

Van helsing

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The style Stoker uses to write the novel *Dracula*, in a series of diary/journal entries, newspaper clippings, letters, and other documents, makes the story more horrifying and suspenseful. This is because as written this way, the story becomes personal. The reader gets the feeling that the story he/she is reading is true. The novel takes on the persona of a case file, which makes the story stand out as a true account of actual events. It makes the reader feel that these terrifying events could actually happen. This style of writing contributes to character development because the characters' personalities are unveiled through the writing.

For example, when Dr. Seward describes Renfield, one gets a closer look into the psyche of Dr. Seward. In this excerpt, even though the reader receives a description of Renfield, the description is only what Dr. Seward sees and feels. It is a first-hand account of what a character thinks and feels through his own writing. The reader does not learn about Renfield in this excerpt, but learns about Dr. Seward. This is so because Dr. Seward makes certain conclusions about Renfield, which may or may not be true. Dr. Seward states what he sees, perhaps not what Renfield is actually like.

Renfield is a patient at Dr. Seward's insane asylum. Renfield is described as a refined gentleman who eats live creatures such as insects and birds. He believes that eating these living things gives him their life-force. Renfield fed the flies to the spiders, then fed the spiders to the birds, stockpiling their life-force. When he was denied a cat to which to feed the birds, Renfield ate the birds himself. Renfield was used by Stoker to drive the plot. It was through Renfield that the reader first learned about Count Dracula as a vampire and Count Dracula's dark world.

Renfield helped Count Dracula at first, but betrayed him because he was in love with Mina. Renfield protected her, and it cost him his life. Renfield is also an image of the theme of religion and eternal life. Renfield ate living creatures in an attempt to reach eternal life. He thought he would live forever if he could steal others' life-force. This is the goal of the Christian faith, to achieve eternal life. However, Renfield wanted to physically live, while Christians look forward to their souls having eternal life. Renfield contributed to the conflict because he helped all of the characters in some way.

For instance, Renfield helped Dr. Seward and Van Helsing realize what Count Dracula was. Renfield also helped Count Dracula lure Mina and Lucy to him. He also helped Mina to escape Count Dracula. Without Renfield, there would not be a story. Renfield contributed to the conflict most when he helped Count Dracula in his evil plans. Renfield came under Count Dracula's control when Count Dracula made an offer to give Renfield an unlimited supply of food if Renfield helped him. When confronted by Mina, Count Dracula's obsession, Renfield tells her to run away.

Count Dracula finds out about this and is so angry that he enters Renfield's cell and breaks his neck. Without Renfield, Count Dracula probably would not have been able to do most of the things he did. Religion, as a major theme of the novel, plays a large role. Many items and people are deemed either "holy" or "unholy." For instance, Van Helsing could be considered "holy" and Dracula could be considered "unholy." Van Helsing likens his mission of chasing Count Dracula to one of "the old knights of the Cross." (pg. 508)

Therefore, Van Helsing could be understood as a righteous man, doing the will of God to rid the world of a monster.

Count Dracula is considered a satanic figure and Van Helsing suggests that Christian icons, such as a crucifix, are the most effective weapons against evil. Stoker uses religious symbolism because he intended Dracula to be a cautionary tale, such as an urban legend. Dracula was written at a time when scientific and social advancements, such as Darwin's theory of evolution and women gaining more liberties, posed a threat to the traditional, religious way of life. Stoker decided to personify this threat in Dracula. In another passage, Van Helsing criticizes Dr.

Seward for relying too heavily on reason. It could be argued that Van Helsing is the protector of tradition while Dr. Seward is a man of science. Van Helsing goes so far as to actually blame science for Dr. Seward's logic thinking. Van Helsing believes that one should rely heavily on faith, not science. This might connect to the novel's central theme of the consequences of modernity because science is a threat to religion like Count Dracula is a threat to the other characters in the story. - Stoker, Bram. Dracula. United Kingdom: Archibald Constable and Company. 1897.