Colonial Legacies and the Aesthetics of the Other in *Dracula*, *The War of the Worlds*, and *The Crucible*

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Abstract: This article offers a comparative and interdisciplinary analysis of Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and Miller's *The Crucible* (1953). To do so, I examine these works through postcolonial and decolonial perspectives and argue that each text aestheticizes colonial legacies. Besides, each work dramatizes the construction of the "Other" and the anxieties embedded in imperial power. The theoretical framework of this analysis applies Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism*, Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, mimicry, and Third Space, as well as decolonial perspectives from Aníbal Quijano and María Lugones. Thus, this study demonstrates how these works employ their respective genres, Gothic horror, science fiction, and historical drama, to expose and critique hierarchical binaries rooted in colonial ideology. *Dracula* renders Eastern Europe as an exoticized, threatening Orient and transforms the vampire into a figure of reverse colonization that reveals Victorian fears of imperial decline. Moreover, *The War of the Worlds* inverts imperialist logic through a science-fictional alien invasion that forces British readers to confront the vulnerability and violence historically imposed on colonized populations. Finally, *The Crucible* translates colonial discourse into an internalized witch-hunt, revealing how Puritan New England, and, by analogy, McCarthyism, reproduces several mechanisms of control and oppression like racialization, scapegoating, and ideological control characteristic of colonial regimes.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, decoloniality, Otherness, colonial anxiety, aestheticism, Gothic and science fiction

Introduction

Anglophone literature of the 19th and early 20th centuries has influenced the Western collective imaginary and has therefore become essential as a foundation of Western literature. Works that today are considered foundational, such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898), and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953), despite belonging to different contexts, genres, and eras, share in common that they all negotiate anxieties rooted in colonial power and its ruptures. Consequently, this study employs postcolonial and decolonial theory to examine how these works dramatize the figure of the "Other," colonial insecurity, and cultural power structures. This study draws on Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity, third spaces, and mimicry. The central thesis of this comparative and interdisciplinary analysis argues that each text aestheticizes colonial legacies in unique ways. *Dracula*'s vampire embodies Western fears of Eastern "barbarism" and exposes the fear of retaliation, thereby portraying a form of reverse colonization. Likewise, Wells's Martians invert imperial conquest to critique British colonial arrogance. Finally, Miller's *The Crucible*, and notably his Puritan Salem, uses the internal scapegoating of witches to reveal the theocratic impulse of colonial societies. Similarly, the play serves as an analogy for McCarthyism and critiques political persecution. Therefore, by juxtaposing these three texts, this

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analysis exposes the deep entanglement of these works' literary forms with imperial legacies and the cultural structures that sustain the binary "The One vs. the Other".

One of the most relevant points is that these three works belong to different genres. While *Dracula* is characterized by a blend of fantasy and the Gothic genre, *The Crucible* can be considered a Gothic novel, and finally, *The War of the Worlds* is a work of science fiction. Hence, it is essential to point out the aesthetic differences among these three genres to unravel the causes behind each author's choice of genre. Science fiction is based on imagined situations derived from postulated scientific discoveries or future environmental changes. Travel narratives are also part of science fiction, although they often blend with other genres.

The term "Gothic" originally referred to the Goths, a powerful Germanic tribe that played a significant role in the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D., capturing territories such as Rome and Spain. Over time, the meaning of the word evolved to describe a medieval style associated with darkness, mystery, and grandeur. In art and architecture, "Gothic" came to signify the medieval style, characterized by pointed arches, vaulted ceilings, and stained-glass windows. Later, in literature and music, the Gothic became linked to the supernatural, the emotional, and the sublime, giving rise to Gothic novels filled with castles, terror, and psychological depth. Thus, the term encompasses a broad cultural movement that blends medieval imagery, emotional intensity, and fascination with the unknown. In sum, this genre is characterized by the exploration of contemporary taboos and by creating an atmosphere of terror and horror.

Finally, science fiction challenges our understanding of reality through imagined technological developments that do not yet exist. The main difference between science fiction and fantasy lies in explanation, i.e., in science fiction, events have a rational or scientific basis; in fantasy, they depend on *deus ex machina* or magic. As Coleridge said in his *Biographia Literaria*, fantasy relies on the "suspension of disbelief," without requiring rational coherence: "to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (208). Accordingly, science fiction relies on cognitive logic but often blends real science with pseudoscience, such as the idea of reaching the moon by cannon. The genre provides specific tools to engage imaginatively with something new, offering a symbolic discourse. One of the main aims of science fiction is to question the conventions of reality itself. In this sense, H. G. Wells is perhaps the most famous writer of science fiction, alongside Jules Verne. Besides, the genre thrives on the tension between estrangement and cognition, a balance that H. G. Wells masterfully achieves through his scientific discourse, rich symbolism, and profound encounters with alterity, the presence of the other.

Therefore, the three genres share, each in its own way, the ability to take distance from a given situation and thus examine social anxieties from a particular perspective. In this case, the three works represent a political critique: *Dracula* and *The War of the Worlds* are critiques of colonialism, while *The Crucible* depicts the witch hunt carried out against all those who opposed the policies of the United States, led by Senator McCarthy, who accused his political adversaries of communism as a repressive tool.

Postcolonialism and Decoloniality: Theoretical Convergences and Critiques of Eurocentrism

Both postcolonial and decolonial frameworks are intellectual movements that question Eurocentric narratives and challenge the ideological structures inherited from colonialism. As Gurminder K. Bhambra explains in "Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues" (2014), despite their distinct historical and geographical focuses, the two approaches share an emancipatory goal. In addition, the author adds that both postcolonial and decolonial thought arise from broader struggles over the politics of knowledge. Thus, they emerge as intellectual responses to political movements that challenged the colonial global order created by European empires (Bhambra 119).

Bhambra distinguishes between postcolonial and decolonial theories. The first is represented by authors such as Spivak, Bhabha, and Said. This theory examines the colonial and postcolonial experiences of Africa and Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, analyzing them primarily through Western frameworks. Decolonial theory, by contrast, investigates the colonial structures resulting from the fifteenth-century European expansion into Latin America and their continuing impact on contemporary societies. Among the leading voices in this school, Bhambra highlights Aníbal Quijano, María Lugones, and Walter Mignolo (Bhambra 115). Both postcolonialism and decoloniality question the notion that modernity was an exclusively European creation, independent of colonial history. Instead, they reveal that modernity and colonialism are deeply intertwined.

Ultimately, despite their different origins and emphases, both postcolonial and decolonial perspectives converge in their critique of Eurocentric paradigms. As Bhambra affirms, "Postcolonial and decolonial arguments have been most successful in their challenge to the insularity of historical narratives and historiographical traditions emanating from Europe" (Bhambra 118). Both frameworks seek to dismantle binary hierarchies, such as the center-periphery divide, and to restore agency and visibility to the voices and histories silenced by colonial power.

Furthermore, one of the main points that both approaches share is the binary distinction between the one and the other, which has been employed by hegemonic power to oppress and justify colonization. In this case, the three novels represent the Other as the abject; that is, an enemy that embodies danger. In fact, in *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva defines abjection as that which "has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I (...) what is abject, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (1–2). Finally, it is also essential to understand the profound relationship between nation and narration that Said establishes. The author argues that: "Nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (Said xii).

Dracula and the Aestheticization of Victorian Colonial Anxiety

This section argues that Dracula aestheticizes Victorian colonial anxiety through a double movement: it exoticizes and demonizes the East, while simultaneously revealing the fear of a return of the colonial repressed in the form of reverse colonization. Situated within the tradition of Victorian Gothic fiction, Dracula (1897) explicitly stages the encounter between Eastern Europe and Western England. Bram Stoker was an Irish literary critic who was famous even before writing his most well-known work, *Dracula*. The original manuscript of *Dracula* was written in 1897. To support the novel's claim to documentary plausibility, Stoker undertook extensive research, and he examined a wide range of travel narratives and reports from those who had journeyed through Transylvania. One of his most characteristic strategies is to lend credibility and realism through diary entries and telegrams, suggesting that he has been researching and is about to present the real story of Dracula. At the same time, he also brings a distant past into the present, as the Romantics did. Although not central to his narrative, Stoker borrowed select details from the Romanian ruler Vlad ˆepeˆ, also known as Vlad the Impaler (1431–1477), the "son of the dragon", to enhance the Count's historical resonance.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is a Victorian Gothic novel that explicitly juxtaposes Eastern Europe and Western England. In fact, as Arata indicates in "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," this novel can be read as a "late-Victorian nightmare of reverse colonization" (Arata 166). Count Dracula himself embodies a network of colonial anxieties. As a Transylvanian vampire, he is the quintessential foreign "Other," representing the exoticism of the border Orient. Although Said's formulation of Orientalism primarily concerns the Middle East, here the term is employed in its extended sense to refer to the internal Orientalization of Eastern Europe within nineteenth-century Western discourse. However, this terrifying creature also reveals the

dangers of retaliation, invading the heart of the British Empire, i.e., London: "I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity" (19). Critics have long noted that Stoker was sensitive to colonial tensions. This is because he was Anglo-Irish and wrote his novel at the height of British imperialism. Nevertheless, several debates were emerging against colonialism over Irish Home Rule.

We can see that Stoker, as well as Wilde or Stevenson, uses a polymorphous dualism to mark the contrast between a hypocritical society and its colonization. The author employs a polymorphous dualism in *Dracula* between night and day, vigour and death, daily routines and superstitions, familiarity in contrast to strangeness. Some examples of these dualisms are the following: "His face was deathly pale, and the lines of it were hard like drawn wires" (35), and "His reply was in a way characteristic of him, for it was logical and forceful and mysterious" (164). Consequently, the author portrays reality in a dualistic way to show the binarisms that hegemonic power has used to oppress the Other. This is why Dracula can only live in the darkness. Moreover, we also have a sense of pathetic fallacy, since it is in the darkest environments, at night, where the darkest side is exposed.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, there is another dichotomy between vigour and death. If we look at his face, he is very pale, with features associated with death, yet his jaws are powerful, he has the teeth of an animal, and his mouth is very red. It is an apparent dichotomy expressed through physical appearance. In addition, there is an apparent dichotomy between practicalities and business, in contrast to superstitions. We see the "blue flames" example as a superstition. Jonathan was safely raised in Victorian England, but we can see how the supernatural—superstitions—can become real. As mentioned, these scenes are constantly accompanied by practicalities and business, which make the story more realistic. In fact, we could consider the novel a blend of Gothic fiction and naturalism, combining Romantic features with realism.

It is therefore important to highlight that colonial anxiety is a fundamental aspect of the novel, and it can even be said to transcend geography. In fact, Dracula is a liminal character created by Stoker who fuses the characteristics of "savages" (as perceived through a Eurocentric and colonial lens) with European civilization, represented through the power of dialectics. Indeed, this character speaks English and can mimic British aristocratic manners when needed. This is directly linked to the concept of mimicry employed by Lacan and Bhabha, since Dracula imitates Western forms and claims to admire English nobility, yet, despite his imitation and approximation, specific details reveal the use of camouflage. In fact, Bhabha, in "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," citing Lacan, explains that "mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage" (125). The Count's polished veneer heightens his menace, representing the ambivalence and inner contradictions of colonial discourse. At the same time, Dracula is not purely Eastern, thanks to his ability to blend into Western society. The novel thus unsettles the binary of "civilized vs. barbarian."

Therefore, Orientalist imagery pervades the novel. From the first moment, Stoker marks a departure of the West towards the East: "The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East" (1). Stoker describes Dracula's features and methods in terms loaded with Eastern exoticism. It should be noted, as Said indicates in *Orientalism*, that exoticizing was a strategy used by hegemonic power to justify oppression. Hence, as the novel shows, his language is described as having an exotic accent: "saying in excellent English, but with a strange intonation" (15). Another example of Orientalist exoticization is that the Count brings to England elements such as the "blood-red velvet" curtains of his Transylvanian carriage, and his vampiric lair is filled with symbols of Eastern superstition. Even Dracula's sexuality is coded as exotic and threatening.

Likewise, it is essential to analyze is how Otherness is spatialized. This is because the remote, gloomy Carpathian Mountains (situated between Romania and Transylvania, places utterly foreign to Victorian England) stand in for the mysterious East. In contrast, London's streets and professional experts, particularly in psychiatry and medicine, stand for the modern rational West.

Another interesting point is that even the vampire's methods invoke colonial tropes. For example, the novel blends science and superstition: traditional elements such as the medieval castle coexist with science through typewriters, phonographs, and blood transfusions. This fusion mirrors how colonization fused Western technology with the "traditional" cultures it dominated. Moreover, the act of "blood-sucking" is in itself symbolic, as it could be considered an analogy for exploitative labor relations. Indeed, in *The Capital*, Marx uses the figure of the vampire to refer to capital: "Capital is dead labour, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" (163). By draining the blood of British citizens, Dracula enacts a reversal of the colonial extraction of resources and labor from subjects who had long considered themselves heirs to a colonial regime.

Finally, there is a contrast between familiarity and strangeness when Jonathan speaks with Dracula: they speak in English, but there is something in his language, something twisted, that sounds strange. Furthermore, when Jonathan moves into the house, we see that, although he buys it, the medieval castle also brings with it past superstitions. Thus, we see a combination of familiarity and strangeness. To conclude, it is worth highlighting that in aesthetic terms, Stoker's Gothic, sustained by its epistolary immediacy, atmospheric terror, and rapid crossings of empire, not only thrills Victorian readers but also reveals their imperial unconscious.

Wells's Inversion of Imperial Logic in *The War of the Worlds*

This section argues that Wells uses science fiction to invert imperial logic, forcing British readers to experience the vulnerability, dispossession, and dehumanisation typically inflicted on colonised peoples by the British Empire. However, before analysing *The War of the Worlds*, one of Wells's masterpieces, it is essential to examine his biography to understand the importance he attributes to the colonial context and to science fiction in his work. H. G. Wells taught at a progressive school and became famous for his alternative ideas; he was not a conservative, as we can see from his works. *The Origin of Species* is key to understanding his thought, particularly the notion of the survival of the fittest. Nonetheless, this also connects to social Darwinism, which justified certain social inequalities under the claim that they were "for the greater good." Wells was convinced that Darwinism offered a model for human development, but he also saw its moral and social problems. He had a background in biology, which influenced his writing, especially his fascination with bacteria and evolution.

This ideological framework is relevant to the colonial theme because Wells draws precisely on these ideas in his novel to construct a fictional representation in which the British Empire itself becomes subjected to the very same logics of oppression it historically exercised over other peoples. Thus, as this analysis shows, his moral and political sensibility, together with his knowledge of social and scientific theories, allow his masterpiece to function as a speculative inversion of colonialism.

Critics such as Rieder and Luckhurst argue that Wells reveals the vulnerability of imperial assurance, as the British, who were powerful colonisers, become powerless victims in his novels. Wells subverts the historical script by turning the logic of force and superior technology—used by imperial powers to dominate others—against the British themselves. Through this inversion, the author exposes the fragility and moral flaws of imperial thinking.

Therefore, taking into account the brutal colonial context is essential when analysing the work from a decolonial perspective. One of the essential points of this work is power and oppression. In fact, power can be understood as the freedom to suppress the subaltern's freedom. In this sense, the book presents a racial division between humans and Martians. Accordingly, the author continually subverts the dichotomy between oppressor and oppressed to confront the reader with the dangers of retaliation. In this dystopia, the white man becomes an oppressed subject and undergoes a process of subalternisation. In this way, the author confronts the British people, representatives of colonialism, with the experience of oppression. Likewise, another key and most terrifying point is that techno-

logically or militarily more advanced civilisations tend to oppress people considered inferior in technological terms.

H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898) explicitly situates colonialism at the heart of its narrative. The plot of this *science fiction novel* revolves around a Martian invasion of England, in which this alien civilisation employs advanced technology to devastate the population. From the first chapter, Wells draws a direct parallel between Martian imperialism and British colonial history. In fact, the narrator himself reflects that humans have often acted like colonisers toward other species: "we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its own inferior races" (4–5). One of the examples the author mentions is that of the Tasmanian Aboriginals, a people historically oppressed, massacred, and subalternised by the British Empire:

> The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit? (5)

This crucial passage frames the entire novel. The Martian onslaught is presented as *just deserts* for Britain's genocide of indigenous peoples. Indeed, Noah Berlatsky, in *Why Sci-Fi Keeps Imagining the Subjugation of White People* (2014), observes that Wells "begins his book with an explicit comparison of the Martian invasion to colonial expansion in Tasmania," a colonial genocide in which Western powers implicitly receive the message: "as has been visited on them, so shall it be visited on us" (Berlatsky).

In this way, *The War of the Worlds* acts as an allegory of colonial anxiety and guilt. It is relevant to mention that Wells was a socialist and a critic of the Empire, and that this author often uses science fiction to imagine the ultimate *blowback*, that is, the colonised striking back. Therefore, as a consequence of this retaliation, which shares certain parallels with Stoker's work, the British characters quickly become victims of slaughter and dispossession. Indeed, they exhibit the same helplessness that colonised peoples might have felt under European guns: "A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine-trees, and smashing them aside in its career" (71). Thus, the Martians' tactics, such as heat rays, poisonous black smoke, and giant tripod machines, echo historical accounts of imperialist technological terror: "A Martian came across the fields about midday, laying the stuff with a jet of superheated steam that hissed against the walls, smashed all the windows it touched, and scalded the curate'shand as he fled out of the front-room" (190). However, unlike in real history, they are used against London itself. It is precisely Wells's choice of setting—Victorian England at the time of the Boer War—that heightens this irony. In sum, England is recast as "the interior of a colony," as Berlatsky remarks: the story is "about 'them' (a non-white, foreign civilisation) doing to us (Western, largely white powers) as we did to them" (2014).

Another relevant point is the way Wells represents the *Other*. Interestingly, the novel can be interpreted from decolonial and postcolonial perspectives, as well as through *critical animal studies*, since the Martians can be read as *non-human animals*. For this reason, this retaliation can be understood on different levels, since *The War of the Worlds* invites us to read them as "Oriental" or *non-human animal* invaders. Likewise, if we pay attention to the way Wells refers to the Martians, we see that he uses terms such as "creatures" and "fiends" rather than fellow humans, dehumanising them in classic colonial fashion. Nevertheless, Wells also makes them symbols of Britain's own monstrousness. The narrator notes how the colonised are often described as "sub-human" by Europeans. Wells's Martians thus embody what Fanon calls the "colonial gaze," appearing monstrous to the British, but this is a mirror of how the British have regarded others to justify colonisation.

As in *Dracula*, the novel's main feature is the pervasive colonial anxiety. In fact, the early scenes, as travellers gather in the London suburbs to watch a meteor fall on the heath, evoke casual Imperial-era complacency—one that is immediately shattered. As news of the Martian invasion spreads around

the country, Wells depicts British citizens as ignorant and ineffectual. The narrator, who describes himself as a respectable scientist and writer, remains amazed by the cosmic forces arrayed against humanity. This idea is linked to a sense of colonial guilt, since Wells's educated Londoners have no honest answer when they become the colonised victims. Therefore, this represents the ideological emptiness of imperialism.

It is also interesting to explore the connection between the work's underlying colonial theme and Wells's aesthetics. This aesthetic is presented as a *terse, reportage-like narrative*, which reinforces the sense of colonial role reversal. The swift, terrifying tone suggests a newsreel of catastrophe rather than a staged drama. This realism brings the horror home to the English reader. Even the Martians' reliance on the earth, represented by the red weed that spreads uncontrollably over the British countryside, inverts the colonial imagery of landscape conquest. Thus, the red weed is often interpreted as a "spread of colonialism" that leeches over water and can be read as a metaphorical bloodshed resulting from colonial violence: "Only that known popularly as the Red Weed, however, gained any footing in competition with terrestrial forms" (212). In sum, Wells uses a combination of science fiction and horror, just as Mary Shelley does, to force an English-speaking audience to empathise with colonised subjects. The coloniser becomes the colonised, and the Victorian scientific romance is subverted into a tragic parable of imperial hubris.

Colonial Anxiety, Internal Othering, and Allegory in *The Crucible*

Finally, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953), though set in 1692 during the Salem trials, must be analysed through both the colonial context of Puritan New England and the mid-twentieth-century context of McCarthyism for which it allegorically stands. In postcolonial terms, *The Crucible* portrays a colonial society's turn inward, that is, a form of colonization in which dissent and difference within the colony are ruthlessly suppressed. It is therefore worth noting that the characteristic tropes of the "Old West" are preserved, namely, the constant conflict between white settlers and Native Americans. This external threat reinforces their siege mentality. As in the previous works, the primary victims in *The Crucible* are what could be considered marginalized "Others" from a colonial perspective. One of the primary victims is Tituba, an enslaved Barbadian witchcraft practitioner. As a Black Caribbean enslaved person, Tituba represents the colonial Other in the Puritan village. It is important to emphasize the relevance of intersectionality and, in this case, how a non-white woman can be doubly subalternized. In fact, her forced confession and subsequent accusation of others initiate the witch-hunt.

From an Atlantic perspective, Tituba embodies the dynamics of racialization characteristic of the colonial world. In fact, her figure reproduces the mechanisms described by scholars such as Saidiya Hartman and Sylvia Wynter, who show how the Black woman was transformed into a symbolic space onto which colonial power projected its fears and fantasies. Indeed, Black women were demonized by the hegemonic power to justify oppression and colonization, thereby coming to embody the traits of the abject. Thus, Tituba is not only a marginal character within Salem, but also a condensed representation of the epistemological and racial violence that structured the enslaved Atlantic: "He say Mr. Parris must be kill! Mr. Parris no goodly man, Mr. Parris mean man and no gentle man" (47).

Moreover, the girls led by Abigail Williams, who embody the stereotypes associated with the Gothic genre, given that they are rebellious, orphaned young women, are also othered within Salem's patriarchal order. Indeed, the initial dance or witchcraft rite in the woods is framed as both erotic and diabolical, that is, as a mixing of forbidden knowledge. Therefore, Puritan morality, which attempts to distinguish itself from natural impulses, intermingles with myth and the demonic. As Miller shows, to sustain a system of oppression, it is essential to eradicate anything that deviates from the norm; this is why He sets his work in Salem. In this respect, Salem's rigid ideology cannot tolerate any deviation, even if it comes from within.

In colonial discourse terms, the witch trials operate like a parody of colonization. In fact, those who judge, such as Danforth and Hathorne, act as imperial magistrates; that is, they represent the British Parliament. On the other hand, the accused, such as Giles Corey, John Proctor, or Rebecca Nurse, find themselves in a liminal state since, on the one hand, they are the colonist elite, as they are landowners and therefore retain privileges, yet on the other hand they are subverted before hegemonic power insofar as they are suddenly cast as traitors to the colony. Miller's drama highlights how these powerholders fall victim to their own law. One could say that, by establishing a parallel, the colonial analogy is as if the colonizers have turned on themselves rather than on their colonial subjects.

Furthermore, it is essential to analyse the aesthetic Miller employs to epitomize such colonial anxiety and to critique the McCarthyism of his time. The play's aesthetic reinforces this claustrophobic, internalized colonialism. Miller uses spare, dialogic scenes, which could be considered inverted Biblical parables, a device also used by McCarthy in *Blood Meridian.* Miller aims to emphasize rigid rhetoric and dogma. Indeed, the frequent invocations of hell, the devil, and sin reflect a binary worldview. It is worth highlighting that hegemonic power has been sustained precisely through these same binaries. In fact, in the play, characters often speak in moral absolutes, showing how colonial ideology saturates language.

It is important to note that although this text is from the 1950s, clearly later than the other two novels in this corpus, written at the end of the previous century, the text does not explicitly mention modern notions such as race or empire. However, its dynamics resonate with colonial "Othering." For example, Abigail Williams, the instigator, idolizes John Proctor; nevertheless, she accuses him of witchcraft when he rejects her. Therefore, Miller denounces how personal circumstances and the simplest frictions in a witch-hunt can have disastrous consequences. This personal vendetta gets recast as a spiritual threat. In this way, witchcraft becomes the label for any deviation, in the same way that in his own era the term "communist" was used, or, today, terms like "fascist" or "terrorist", depending on the side. The community's readiness to believe in witches parallels how colonial regimes labeled resistance or alternative beliefs as heresy or savagery. Miller's portrayal of hysteria echoes how colonizing states often provoked internecine violence among subjugated groups to maintain control: "And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night" (20).

It is also worth noting that the play contains several subversive moments. For this, the theory of "third spaces," coined by Bhabha, is relevant. The author defines these spaces as a "liminal space, in-between the designations of identity" (*The Location of Culture* 4). Consequently, these spaces oppose the binaries established by hegemonic and colonial power between the self and the Other, thereby giving rise to processes of hybridity. In this sense, the play, through a decolonial perspective, reveals moments when authoritative voices break.

An example of this is Hale's final plea; in this speech, the character argues: "Life, woman, life is God's most precious gift!" (132). Hence, this speech constitutes a humanist rupture from ideological dogma. Through these lines, Miller highlights that salvation comes from individual conscience rather than rigid theology: "There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning" (30). Similarly, Proctor's refusal to sacrifice his name is also an assertion of personal integrity against the community's colonial logic of conformity; that is, it represents individuality against the collective. Thus, Elizabeth Proctor's final act of forgiveness represents individual compassion against the collectivism imposed by a set of norms.

In summary, *The Crucible* uses the "witch trial" aesthetic, which is a combination of Gothic obscurantism and Christian and pagan elements such as puritanical language, confession scenes, and moral certainties, to dramatize internal colonial violence. Therefore, Salem becomes a microcosm of colonial order, and its hysteria reveals the logic of empire applied domestically. Moreover, Miller demonstrates how hysteria has been a recurring instrument of oppression; for example, after 9/11, the government once again activated this mechanism to justify Islamophobia and the invasion of the

Middle East. While Miller's immediate target was McCarthyism, the play's portrayal of community power and othering is entirely compatible with postcolonial themes, given the Puritan context in which the work unfolds. Finally, the scapegoating of marginal figures such as Tituba and the terror of being "marked" for being different, here under the excuse of witchcraft, mirrors colonial practices of stigmatization.

Conclusion

To conclude, this comparative and interdisciplinary analysis has demonstrated that *Dracula*, *The War of the Worlds*, and *The Crucible* are texts deeply inflected by the legacies of empire. However, one of the most relevant aspects of this postcolonial analysis has been examining how each text uses its genre's distinct aesthetics—i.e., Gothic horror, science fiction, and historical drama—to surface and critique colonial power dynamics.

To begin with, Stoker's *Dracula* exoticizes Eastern Europe and implicates Western imperialism in Dracula's "Westward" conquest. To do so, Stoker shows the dangers of retaliation. Additionally, Wells's *War of the Worlds* dramatizes the inversion of empire, forcing England to feel what it meant to be brutally colonized. Finally, Miller's *The Crucible* internalizes colonial logic, showing how a settler society turns on its own people in paranoid zeal, as an analogy of McCarthyism. In all three works, the "Other," which is shaped through different supernatural forms, vampires, Martians, and alleged witches, serves as a foil for examining Western identity and anxiety.

Thus, this analysis underscores how the aesthetics of literature function as a site of colonial discourse. To do so, it has been essential to apply Said's concept of Orientalism and Bhabha's hybrid Third Space to unravel how narrative tropes of difference are always biased and controlled by hegemonic power. Additionally, it has also been essential to apply Quijano's coloniality of power because it reveals that social hierarchies and segregations underpin these stories. By citing these theorists alongside literary evidence, this analysis has demonstrated how the power of these novels and plays lies in their ability to make visible the otherwise hidden colonial undercurrents of language, genre, and plot.

In the end, this analysis shows how *Dracula*, *The War of the Worlds*, and *The Crucible* are media through which the author and reader can confront the ghosts of empire. Indeed, if we examine the principal elements of their aesthetics, such as the Gothic castle, the Martian tripod, and the Salem scaffold, we observe that they are all haunted by the memory of historical colonial violence, a haunting that, as Bhabha suggests, disrupts the present even as it lingers from the past. To conclude, I consider that reading these texts through postcolonial and decolonial frameworks enriches our understanding of how their literary form grapples with cultural otherness, authority, and resistance.

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Acknowledgements

This publication has been developed during the period of participation in the PhD Training Program for Non-Doctoral Research Staff of the Department of Education of the Basque Government (2025/26), and under the auspices of the consolidated research group REWEST (Research in Western American Literature and Culture) from the University of the Basque Country, funded by the Basque Government (IT-1565-22).

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