anything is possible.

Dracula is yet another *vargr i veum* in world literature. Wolves are at his constant beck and call in his "wolf country" of Transylvania/Romania, as are even their more domestic relatives, Bersicker, the London Zoo wolf and all dogs it seems. The Count controls the wolves just by holding up his hand in silence and can turn into a wolf or bat in the twilight hours. In the final showdown between Van Helsing and *Dracula*, the close connection between Gypsies, wolves, and vampires culminates. The Gypsies and wolves are connected through forming circles around the hunters of *Dracula*, but as soon as *Dracula* is finished the wolves and Gypsies also disappear: "The gipsies [sic], taking us as in some way the cause of the extraordinary disappearance of the dead man, turned, without a word, and rode away, as if for their lives. . . . The wolves, which had withdrawn to a safe distance followed in their wake, leaving us alone" (314). This trinity of wolf, Gypsy, and vampire is closely associated with the Count's family and race. From the beginning, British fears of racial pollution by Eastern invaders of Oriental provenance form a stark contrast with the Count's own perception of his noble and ancient lineage steeped in Northern Europe. The Count's understanding of his race is quite

different from the way he and his kind are seen in civil Western Europe. His identification with the allegedly superior Nordic race, however, contains the ambivalence of the beast as sovereign and outcast specifically in his insistence on his family's origins with the berserks, aligning him with marauding Vikings, with predators, and thus a much older threat of invasion than that experienced by the British from the nineteenth-century migration waves of Jews and Gypsies.

Descended from berserk warriors, Dracula is the classical *vargr* as wolf and outlaw (once outlawed in the early Middle Ages, the *berserker* became synonymous with the *vargr*). As such, he is contrasted with Jonathan Harker, who stands for everything to do with the law, but he, too, suddenly finds himself in the state of exception where not only man is a wolf to man, where he is stripped of all human rights including the ones pertaining to criminals, but also where the idea of human sacrifice is closely linked to ritualistic violence: "I am shut up here, a veritable prisoner, but without that protection of the law which is even a criminal's right and consolation" (38); "a man's death is not a calf's" (40); "I was to be given to the wolves" (43). Harker's initial position as prisoner of the Count and *homo sacer* has all the qualities of a rite that will initiate and facilitate the great hunt for blood and souls upon which Dracula embarks as he travels to England. As the ruler of his lawless terrain and the one who vindicates the right to sacrifice humans, be it Harker or the children he feeds to his female fellow vampires, Dracula is the primordial hunter. Since he is the one who in turn becomes hunted in the end, he finds himself in the typical dual position of sovereign and *homo sacer*, both hunter and hunted, while for Harker, who advances from initial sacrificial victim to becoming one of the hunters, this process is inverted.

The outlaw's position outside the community, outside civility makes Dracula appear as such a threat when he first arrives in Whitby, Yorkshire, that classical terrain of Viking migrations and invasions. In line with the fear of the West, which sees itself as civilized and considers the East as uncivilized, the two locations of the novel, Transylvania and Britain, reflect this tension between the wild and lawless versus the civil, domestic space in which law and order prevail. Dracula, a sort of evil *homme naturel* not least because of his shape-shifting into animals, is obviously aware of England's domesticating and civilizing mission. While associated with wolves in his home, as soon as he lands in Whitby he sees the need to camouflage his uncivil nature. He does so by shape-shifting into the domesticated version of the wolf, a dog. However, like those Viking marauders a long time before him from whom he claims to be descended, he is a berserk dog, immediately engaging in a fight with a home dog, a scene in which the hierarchy between the alleged superior

race of the West and the alleged inferior races of the East is inverted in that Dracula, the noble and “evidently fierce brute,” kills the “half-bred” English mastiff (69).

England is the country that has domesticated the wolf just as it has incorporated Viking marauders into its civilization. This can be seen primarily in the irony surrounding Bersicker, the Norwegian wolf living in a London zoo. He belies his own name, implying ferocity, in that “the animal was as peaceful and well-behaved as that father of all picture wolves, Red Riding Hood’s quondam friend” (17). Old and no longer used to the wild, he is a pathetic creature instilling pity rather than fear. When Dracula arrives in London, however, Bersicker tears himself away from years of domestication, breaks from the zoo, and follows that call of the wild that the Count’s presence has sent him telepathically. As a descendant of the berserks Dracula exerts special control over Bersicker as he does over all wolves and those given to lunacy, like Dr. Seward’s patient Renfield and Jonathan Harker’s fiancée, Lucy Westenra. Victorian fears of racial contagion are especially inscribed into Lucy, who, in getting bitten by the Count, becomes racially polluted.

Dracula’s presence in the city of London is thus a case of the wolf breaking into the sanctuary, the *vargr i veim*. It is a sanctuary that has a civilizing and domesticating mission, where lunatics and real wolves are tamed, their muted instincts suddenly reawakening upon the arrival of the creature from the wilds of Transylvania. His castle there, although a trap to Harker, is a sanctuary to the Count, whose ultimate sanctuary is the coffin. By leaving his castle for the metropolis of London, where he quickly reinstalls a sanctuary for himself in the House of Carfax with its coffins filled with consecrated earth, he simultaneously destabilizes the sanctuaries of others, the city itself at the heart of Victorian England but also the mental asylum from which Renfield escapes as well as the London zoo, both sanctuaries and places of enforced domestication.

I would argue that these texts become parables for the contemporary migrant crisis and its mechanisms of dehumanization. Each of the three novels contains a specific moment that can be read in the context of current scenarios of criminalization, animalization, and segregation of migrants from the human community resulting in a loss of sanctuaries and trauma. While *Frankenstein* demonstrates an extreme version of such loss of sanctuary in the dissolution of the *polis* for the alien who is being “monstered” and cast out into a place that Shelley describes as an arctic kind of hell, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* shows us images of incomplete sanctuaries resulting in the ritualistic scapegoating of those considered alien. It shows us the *homo sacer* on the threshold between the

sacred and the profane space, the city of Paris a fractured sanctuary. Finally, Stoker's *Dracula* is an example of a national community's fears of invasion by migrants and of being vampirically drained by them. Stoker's novel in particular, whose protagonist differs from Frankenstein's creature and Quasimodo in that he is innately evil and a product of the implied author rather than being monstered by the other characters, evokes that fear of infestation that was recently mentioned by Donald Trump when he said: "Democrats want immigrants to 'infest' the U.S." (Graham). Comparing current scenarios of biopolitics with these canonical texts demonstrates how contemporary politics in its dehumanizing rhetoric and practices has reached a point at which the lines between fiction and reality become strangely blurred.

The fact that cities are unreliable sanctuaries and that the *homo sacer* finds himself in the state of nature is common to all three texts. I would suggest that Shelley's novel in particular with all its horrors following the crimes of the monster, his expulsion from the human community, and his subsequent aimless roaming in the state of nature may evoke not only the horrors of the camps and gulags but also tallies with Francisco Cantú's description of the Tex-Mex borderlands today, especially its cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, which have become fractured cities where the state of nature as a permanent state of war reigns supreme:

To live in the city of El Paso in those days was to hover at the edge of a crushing cruelty, to safely fill the lungs with air steeped in horror. As I ran and drove through the city, oscillating from work to home, the insecurity of Juárez drifted through the air like the memory of a shattering dream. . . . This narrative, of a city fractured by its looming border, saddled with broken institutions and a terrorized populace, had become part and parcel of its legacy, the subconscious inheritance of all those who came within the city's orbit. To comfortably exist at its periphery, I found myself suspending knowledge and concern about what happened there, just as one sets aside images from a nightmare in order to move steadily through the new day. (130-31)

The trauma of the *homo sacer* is a key element in these texts, and in its metaphorical construction—animalization, demonization, and expulsion—the plight of this figure in literature is persistently relevant to the current construction of narratives in which the *polis* has become fractured to the point of no longer offering a sanctuary. The horror of such narratives is neo-mythical but has its roots in the stories of Callisto, Io, and Lycaon, all of whom Jupiter renders speechless. As myths of the

transformation of human beings cast into liminality between the human and non-human they accompany us through literature over time. The profound depression and speechlessness of these characters resurface in fiction—Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*—but also in memoirs, in Primo Levi’s descriptions of the *Muselmann* of the camps, that human being caught between life and death, physically still alive but mentally in a state of abandonment to fate, and in Cantú’s victims of the desert, relegated to the fields of *lethe* (115).

Cut off from the community, silence and depression are the human conditions of the *homo sacer*. In its most extreme manifestation this traumatization has recently shown itself in the sovereign declaration of the state of exception condemning immigrant children to being separated from their families. This is an act by which the children themselves were turned into *homines sacri* as much as their parents, the only difference being that the latter were declared criminals for not only trespassing but also exposing their children to the state of nature they had chosen to walk into. The US government was thus shrewdly able to hide its own criminal behavior in locking up children in cages by blaming the parents for it. On the one hand, this expulsion of refugee children into a Hobbesian state of nature results in the fracturing of the US as a nation state that has traditionally defined itself as united and intact through its celebrated ideals and reality of pluralism and multiculturalism, welcoming everyone upon its shores. More importantly, however, this action has resulted in the children’s loss of the most intimate and peaceful sanctuary possible, that of the family. One should never tire of pointing to the consummate cruelty of this sovereign act of dehumanization based on fears of “infestation” attributed to the immigrants and the severe psychological damage this has caused.

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