

# The “Substantivization” of Modern in Late Victorian Literature and Victorian Liberalism

**Olga Polovinkina**

Comparative Literature Department, Moscow State University for the Humanities  
Miuskaya sq. 6, Moscow, GSP-3, 125993, Russia

Email: [olgapmail@mail.ru](mailto:olgapmail@mail.ru)

**Abstract** The article concentrates on the problem of legitimization of the modern age in the late Victorian literature. The evolution of the idea of modern in the late Victorian time was stimulated by liberal thinking, namely Social Darwinism, new ideas of religion and Mill’s idea of the liberty of thought and discussion. This revolution in the ways of thinking emphasized the value of transient moments and produced a new type of writing accentuating the “true present.” On the other side, the new value of modern was seen as a characteristic feature of the national life, as a result modern acquired great significance, and a new feeling arose — of dynamic and rootless way of being.

**Key words** modernity; modernization; liberalism; Victorian era; G. Gissing; G.B. Shaw; O. Wilde; B. Stoker; Englishness

**Author** **Olga Polovinkina** is Professor of Comparative Literature Department at the Moscow State University for the Humanities and a researcher at the Gorky Institute of World Literature. She writes on the literary, cultural and intellectual history of the USA and Great Britain since c. 1600.

The modern philosophers, while postulating the main traits of modernity as an epoch, concentrate their attention on the legitimization of the modern age. As H. Blumenberg observes, “the problem of legitimacy is latent in the modern age’s claim to carry out a radical break with tradition, and in the incongruity between this claim and the reality of history, which can never begin entirely anew” (116). Jürgen Habermas points out that self-grounding of modernity is a consequence of this claim: “*it has to create its normativity out of itself*” (7). This factor came to consciousness in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the modern gradually acquired its own significance without looking back to the past and its norms. It’s essential to have it in mind while discussing the evolution of the idea of modern in the Victorian era.

Habermas says, “In the European languages of the modern age the adjective ‘modern’ only came to be used in a substantive form in the middle of the nineteenth century” (8). He means the name of the epoch. The substantive form of the adjective *modern* equal to German *Moderne* (the modern time) did not appear in the English language. *Moderne* is translated by the noun *modernity*. Nevertheless, a sort of “substantivization” of modern happened in the late-Victorian literature. The English word *substantive* as the French *substantif* and the German *Substantiv* means “noun,” but as an adjective it means “being a totally independent entity,” “real rather than apparent,” “belonging to the substance of a thing.” Otto Espersen cites the following definition from the preface to the *New and Improved Grammar* by William Hazlitt (1810): “a substantive is ... the name of a thing ... considered as subsisting by itself” (qtd. in Jespersen 134). In the British mind the modern was not considered as “subsisting by itself” for a long time. As an adjective or as a noun, mostly used in plural form (*modernes*), the word *modern* was a part of the antithesis “modern – ancient” or “the modernes – the ancients”. Only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *modern* began to be perceived as something independent, something like Delos, an island which had floated freely in the seas before Zeus attached it with a chain to the sea floor.

William Gladstone used this metaphor while talking of *modern* thought. He said in the address delivered in the Liverpool Collegiate Institute (1872): “...free thought, of which we now hear so much, seems too often to mean thought roving and vagrant more than free; like Delos ... drifting in the seas of Greece, without a root, a direction, or a home” (qtd. in Stoddart 1). Walter Pater opened his notorious “Conclusion” to *The Renaissance* with a similar statement: “To regard all things and principles of things as inconstant modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought” (186). Gladstone took a classical image appealing to the old idea that the authority of ancients should be a home of thought, and dismissing modern thought as drifting without any support; Pater in his turn treated the modern as it is, free from any correlations with the past, and even more – like mutable by nature.

### **Delos**

The “substantivization” of modern in the Victorian mind was facilitated by the evolution of liberal thought, with Social Darwinism and new ideas of religion included. The Reform Act of 1867 resulted in the Liberal Party win of the 1868 general election and in the spread of liberal ideas in the future decades. “The radical spirit” of the new epoch made nervous many contemporaries. Benjamin

Disraeli wrote in the preface to his collected works: “It cannot be denied that the aspect of the world and this country, to those who have faith in the spiritual nature of man, is at this time dark and distressful” (qtd. in Stoddart 1). He believed that the main threat were those factors, which put forward the turbulent modernization of the national life beginning with the 1870s: the ideas of natural science, textological approach to the Bible, liberalization of all areas, from religious to political life, prosperity of Great Britain attended by “materialism” as they named it, and we’d rather call it “consumerism.”

As J. Stoddart comments, “Disraeli’s dark predictions might ... have been seen as the broodings of an ousted politician, forecasting anarchy under the new Liberal regime.” But the same way of thinking was demonstrated by the leader of the Liberal Party. In the named Address Gladstone said: “I doubt whether any such noxious crop has been gathered in such rank abundance from the press of England in any former year of our literary history.” According to Stoddart, he had in mind such works as H. Spenser’s *The Principles of Psychology* (1855), describing human mind as submitted to the biological laws, D. F. Strauss’s *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (1872; English translation by M. Blind, 1873), advancing materialism of modern science, and W. Reade’s *The Martyrdom of Man* (1872) with its accent on political liberalism and Social Darwinism. As Gladstone summarized them, the works “boldly proclaimed to deal with root” and cultivated the “delight of following the free thought” (qtd. in Stoddart 1).

The idea of free thought, which captivated minds in the 1870s, was largely framed by statements formulated in J. S. Mill’s *On Liberty* (1859). Chapter II was devoted to “the liberty of thought and discussion.” Mathew Arnold in *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1865) treated the notion of free thought from the aesthetic point of view. Arnold interprets criticism as any topical statement, any “fresh and true idea,” “*a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world*” (81). According to Arnold, “in modern times” literature represents this kind of discourse; since “life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it” (14). This effort aims at recapitulating modern ideas, for “the creative power” involves the ideas, “*current at the time*,” “not merely accessible at the time” (11). Arnold specifies: such idea may be “not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces” (13).

Speaking of the modern, Arnold often uses the adjective *current*, which means “happening or existing now: belonging to or existing in the present time.” George Gissing used the word “current” to name a fictional magazine in his novel *New*

*Grub-street* (1891); he depicts as an unprecedented up-to-date edition, “current Current.”

*New Grub-street* is an important part of the late-Victorian discourse of the modern. Structurally it is founded on the opposition “ancient” — “modern” serving a reference point of the reflection on modernity in the novel. Gissing tells the story of two friends, both of them are writers. Jasper Milvain represents different aspects of the modern world; “unpractical artist” Edmund Reardon is absorbed in the world of classical literature. He is a connoisseur of classical writers; he spends all his royalties on the tour to Greece and Italy, being delighted by the opportunity to study the ancients. While reading from Homer a scene “where Odysseus speaks to Nausicaa” he thinks: “THAT was not written at so many pages a day, with a workhouse clock clanging its admonition at the poet’s ear” (229). It is impossible for Reardon to turn writing into “trade” as Milvain calls it; he can’t bear the pressures of the modern era, and he is ruined. As for Milvain, he is doomed to success. Gissing introduces him to the reader as “an alarmingly modern young man” (30). He does writing “to earn money,” that’s why he puts aside novels and chooses journalism, producing “marketable stuff” — smart essays, which can make him a popular and influential author. Milvain builds his career and eventually becomes the editor of *The Current*.

Highlighting the modern nature of Jasper Milvain, Gissing depicts him standing on the bridge over the railway line and watching in ecstasy the train below, bursting “with dread force and speed.” He confesses to Marian: “It enspirits me. It makes me feel eager to go back [to London] and plunge into the fight again” (55). “Dread force and speed,” “a blinding rush” are Milvain’s in his desire to win and in the destructive effect of his actions. As M. Beaumont and M. J. Freeman observe, “in the cultural imagination of the Western world the railway has figured historically both as a celebration of modernity and as a critique of it” (13). The author obviously enjoys the power of train appearing in the sunlit steam, and Milvain’s optimism and energy, but the picture of modern urbanized England indubitably loses to the enchanting illusion of Homer’s Greece.

Gissing believes it important to date Milvain’s epoch with precision: he is a “man of 1882” (8). The early 1880s was turning point in the history of mass-media. In 1860 there were 31 daily newspapers in Great Britain, by 1890 there were 150 of them. For a long time newspapers were read aloud in the coffee-houses. In the late 1890s the newspapers became much cheaper, and with the help of the new mass readership turned one of life essentials. W. T. Stead memorably said of press: “...the only true throne in England, the editor’s chair” (qtd. in Saab

88). But the influence of newspapers was not only political, it changed the reading audience. With the Liberal Party coming to power Forster’s Education Act (1870) and other Elementary Education Acts were introduced, aiming at the spread of mass education. Eventually much more people were literate, and the Victorian phenomenon of family reading for entertainment and instruction disappeared. In 1900 The Daily Chronicle observed that the majority of Englishmen read nothing but newspapers. The career of “an alarmingly modern young man” in Gissing’s novel is connected with the growing influence of press; journalism, being oriented on the transitory, is represented as the very embodiment of the modern.

In *New Grub-street* modernity with its non-stop renewal is constantly and ruthlessly displacing the authority of the past with its high ideal of beauty. Milvain’s marriage to Reardon’s widow Amy at the end of the novel has symbolic meaning. Milvains displacing Reardons — this is Gissing’s idea of modernization of culture, attended with the process of commercialization of literature. The triumph of modernization in the novel is absolute because of the way of writing Gissing chooses; his ideal is “honest reporting.” One of the characters, Harold Biffen, considers even Zolaistic way of writing insufficient: “Zola writes deliberate tragedies; his vilest figures become heroic from the place they fill in a strongly imagined drama”. To be really modern a novel should “deal with the essentially unheroic, with the day-to-day life of that vast majority of people...” (264).

### **“Crystallization” of the Present**

In the 1890s Bernard Shaw used journalism as a metaphor of the modern, “ephemeral half” (Ch. Baudelaire) of creative writing. In the preface to his review of Nordau’s *Entartung* (1892) named *The Sanity of Art* (1895) he developed Arnold’s thought on connection between literature and topical issues. “Journalism is the highest literature for all the highest literature is journalism”, since “what the journalist writes about is what everybody is thinking about” (4, 3).

All prominent writers, Shaw states, from Plato and Aristophanes to Shakespeare and Ibsen, were topical, and they “are still alive and at home everywhere among the dust and ashes of thousands of academic punctilious, archeologically correct men of letters and art who spent their lives haughtily avoiding the journalist vulgar obsession with the ephemeral” (*The Sanity of Art* 4-5). Actuality lies at the core of Bernard Shaw drama theory, discussion being its chief element.

Discussion was presented as an ideal form for a periodical by the founder and secretary of the liberal Metaphysical Society (1869-1880) and the editor of

the *Nineteenth Century* James Thomas Knowles. In his letter to Gladstone he saw editor as an “*utterly impartial*” coordinator, recapitulating ideas, akin to Mathew Arnold’s critic, on the ground that “full and free discussion is the best way for arriving at and disseminating Truth” (qtd. in Stoddart 3).

The spirit of discussion was transposed to the British variant of new drama. In the reworked edition of *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1913) Shaw spoke of discussion as of the most important innovation by Ibsen, which changed drama profoundly: “The technical novelties of Ibsen and post-Ibsen plays are, then: first, the introduction of the discussion and its development until it so overspreads and interpenetrates the action that it finally assimilates it, making play and discussion practically identical...” (233-234).

But Shaw is quite different from Mathew Arnold, speaking of ideas, “*current at the time.*” Arnold implies modern philosophical ideas of the world; he speaks of different kinds of epochs: there are “great creative epochs” of national intellectual flowering, as Shakespeare’s time was; and there are epochs with very few ideas and no opportunity for the individual talent, “because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of a man and the power of the moment” (11,12). Shaw implies topical social issues, “human concern.” In the preface to the first edition of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* he says: “...I have spared no pains to make known that my plays are built to induce, not voluptuous reverie but intellectual interest, not romantic rhapsody but human concern” (196). Shaw’s dramas are based on the conflict of ideas, which are related to his role as a prominent member of the Fabian Society, a participant of political discussions; his dramas discuss the possibility of financial independence for women (*Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, 1893), Victorian passion to idealization (*Candida*, 1894), economics as a source of morality (*Major Barbara*, 1905), social hierarchy and its actual basis (*Pygmalion*, 1913) etc. For some time Shaw thought of Ibsen as of a social prophet, akin to the Fabians (*The Quintessence of Ibsenism* 221).

In the essay “The Technical Novelty in Ibsen’s Plays” Shaw underlined, that “in the new plays, the drama arises through a conflict of unsettled ideals” (*The Quintessence of Ibsenism* 221). The new plays are all about current and actual, about issues, topical for the audience, its ordinary day-to-day life: “Now an interesting play cannot in the nature of things mean anything but a play in which problems of conduct and character of personal importance to the audience are raised and suggestively discussed” (217). The topical issues not merely attract attention of the audience, they involve it into discussion, and thus a new type of theatrical illusion emerges.

Shaw tells the story of staging *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* in the preface to the play. It happened eight years after the play was finished in 1902, because of its scandalous assumption that prostitution is a part of economic issues, and not an evidence of wickedness. The review published in the *St. James Gazett* said: “The second act contains one of the boldest and most specious defenses of an immoral life for poor women that has ever been written” (Wansley). Shaw describes the press response as “moral panic,” as a result, “the power of distinguishing between the work of art on the stage and real life of the spectator is confused” (Wansley). One critic left the theatre at the midst of the performance, damning Sir George Crofts, the drama’s character. “What a triumph for the actor, Shaw exclaims, thus to reduce the jaded London journalist to the condition of the simple sailor in the Wapping gallery, who shouts execrations at Jago and warnings to Othello not to believe him!” (*Mrs. Warren’s Profession* 183). Virtually this is the very effect Shaw’s dramas should have, but it’s the exchange of opinions, that makes the dividing line between the auditorium and the stage disappear.

Discussion, assimilating the action, ruins the usual temporal characteristics of the play. Capturing the audience, conflict of ideas replaces the history, which develops in chronological sequence, from one event to another. Thus “crystallization” of the present takes place: not those events, that have already happened or those, that lie ahead, matter, now the most important element of the play is opinion, which spectators acquire with the action going on, “a free play of the mind” by both sides of the footlights. On the other hand, the time being that is *represented* in the drama obtains great importance; as Javier Ortiz says, it points towards the future: “...while Ibsen is highly sensitive to the pressure that the past has on the present; Shaw sees the present in relation to what kind of future it is leading towards. In other words, Ibsen’s plays are sequels; Shaw’s prologues” (qtd. in Ortiz 156). “Crystallization” of the present shifts the focus, leads the author away from the realistic representation, typical for the plays of Arthur Pinero, for example. The characters in Shaw’s plays are not realistic; they are not even the embodiments of different ideas, but just those who talk. The function of speeches in Shaw’s plays is akin to the function of arias in the opera; Thomas Mann compared Shaw’s dramas to operas (qtd. in Obratsova 258). As J. Gassner observes, Shaw “drew close to the freedom of presentational as against the stringencies of representational art ... he turned to ‘musical form’ in discussion drama, composing plays in the manner of a theme and variations...” (521).

Oscar Wilde in his dramas also “turned the British drawing room into a forum” (Gassner 521). But in these plays discussion is outweighed by “the

free play of mind;” this time it implies intellectual wordplay. In Wilde’s plays “disinterestedness,” as Mathew Arnold understood it, is a kind of Hellenism; this notion continues Arnold’s reflection on the importance of the ancients for the modern culture. Arnold considers British adherence to duty as one of the two main tendencies of human existence; he names it Hebraism in his essay “Hebraism and Hellenism” (*Culture and Anarchy*, 1869). Arnold defines Hebraism as striving for action, strict submission to moral duty, self-control, and seriousness — the typical qualities of the Victorians. He thinks that it’s time to balance Hebraism with Hellenism; Hellenism is “the thinking side in man” (135), it implies capability “to see the things as they are” (127). Hellenism is “an unclouded clearness of mind” (128) (Arnold associates it with the Greek idea of human nature); it suggests the modern freedom of thought. At the same time Hellenism means “seeing things in their essence and beauty,” “going back upon the actual instincts and forces which rule our life” (140); that’s why Hellenism became the slogan of British decadence. Arnold admits that some “moral weakness,” “relaxation or insensitivity of the moral fiber” is a part and parcel of Hellenism (135). Witticisms in Oscar Wilde’s plays involve the game with moral norms of the late-Victorian time; they are vital for his dramas. Their paradoxical nature provokes the audience to share the ways the author’s mind works. His dramas are full of the drawing-room conversations, exhibiting play of the mind. They stop the action, producing the retardation effect, as a witty talk of Sir Robert Chiltern and Mrs. Cheveley in the first act of *An Ideal Husband* (1895). Mrs. Cheveley’s responses to Sir Robert Chiltern sound as if the only purpose of his remarks is to provide her with an excellent opportunity to display capability to create witticisms:

**Sir Robert Chiltern:** ...But may I ask, at heart, are you an optimist or a pessimist? Those seem to be the only two fashionable religions left to us nowadays.

**Mrs. Cheveley:** Oh, I’m neither. Optimism begins in a broad grin, and Pessimism ends with blue spectacles. Besides, they are both of them merely poses.

**Sir Robert Chiltern:** You prefer to be natural?

**Mrs. Cheveley:** Sometimes. But it is such a very difficult pose to keep up.

**Sir Robert Chiltern:** What would those modern psychological novelists, of whom we hear so much, say to such a theory as that?

**Mrs. Cheveley:** Ah! the strength of women comes from the fact that



psychology cannot explain us. Men can be analysed, women . . . merely adored.

**Sir Robert Chiltern:** You think science cannot grapple with the problem of women?

**Mrs. Cheveley:** Science can never grapple with the irrational. That is why it has no future before it, in this world.

**Sir Robert Chiltern:** And women represent the irrational.

**Mrs. Cheveley:** Well-dressed women do. (115-116)

Jeff Nunokawa compares Wilde’s characters, speaking paradoxes, to the ventriloquist’s dolls (55). Their author, highly estimating the art of conversation, virtually stands behind them. As discussion in Shaw’s dramas, witty remarks with their brilliant theatricality provide “crystallization” of the present, provoking the shift of accents and dismissing the impression of illusory realism — the optics, denied by John Ruskin’s “innocence of the eye.”

### “Modern” Means “English”

Nevertheless Wilde was not inclined to treat his works as modern. For him “modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter” were inseparable from 19<sup>th</sup> century realia. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) contemporary life is described as utilitarian, “thoroughly well-informed”, depressing with hopeless seriousness, dullness, and passion to moral instructions. His essay “The Decay of Lying” (1891) announces, that everyday life and all its constituents lie out of the horizon of the beautiful; it is a subject-matter for speculations of “a common pamphleteer or a sensational journalist”, not for the art of literature (19). Modernity cannot be regenerated with purely artistic effort; when it breaks into the art, it vulgarizes it. But condemning “foolish attempts to be modern”, Wilde is eager to be ahead of his time, since “it is only the modern that ever becomes old-fashioned” (19). This witticism shows a new way of understanding the modern as “separating itself from itself” (H. R. Jauss), in other words as containing within itself the potential past.

The modern thought was described as open to the future by John Morley, a journalist and then a Liberal statesman, in *On Compromise* (1874):

The right of thinking freely and acting independently, of using our minds without excessive awe of authority, and shaping our lives without unquestioning obedience to custom, is now a finally accepted principle in some sense or other with every school of thought that has the smallest chance

of commanding the future. (1)

British liberals were enchanted with the image of drifting thought not so long. Free thought soon was intertwined with the idea of progress, suggesting permanent movement from the present to the future. Journalist and writer Walter Bagehot connected this openness to the future with discussion in *Physics and Politics* (1872). He considers “constant disposition to change,” “improvement” to be the main feature of the modernized world, opposing the British culture to the traditionalist (Indian) culture, “regulated by ancient usage” (156). Discussion is proclaimed a basis of the modern civilization: “...the mere putting up of a subject to discussion, with the object of being guided by that discussion, is a clear admission that that subject is in no degree settled by established rule, and that men are free to choose in it” (161). Bagehot motivates the necessity of freedom of thought and opinion for the social and political life by Darwinist conceptions. As Stoddart recapitulates this point: “The ‘peculiarity of arrested civilization is to kill our varieties at birth ... before they can develop’, only when ‘the chain of custom’ was broken by a ‘government of discussion’ could societies develop and improve” (2).

The tendency to equal modern and English became stronger to the end of the century. In the 1880s Englishness was already associated with the modern era, modernization, not with the archaic “childhood.” The main characteristic of the English national character now is the capability to change instead of preservation of certain traits for long ages. The idea of one nation was put ahead by the Liberal Party since the struggle around the first Reform Act. Then the English national character was attributed to the Anglo-Saxon heritage: their striving to freedom, self-government and communities. In 1841 Thomas Arnold in his inaugural lecture in Oxford said:

We, this great English nation, whose race and language are now overrunning the earth from one end of it to the other, — we were born when the white horse of the Saxons had established his dominion from the Tweed to the Tamar. So far we can trace our blood, our language, the name and actual divisions of our country, the beginnings of some of our institutions. So far our national identity extends; so far history is modern, for it treats of a life which was then, and is not yet extinguished. (32)

This idea was also formulated by John M. Kemble in his *History of the Saxons in England* (1849, new ed. 1876); he stated that Anglo-Saxon social and political

principles were the original source of the modern social and political principles. The partisans of this conception (among them was John Richard Green, whose *A Short History of the English People* (1874) was authoritative for almost 50 years) considered that all basic elements of the Englishness were formed by 1066. Mathew Arnold called them “teutonomania.” In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century “teutonomania” was seriously challenged. In *The Expansion of England* (1883) J. R. Seely proved that the English national character was to a great extent the consequence of such events as the first settlements in the New World and colonization, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Civil War, supremacy in the seas, the industrial revolution. Nonconformist liberals, S. T. Gardiner among them, considered Puritan virtues, influential in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to be the crucial factor in the formation of the English national character. Even later period was chosen by the New Liberals, who believed the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century’s economical process to be the most important.

In 1890s the Britishness and Great Britons are on the agenda. The nation is widely thought to be based on the ethical and social principles, and not on the ethnicity. The supreme position of the Englishman (Briton) is explained by his ability to rule, and also by his moral and intellectual superiority, his self-sufficiency, self-reliance, spirit of enterprise, education — the qualities, acquired in the process of modernization.

The Englishness (Britishness) is equaled to the modern in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897), being widely examined today as an “imperial gothic.” Stephen D. Arata characterized Dracula’s striving to England as “reverse colonization” (119). He understands “reverse colonization” as an expression of “geopolitical fears”, the late-Victorian anxiety about the Empire and its future (623). But it should be noted, that there is at least one more reason, for “the archaic Dracula” (Johnson 76) strives to get to England in vampire need of constant renewal, modernization with its cult of novelty implies such a possibility. Dracula himself resumes the situation: “I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that makes it what it is”(32). England is represented in the novel as a dynamic country (most of the journal entries are made in the trains), urbanized, humane, with modern ways of economic and social life, in other words, as the essentially *modern* country. The Count tries to appropriate its modes of life, but fails — in the same way as he fails to master the contemporary English. The Count’s real being is the same for several centuries. It is a fixed life (or rather death) circle, related to some strict hierarchal order. Dracula practices “reverse colonization” of a sort while involving his pursuers into this circle, placing them low in the hierarchy. The

symbol of this type of being is Harker and Dracula night trip: the calèche rushes at full speed, but Harker notices that they pass the same places again and again. Such is fruitless rapidity of the dead — attached to the past — world. At the beginning of the novel as the action moves eastward trains begin to be late, the time stops. As for England, here trains function to a high degree of accuracy. The railway timetable — Bradshaw's Guide — is a highly important symbol of this novel, for speed of the modern world, being embodied in trains, the underground, steamboats, telegrams, allows the heroes coordinate their activities and thus resist the Count. And otherwise — the only late telegram obviously becomes the cause of Lucy Westenra's death. Newspaper cuttings play an important role in the reconstruction of events. Newspaper is one more symbol of the modern world and its constant renewal, since the news instantly appears to outdate the next day.

At first sight, Dracula's pursuers are indistinguishable from one another in their modernity. But close reading shows that the American adventurer Morris has only one feature: he is an action man. While others continue talking in Dr. Stewart study, he has already shot at the bat on the window-sill. The pursuit is headed by Van Helsing, moving swiftly between Amsterdam and London. Though Seward calls him "one of the most advanced scientists of his day," this "philosopher and a metaphysician" prefers magical actions. Van Helsing speaks of "sterilization" while consecrating the earth with a wafer; transfusion of blood with his help reminds of some magical manipulation of sexual character; hypnotizing resembles spiritualistic practice. He is ignorant of stenography; all his knowledge has ancient treatises as its source. His most efficient tools are a crucifix, the Host and decadent garlic flowers. Van Helsing's Holland is the same land of Jesuits it was, for example, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; you can get the Host or an Indulgence there.

Speaking of Englishmen, Doctor Seward plays a role of an observer, a usual figure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature with its adherence to "cases." He puts down his observations in the most unusual way: he makes his entries on a phonograph. As Jennifer Wicke claims, "Seward's diary constitutes immaterialization of a voice, a technological zone in the novel, inserted into a historical point where phonography was not widespread ... but indicative of thing to come" (470). Lord Godalming shows some features, with which English nobles are associated in the national myth, but rowing and sailing are replaced with a little steamboat. But on the whole he is pushed aside. The real antipode of "the archaic" Count is a democratic hero, the quiet, "business-like gentleman" Jonathan Harker.

On the first pages of the novel Harker, travelling in Transylvania, is called "Englishmen," "English," "the English Herr." Indeed, he is represented as an

ideal Englishmen from the point of view of the 1890s. Bishop Creighton in *The English National Character* (1896) enumerated “the characteristics of the modern Englishman”: “An adventurous spirit, practical sagacity, a resolve to succeed, a willingness to seek his fortune in any way, courage to face dangers, cheerfulness under disaster, perseverance in the sphere which he has chosen...” (qtd. in Mandler 127).

Speaking of Jonathan Harker, we have nothing to add to this portrait, except, perhaps, his tendency to keep going. He is literally a modern businessman: he makes the entries into his journal in the train, easily deals with documents etc. He can stenograph brilliantly, and stenography is another symbol of modernization: it means speed and cryptography, which “the archaic Dracula” cannot decipher, and it is a way to put everything in order. Memorably, the Count takes only one step against his pursuers: he burns the cylinders of Seward’s phonograph and documents, typewritten by Mina and put in order by her and Harker. “The archaic Dracula” knows nothing about the possibility of copying! Mina proudly reports to Doctor Seward, that her typewriter has this function.

Johnson remarks: “...one can see the insistence throughout the text of the fundamental value of recorded, empirical knowledge in the fight against the mysterious unknown” (74-75). This kind of knowledge is represented in the first place by the figure of Harker, whose entries help to clarify the events. At the beginning his aim is to improve his education; Harker writes down every detail of his journey, as one should do while writing in the genre of travel. He is well-read in history (history of Transylvania, in particular), physiognomics, he even speaks German.

Trying hard “to keep up with Jonathan’s studies,” the young teacher Mina Murray also improves her skills, and her education makes quite an impact into defeating of Dracula. It is Mina who constantly systematizes the entries, making “words” — the dispassionate testimony against Dracula — out of “the anguish of Seward’s heart,” that was fixed in the modulations of his voice on the phonograph. It is Mina who gathers newspaper cuttings and classifies the Count according to Lombroso’s and Nordau’s ideas of criminals. And Mina, like Harker, is an exemplar of the English woman: hardly awoken from the hypnotic trance, she already asks if anybody would like some tea. Making tea was one of the most important social functions of a woman in the British society. Her perseverance, moral strength plus her skills of a “new woman” (at this period “new woman” was a symbol of everything modern in the British society) predetermine the victory of the modern over the “archaic” Count. Though at one moment Harker says bitterly: “the old

centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere ‘modernity’ cannot kill” (55), “modernity” and the associated Englishness is represented as having great potential. Author takes the side of modernization, which is consecrated with the Christian ethics (as John Stuart Mill understood it), and suggests such liberal values as sensibility, goodness, education, democratic thinking.

The development of liberalism is admitted to be the crucial factor in the process of modernization. Political and ethical ideas, religious attitudes of the British liberalism had a direct effect on this process. But the revolution in the ways of thinking, which was provoked by the liberal ideas, is also of great importance; it emphasized the value of transient moments. This revolution produced a new type of art: discussion plays are much closer to *Ulysses*, than it may seem. On the other side, the new value of modern was seen as a feature of the national life, as a result, the modern acquired great significance, and a new feeling arose — of dynamic and rootless way of being.

## Note

1. For details see Ortiz, Javier. *Bernard Shaw's Ibsenisms*. Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses 7 (1994):152-153.

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