Representation of Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*: Fear and anxiety in the Victorian era

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In 1897 Bram Stoker published *Dracula,* which would become not only his most famous novel but a prominent and iconic entry to the horror genre. Stoker created a seductive and controlling vampire from foreign lands who could potentially wreak havoc in conservative England. By using the vampire motif, Stoker explored social issues and underlining concerns which were emerging in Victorian England. Numerous fears and anxieties included mounting threats to the stability of the British Empire and perhaps even more key to the subject of this dissertation, the rising women's movement. This dissertation will discuss the historical and social context of the novel, focusing on the themes of othering, the deviant, women's activism and women's sexuality. It will identity the key aspects of social anxieties that vampire texts of the time tended to reflect and then it will discuss why the vampire was used to discuss or represent these anxieties. The universality of the social issues at the heart of *Dracula* is clear from the ongoing popularity of both the novel and its adaptations. This dissertation will conclude with an analysis of a recent production of *Dracula* staged in Dundalk in 2017, showing how *Dracula* still provides a valuable basis for contemporary adaptations to discuss issues of relevance to society today.

Bram Stoker was born in 1847 in Clontarf, Dublin, Ireland.[2] He wrote *Dracula* in 1897 and it has become his most famous novel. Bram Stoker did not start to write until his twenties and he began writing novels at the age of forty-three.[3] He came from a middle-class background, "though upwardly mobile, and possessed a healthy sense of ambition".[4] Stoker's father Abraham was: "a respected, hard-working civil servant".[5] It is said that: "his mother Charlotte was reform-minded and industrious—and possibly 'superstitious', full of horror stories about the effects of the cholera epidemic in 1830s Sligo where she grew up".[6] His mother's superstitious character clearly influenced Stoker's writing, his use of the vampire myth relates to her storytelling about the anxieties of the horror of the epidemic she had told him about. When Stoker left Dublin for London he began his career as a theatre critic.[7] He then became manager of London's Lyceum Theatre and worked as stage manager for actor Sir Henry Irving.[8] It is said that Stoker's work as a: "civil servant helped shape *Dracula's* structure which uses diary entries, memos and telegrams to lend an eerie realism".[9] Stoker met Hungarian writer Ármin Vámbéry, who was also a traveller and "known for his journeys in the Middle East and Central Asia".[10] Vámbéry also: "chronicled the dark tales and

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[1] This dissertation was submitted in partial fulfilment of the BA(Hons) in Digital Humanities, May 2018.

[2] Penguin Random House, 'Bram Stoker' (https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/173907/dracula-by-bram-stoker/9780307743305/) (14 February 2018).

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] J. Killeen, 'Bram Stoker' available at *Trinity Writers* (https://www.tcd.ie/trinitywriters/writers/bram-stoker/) (16 February 2018).

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Tourism Ireland, 'Dracula's Undead appeal' (https://www.ireland.com/en-gb/articles/bram-stoker/) (15 February 2018).

[10] Time, 'Vampires top 10 famous mysteries', (http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1916160_1916151_1916132,00.htm) (15 February 2018).

superstitions kept alive in the Balkan valleys closer to his home in Hungary".[11] Thus: "the legend of Dracula likely emerged from Vámbéry's wanderings by the Carpathian mountains listening to stories from local gypsies about secrets of the land and its gruesome histories".[12] Stoker wrote many novels and *Dracula* was his fourth. *The Telegraph* notes that: "To date, more than 1000 novels and 200 films have been made about the vampire Dracula".[13] This clearly indicates the ongoing relevance of the social anxieties articulated in the novel.

Although *Dracula* is based on exotic landscapes and supernatural creatures, its reflection of real anxieties is very clear. Several social issues were emerging in Britain during the nineteenth century as society was changing and these began challenging Victorian ideals: "Some specific changes besetting late-nineteenth-century British society included the rise of trade unionism; fears of colonial rebellion; and reform legislation which significantly improved women's legal status".[14] Late Victorian anxieties were associated with the fear of the collapse of the British Empire.[15] Stoker highlights this fear by setting *Dracula* in both Transylvania and England, and focuses on London as it is the core of the Empire. *Dracula* therefore portrays both the external and internal threats to British society and British domination. Queen Victoria "had been a stabilizing factor of the British Empire for sixty years" and her reign was a period of Industrial expansion and British power.[16] However, both the nineteenth century and the Victorian period were coming to an end.

The nineteenth century was a time when women's movements became to emerge. The 1860s was the first time that any organised support for women's votes emerged and it grew rapidly in the late 1880s.[17] Both the National Central Society for Women's Suffrage and the Central Committee for Women's Suffrage merged together, and this represented a turning point for women.[18] The new organisation called: "The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies was headed by Millicent Fawcett".[19] Women began speaking out for their right to the vote. First Wave Feminism began emerging in the 1890s, which is when women began to demand rights both legally and politically.[20] In a male dominated society this caused fear and anxiety, as men believed women should be: "kept in emotional check and uncontrolled impulse was a real social and personal threat".[21] This social issue is reflected in *Dracula* through the characters of the Three Brides and Lucy. Stoker created these women as independent, feisty, sexual characters who challenge the normal role for women at the time. *Dracula* thus reflects the: "popular thoughts, ideas, and beliefs of the Victorian era that paints an elaborate picture of what society was like for Bram Stoker's generation".[22] During the nineteenth century society was patriarchal and "society maintained strict social standards and

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[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] M. Chilton, 'Bram Stoker 10 Facts about the author' available at *The Telegraph* (https://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/authors/10-facts-about-Bram-Stoker/ (15 February 2018)

[14] Bram Stoker's 'Dracula and Late-Victorian Advertising Tactics: Earnest Men, Virtuous Ladies, and Porn'

[15] G. Buzwell, 'Dracula: vampires, perversity and Victorian anxieties' available at *The British Library* (https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/dracula)

[16] BBC, 'History Victorian Britain', (http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/timeline/victorianbritain_timeline_noflash.shtml). (18 October 2017).

[17] BBC, 'Women's suffrage campaign gains momentum' (http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/timeline/victorianbritain_timeline_noflash.shtml) (18 October 2017).

[18] Ibid.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] P. N. Stearns, 'The Victorian Style', in *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York, 1994), p. 17.

[22] A. M. Podonsky, 'Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Reflection and Rebuke of Victorian Society' available at *Inquires Journal* (http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1678/bram-stokers-dracula-a-reflection-and-rebuke-of-victorian-society) (15 February 2018).

men were permitted many more freedoms and pleasures than their female counterparts".[23] The Victorian view of society: "further enforced male superiority and dominance over women which in turn also provided countless excuses to justify male sexuality and carnal urges; especially those which women were expected to suppress and constantly refrain from expressing".[24] *Dracula* vividly expresses the need to contain women from gaining any freedom which could enhance their power or their sexual desires. Stoker's character Lucy is shown as a threat to society as she could take control over the men if she is not stopped. Thus, she must be killed in order for society to remain under the control of men. Stoker's use of his characters to reflect on such contemporary social issues will be discussed later in the dissertation. A brief overview of the use of the vampire as a reflection on anxieties relating to a changing social order will be provided first.

Research shows that throughout history the vampire myth has been associated with times of crisis within societies. Linda Heidenreich states that: "The fascination with vampires is tied to times of crisis, when the dominant culture fears change".[25] The vampire motif thus reflects the anxieties in a culture regarding a change in society. This is a theme that emerges throughout numerous articles as Amanda Hobson and U. M. Anyiwo also note: "vampires have existed in every culture, serving as reflections of the culture from which they came".[26] Another article by Fred Botting is also linked to this theme as he states that: "In culture the vampire's fictional power was possible, associated with anxieties about the stability of the social and domestic order and the effects of economic and scientific rationality".[27] It is notable that the use of the vampire: "allows a dominant culture to articulate and contain cultural threats".[28] This enables the fear of the dominant culture to be expressed by portraying the vampire: "as metaphors for a myriad of human fears and desires".[29] Vampire texts challenge the change in culture and identities and examine the implications that they could instigate. The texts engage with the changing culture and reflect the effects of the threat. The vampire thus represents all evil irrational creatures who challenge the behaviours of individuals within societies. The following section of the dissertation will examine exactly why the vampire is used to discuss the anxieties.

Sigmund Freud believes that horror texts are a useful source for analysing certain anxieties in society. He believes that when the boundaries: "between fantasy and reality are blurred" an uncanny effect arises.[30] He further explains that the uncanny occurs when: "we are faced with the reality of something that we have now considered imaginary, when a symbol takes on the full function and significance of what it symbolises".[31] The uncanny thus turns the fear previously found only in the imagination into reality. As horror texts arouse fear and dread, they bring the familiar and the unfamiliar together which creates the uncanny. Freud says: "The Uncanny no doubt belongs to the realms of the frightening that evokes fear

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[23] *Ibid.,* p.1

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 2.

[25] L. Heidenreich, 'Vampires among us', in *Peace Review a The Journal of Social Justice*, 24, 1 (2012), p.92.

[26] A. Hobson and U. M. Anyiwo, 'Gender in the vampire narrative', available at *Sense publishers* (https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/2890-gender-in-the-vampire-narrative.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2018), p. 2.

[27] F. Botting, *Gothic*, (London, 1999) available at ProQuest Ebook Central, (http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dkitlib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1480738) (25 January 2018), p. 129.

[28] L. Heidenreich, 'Vampires among us', in *Peace Review a The Journal of Social Justice*, 24, 1 (2012), p. 92.

[29] A. Hobson and U. M. Anyiwo, 'Gender in the vampire narrative', available at *Sense publishers* (https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/2890-gender-in-the-vampire-narrative.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2018), p. 2.

[30] S. Freud, 'The Uncanny' available at (http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_Uncanny.pdf) (accessed 8 February 2018), p. 150.

[31] *Ibid.,* p. 150.

and dread. It is equally beyond doubt that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, and so commonly merges with what arouses fear in general".[32] Horror texts can be used very effectively to highlight existing problems within society. Society reacts to the underlying fears and anxieties within the context of the uncanny/the other. So, the vampire is not just a monster, it also represents something much deeper and more frightening to a society. Another key feature of the horror text, according to Freud, is the presence of the Doppelganger or double: "The idea of the double, the Doppelganger, in all its nuances and manifestations, the appearance of persons who have to be regarded as identical because they look alike".[33] Thus the idea of the double is used within texts to highlight society's fears within themselves. This relates to the vampire as it represents the monster from within. Freud highlights the double as the opposite to oneself. In other words, the double represents all the evil, dark thoughts and behaviour that we keep repressed. By creating characters that are like humans and yet display inhuman traits, horror texts allow us to confront our deepest fears about deviant behaviour. This represents society's worst fears that it could be turned into something which subverts the norm.

In vampire texts, the vampire is human and turns to something inhuman. This reflects the issues that individuals face within society, mainly the fears of the dominant culture reacting to social change. So, for example, using female characters that turn into these inhuman monsters heightens fear and anxiety even more in a patriarchal society. It is also suggesting to the reader that women could be uncontrollable if not contained. The fact that they still look similar to normal women makes it even more realistic in a sense. Writers used the vampire motif to make their texts more scary and real to readers in the Victorian era. Therefore, they were cementing the fact that there was a real fear of the growing women's movements in society and that women must be stopped from becoming too independent and kept under control to restore order. It is always the dominant culture that fears this change and horror texts: "evoke such a feeling under particular conditions and in combination with particular circumstances".[34] The texts allow for confronting certain underlying issues within a specific period. They represent firstly the familiar and the fear is enhanced as unfamiliarity takes over as this represents the opposite to oneself. Horror texts evoke the anxieties and issues in society as any human could be turned into the unfamiliar. The following section will focus on the othering/deviance function: many of these texts are hegemonic in that their aim is to contain the threat embodied in the vampire. Exactly why the vampire motif is used as this function will be examined focusing on Stoker's *Dracula*.

Hobson states that: "Vampire tales find their place within religious texts, folklore, oral storytelling, and fictional explorations, their struggle between good and evil, and discomfort with ambiguity and those who are different".[35] The vampire is therefore used within texts to identify and control threats. As Botting notes, the vampire motif is: "socially useful in the process of identifying and excluding deviant and degenerate individuals".[36] This highlights the use of the vampire motif to identify and contain the threat to society. The texts are used to heighten the anxieties about the othering, thus creating a sense a panic. Stephen Dowling notes that: "The vampire always seems to come from somewhere outside of the comforts of our own homes be that a rural Transylvanian cottage, an English stately home or Ancient

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[32] *Ibid.,* p. 123.

[33] *Ibid.,* p. 141.

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 144.

[35] A. Hobson, U. M. Anyiwo, 'Gender in the vampire narrative', available at *Sense Publishers* (https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/2890-gender-in-the-vampire-narrative.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2018), p. 2.

[36] F. Botting, *Gothic,* (London, 1999) available at ProQuest Ebook Central, (http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dkitlib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1480738) (25 January 2018), p. 88.

Athens". [37] By placing the vampire outside the norm, the texts are showing the danger they impose on society and therefore justify the aim of containing them as they are indifferent. The fear of foreign people and foreign ideas are also highlighted throughout the texts, showing how different they are and how they could easily pollute the natural order of a country. The problem could not possibly be from within a well-structured society therefore it was the foreigners/othering who caused the problems within society. This reflects the growing sense of fear in Victorian England regarding the threat to the British Empire.

The function of the vampire Dracula represents late-Victorian anxieties because he can disrupt and destabilise British society and civilization. The Count represents colonialism reversing as he enters London, thus suggesting that England could lose its power and position in the world. Stoker through the Count reflects the fear of immigration from the foreigner who is the 'Other' to English society. Stoker himself was an immigrant living in London, so he could be representing what he learnt from his own experience. The Count thus represents the outsider in British society, highlighting the need that he must be removed as he poses a threat.

As Freud states in his theory of the uncanny, Dracula looks somewhat different but at the same time looks very similar to us, enough so that he could easily assimilate into the population to get close to anyone he wants and cause havoc. This is also a feature that makes him very scary to the reader especially in the Victorian period. England was becoming unstable and society was anxious about the collapse of the Empire. The vampire represents the Other, the unfamiliar. It is this Other which causes concern and fear throughout conservative Britain. As stated above vampire texts both identify potential threats to society and seek to contain them. Stoker created Jonathan Harker and Doctor Seward as both Englishmen whose function is to contain the threat posed by the other (Dracula).

In Stoker's novel, Dracula represents the Other who seduces the Victorian woman (Lucy) into giving up her conformist Victorian ideals. Dracula enables Lucy's character to break away from the male domination and pursue her own happiness in sex. Count Dracula throughout the novel is easily angered but he also maintains both a haunting and a strangely charming or seductive presence. As Jonathan notes: "His face was a strong - a very strong-aquiline… peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness… The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor".[38] Mina is also both "shocked and thrilled" when Jonathan tells her: "it is the man himself".[39] Mina's reaction shows how Dracula's presence excites her and how he could potentially take control over her. As she is 'thrilled' Stoker highlights the fear of women having unnatural desires. Dracula also maintains a threatening presence as he symbolises aspects of evil and sin. Dracula is depicted as being highly erotic throughout the novel. He is a foreign, exotic and well-dressed man with very distinguished features not seen in British men, which attracts Lucy and enables him to easily lure her in. For example, when Lucy begins to sneak out at night to meet Dracula she tells Mina: "I had a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, and something very sweet and bitter".[40] Lucy is attracted by the strangeness as she attempts numerous times to get out of the room while sleepwalking. As Lucy is asleep she cannot control her urges and is therefore an easy target for Dracula. It is because of her sexual repression that her desires come to the fore while sleeping. The following section will focus on the role of emerging women's activism and female sexuality.

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[37] S. Dowling 'The Real Life Diseases that spread the Vampire Myth' available at *BBC* (http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20161031-the-real-life-disease-that-spread-the-vampire-myth) (25 January 2018).

[38] B. Stoker, *Dracula* (London, 2011), p. 21.

[39] *Ibid.,* p. 207.

[40] B. Stoker, *Dracula* (London, 2011), p. 118.

The emergence of the women's movement during the late nineteenth century was a key focus of the vampire texts. As noted above, the texts highlighted the threat of this change in the social order by using the vampire to highlight the need for containment. Botting states that: "While science disclosed grand unifying powers, horror was another mode of cultural reunification, a response to the sexual figures that threatened society".[41] Horror was therefore used to express the concerns of the dominant culture. The threat was posed by women who were no longer happy being silent and submissive. Women were becoming more vocal which caused anxiety in the male dominant culture. The emergence of this New Woman created a threat to society as women aimed for change to the existing order. As Botting notes: "One of the main objects of anxiety was the 'New Woman' who, in her demand for economic, sexual and political independence, was a threat to conventionally sexualised divisions between domestic and social roles".[42] This new demand from women was feared among the dominant males as it caused a threat to patriarchy.

Industrialisation and urban development was also changing the natural order as for it to grow more women had to also work outside of the home which was also changing their image in society. Women began to slowly become more independent and have minds of their own. The vampire motif is used to show out of control women and the consequences of allowing them to obtain change. Traditionally, women had to be obedient, look after the house and the men could control them, but now they posed a threat to this dominance. Maria Parsons acknowledges that:

The New Woman not only posed a threat to the social order but also to the natural order, and was represented as simultaneously nonfemale, unfeminine, and ultra feminine. Incorporated into varying depictions of the New Woman was a consistent perception of her as oversexed and unduly interested in sexual matters.[43]

Stoker's three brides represent this New Woman as they are unnatural and highly sexual women. Their sexuality and appearance highlight the threat to the social order as they disrupt the natural order by being dominant. The New Woman can clearly be identified in Lucy's character, as she talks openly about her suitors and is very forward, which does not conform to the Victorian ideals of the ideal chaste woman. So, even before she becomes a vampire her character is already showing signs of a somewhat rebellious nature in her thoughts. Mina's character also shows signs of the New Woman as she is well educated with literacy skills and far more intelligent than her husband. She is the reason after all that they get the opportunity to kill Dracula as she pieces all the information together to defeat him. She is also financially independent and could be equal if not superior to her husband. She outshines all the men in the novel as she is well cultured. Both these women are exemplars of the new women which Mary Wollstonecraft was advocating in her essay. Wollstonecraft says: "I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body".[44] Parsons also notes that: "The polarised dialectic of the idealised, perfect woman and the demonised, sexual woman has dominated Western separatist ideology for centuries. In terms of the body, it reaches a

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[41] F. Botting, *Gothic,* (London, 1999), available at ProQuest Ebook Central, (http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dkitlib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1480738) (25 January 2018), p. 90.

[42] *Ibid.,* p. 90.

[43] M. Parsons, 'Vamping the Woman: Menstrual Pathologies in Bram Stoker's Dracula' in *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies,* 1 (2006), p. 6, available at (https://irishgothichorror.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/ijghsissue12.pdf)

[44] M. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women,* available at *Project Gutenberg* (http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3420/pg3420-images.html) (accessed 2 April 2018).

significant impasse in the nineteenth century".[45] As the nineteenth century was progressing with new technologies and as noted above women's activism this created panic with the dominant culture. These changes brought about ideologies associated with women's behaviour and stereotyping the New Woman as evil.

Women in the Victorian period were not supposed to have any sexual desires of their own. It was believed that only the men had the desires and the women were only there to satisfy them. Men controlling sexual desires was another way to show their dominance over women. As the fear of the women's movement was growing, the focus on women's sexuality became a more prominent feature of the vampire texts: "Fear of women's sexuality particularly centres on women who embrace their sexual hungers and who act as agents of their own desire, and the female vampire embodies those cultural concerns". [46] The female vampires are used to show the danger of allowing a woman control. They are shown as uncontrollable and destructive and thus, must be contained. The female vampire can lure men, enabling them to take control. They are used to show the danger of reversed gender roles. These monstrous women can slowly kill and drain the masculine body leaving the men weak. Thus, the female vampire: "is the perfect metaphor for that unstoppable force, draining her victims of vitality—their blood and sexual energy".[47] Through her strength and durability the female vampire can embody: "all the cultural fears of women's sexuality; especially that it is unquenchable and uncontained by male dominated institutions such as the Church, the family, and even the government".[48] Women's sexuality posed a real threat to society as men could not control these desires. Ideologies surrounding women's bodies and womanhood increase fears surrounding female sexuality. As Hobson says: "Beliefs about womanhood centre on a notion of idealized feminine weakness and passivity and one specific type of weakness: the purported moral weakness manifested through the voracious and destructive nature of female sexuality". [49] As men considered women as opposite to them the ideas surrounding women were that if they were sexually active they were devious. In fact, Peter Day states that:

William Acton's *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs* (1857) promotes a moral paradigm of female sexuality which constructs male sexual desire and activity as natural and innate, and female sexual desire or pleasure as pathologically deviant.[50]

This ideology that female sexual desire is unnatural enabled the dominant culture to control women. Stoker's female characters express the threats and fears which were beginning to develop in the late nineteenth century. The following section will focus on the women characters in the novel, examining the characters of the three brides, Lucy and Mina, in order to demonstrate how women's sexuality is portrayed as unnatural if not controlled.

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[45] M. Parsons, 'Vamping the Woman: Menstrual Pathologies in Bram Stoker's Dracula' in *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies,* 1 (2006), available at
(https://irishgothichorror.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/ijghsissue12.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2018) p. 66.
[46] A. Hobson, U. M. Anyiwo, 'Gender in the vampire narrative', available at *Sense Publishers* (https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/2890-gender-in-the-vampire-narrative.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2018), p. 10.
[47] *Ibid.,* p. 11.
[48] Amanda Hobson and U. Melissa Anyiwo, Gender in the vampire narrative, available at *Sense Publishers* (https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/2890-gender-in-the-vampire-narrative.pdf (accessed 25 January 2018), p. 12.
[49] *Ibid.,* p. 12.
[50] P. Day, *Vampires: Myths and Metaphors of Enduring Evil*, Editions Rodopi, (2006) available at ProQuest Ebook Central,(http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/dkitlib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=556585) (25 Janurary 2018)., p. 36.

The ideal woman at the time was supposed to be quiet, childbearing and be eager to look after her husband's needs; therefore, taking care of life within the home was a woman's primary position in society. They were regarded as "the Angel of the house".[51] Women were to have no sexual desire, or they would be perceived as dangerous, devious and evil. The theory which justified the stigmatisation of female sexual desires was that:

male sexual pleasure (is) necessary for reproduction and female pleasure (is) not, (therefore) sexual pleasure (is) the sole providence of men. The mentality ultimately supported the conclusion that the female sex drive has no purpose and, therefore, should not exist.[52]

Dracula vividly articulates this anxiety surrounding female sexuality and the belief that it could be dangerous to allow women to have any control of their emotions or anything that would be considered dominating characteristics.

Dracula's three vampire brides reside in the castle with him where he provides them with people to feed on, mainly children. For women this was considered unnatural and reprehensible as a woman's instinct would be to care for children. By using children as victims, Stoker highlights just how out of control the brides were, perhaps representing the fear and horror at the very idea of what women could become if they were not kept under control. The three brides are voluptuous and have an effective charm, easily seducing Jonathan Harker and consequentially they reverse the normal roles in society. They actively lure him with their sexual advances and he becomes their victim. Thus, he becomes the passive one and the brides the aggressors. The three brides are used to show how damaging allowing women to have control over their sexual desires could theoretically be. By allowing women control they could decrease the male dominant society's powers by enabling women to diminish the agency of men lured into their captivity:

The fair girl went on her knees, and bent over me, gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth.[53]

The language Stoker uses to describe the three undead brides highlights their danger, they are animalistic and predatory more like ferocious beasts than humans. They are unlike the living women in the novel as they are insatiable and aggressive, clearly creating a standard of what women should be in a civil society by caricaturising a brutally misogynistic image of what women could be like if allowed. Stoker uses words such as "voluptuous", "animal", "scarlet" and "red" which are associated with danger and the visceral image of blood and violence. It is here that Stoker shows how Jonathan Harker is both repulsed and excited by the three brides' sexuality, making an argument for how men could be seduced and lured away from the righteous path by the socially undesirable, predatory woman. Thus, Stoker is highlighting the danger of the man being able to lose his life to "untamed" women.

Lucy's character is first portrayed as an ideal Victorian woman. She has an innocent femininity, but she soon develops uncontrollable desires and cannot resist Dracula's charm. It is these unnatural desires that turn her into a non-conforming woman and in Victorian society this is where the fear lies. Lucy's character highlights this concern and the need for her to be

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[51] K. L. Spencer, 'Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis', in *ELH,* 59, 1 (1992), p. 204.

[52] Weinman and Dionisapoulas, Lyndon, Bohn, cited in A. M. Podonsky, 'Bram Stoker's *Dracula*: A Refelection and Rebuke of Victorian Society' available at *Inquires Journal* (http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1678/bram-stokers-dracula-a-reflection-and-rebuke-of-victorian-society) (15 February 2018).

[53] B. Stoker, *Dracula* (London, 2011), p. 45.

contained by society. She is nineteen years old, beautiful and pure. It is these qualities which enable her to have three men chasing after her hand in marriage. She openly tells Mina: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?"[54]. From the start she does not want to be controlled and has her own mind as she says: "I suppose that we women are such cowards that we think a man will save us from fears, and we marry him."[55] Lucy is questioning women's traditional roles in society. She is maintaining that women are afraid to go against social roles and marry men just because they must. She is therefore questioning the gender roles.

Lucy is kept in the dark about the power of Dracula and it is this lack of information which enables her to become seduced by him. Stoker is perhaps already suggesting anxiety in the way she is thinking. She falls for Dracula even though she knows little about him and already has three men lined up. She is thus clearly giving into her sexual desires and acting on attraction. Even if she knew his intentions or did not have the others trying to steer her away from Dracula, it is hard to say if she still would not be seduced by him. Lucy does have the innocent characteristics but is perhaps showing some unwanted signs of free thinking. When she is talking to Mina she asks her why she cannot have as many men as she wants. Lucy becomes infected by Dracula and will now herself become a vampire. She turns from an innocent bright girl into a black-haired beauty which would suggest that she has broken the rules of society as the black hair represents her turning to the dark side, therefore, the black hair is a significant visual representation of the change. As Dr. Seward notes: "startling prominence a dark-haired woman".[56] There is now a much more erotic, seductive and dominating image of Lucy being suggested to the reader here.

As Lucy becomes a vampire, all three men try to save her. She becomes highly sexualised and this is where the anxieties/horror lies. If women have desires, they will become uncontrollable and thus men will become inferior. Therefore, she must be contained. As Doctor Seward says: "We recognized the features of Lucy Westenra. Lucy Westenra, but how changed. The sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty and the purity to voluptuous wantonness". [57] Lucy thus is not Lucy anymore as she has released her sexual desires out in the open. She has become forceful with her sexuality which was not the norm for women during this period. Women who were unnatural (had sexual desires) in the Victorian period were deemed to be the workings of evil forces. This justified the need to kill Lucy. After all Lucy preys on children, therefore what could be more unnatural than a woman doing this. Dr Seward says: "She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there; the pointed teeth, the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth…the whole carnal and unspiritual appearance".[58] The language used now to describe Lucy suggests that she is now the opposite of the ideal Victorian woman and therefore she must be contained. She has lost her purity and because of this she has become a threat to the male dominated society. It is her fiancé who kills her restoring her to: "the Lucy as we had seen her in her life, with her face unequalled sweetness and purity".[59] The phallic symbolism of the stake and religious paraphernalia like the crucifix highlights that the threat of women's sexuality has been contained by both patriarchal and religious institutions. Kathleen Spencer asks the question: "Who is the scapegoat in *Dracula* and what does it represent"?[60] She argues that it is Lucy who is the

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[54] *Ibid.,* p. 70.
[55] *Ibid.,* p. 69.
[56] *Ibid.,* p. 253.
[57] B. Stoker, *Dracula* (London, 2011), p.254.
[58] *Ibid.,* p. 257.
[59] *Ibid.,* p. 260.
[60] K. L. Spencer, 'Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis', in *ELH,* 59, 1 (1992), p. 209.

scapegoat as she must be sacrificed to restore a lost order in Victorian society.[61] Thus Lucy in *Dracula's* society had to be put to death in order to become "the angel she had been in life".[62] Lucy's character highlighted the fear and anxiety about women and sexuality in repressed Victorian England and thus she needed to be controlled.

Mina's character is the opposite in many ways to Lucy. Mina remains faithful to Victorian society thus Stoker is showing the difference between the two women from the start. Stoker creates Mina as the character that defines what women should be and Lucy as everything which society fears. Mina's character embodies all the qualities typical of the protected virgin. She is socially proper, kind and passive, just what patriarchal society wanted women to be, the very opposite to men. Mina is dedicated to helping Jonathan as she says: "I have been working very hard lately because I want to keep up with Jonathan's studies and I have been practicing shorthand very assiduously".[63] She is bettering herself for her fiancé. She is dedicating her life towards doing what is best for Jonathan. Mina works as a schoolmistress and has some journalistic aspirations, but she mainly achieves all her skills and knowledge to help Jonathan. Therefore she is controlled. Everything she does is about furthering his career and ensuring that despite being intelligent herself, it is he that will be the man of the relationship and she is in her place. Once he is established she will be ready to take on her role in the home and be a mother.

Mina is the good ideal woman that Victorian society wants women to be. She is very lady like, has expressed no sexual desires and does not like the way Lucy openly speaks out about lust and love. She wants to marry and is the ideal mother figure for society. We interestingly do not get a full description of Mina only that she is pure and does not portray any sexual desires. However, Mina is also bitten by Dracula and exhibits signs of being lured just like Lucy. The first time she has her blood sucked she says: "I lay still and endured; that was all".[64] She was able to be controlled. Tanya Pikula notes that:

Victorian gender ideology, and the novel ends with a containment of Mina within the role of Victorian mother. It seems as though Mina's involvement in the vampire hunt (and her authoritative use of technological novelties) is only temporary and needs to be countered carefully by heavy doses of patriarchal discourse.[65]

Even though Mina's body becomes contaminated by Dracula, her soul still remains pure. Thus, at the end of the novel when her body recovers its purity, it represents a return to the natural order of society. Mina has now become a wife and mother portraying the ideal Victorian woman.

It is evident from the research that the main message of the novel is to repress and contain all the threats to the Empire. It specifically focuses on the need to contain women and keep them under control. Lucy represents the unnatural woman who could destroy the dominant culture if not kept in check. *Dracula* highlights the disruption women will cause to society if they can progress and the text shows a general distrust in women's morality if they are not led by men. It also highlights the need to contain immigration control as the British Empire could be in danger of losing its control if foreigners continue to enter the country.

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[61] *Ibid*., p. 209.

[62] *Ibid*., p. 212.

[63] B. Stoker, *Dracula* (London, 2011), p. 64.

[64] *Ibid*., p. 311.

[65] T. Pikula, 'Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' and Late-Victorian Advertising Tactics: Earnest Men, Virtuous Ladies, and Porn in *English Literature In Transition, 1880-1920* 55, 3 (2012): 283-302. Available at Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (16 February 2018). (http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=130fea99-7e2a-484c-9be1-d8190c089260%40sessionmgr4008).

Thus, the novel symbolises fear and anxiety from Victorian culture as change was looming from both women's movements and change to the Empire. It represents the challenging position that patriarchal society was facing, that is the "superiority" of men over women when women were starting to find a voice.

A recent production of *Dracula* in Dundalk in 2017 highlights the continuing relevance of themes raised in Stoker's novel. Director Anna Simpson's adaptation of the novel largely stayed faithful to the original story except for the interpretation of the female characters: "placing greater autonomy and power into the hands of the female characters".[66] Simpson deliberately assigned control to women, especially Mina, as she says: "I thought it would be powerful to hand the act of killing Dracula to Mina. After all she has lost the most".[67] Simpson reversed the patriarchal expectations of gender roles and by allowing Mina to kill Dracula showed that Dracula's downfall was his own doing. As Simpson says: "Dracula did not see her approaching, stake in hand, as his attention was on what he perceived as the 'real threat' of the men before him".[68] Thus, Mina was below his radar as he could not see how someone inferior (a woman) could have the power to prove herself a threat to him and therefore she was overlooked. This adaptation is interesting as it shows that because Dracula neglected the fact that the woman could have control, she was able to contain him, rather than him containing her. Simpson notes that: "The women in the novel act as a moral message for readers, rather than agents, and are not granted the same internal life as characters as their male counterparts".[69] Thus, the threat of the rising women to society in Stoker's novel had to be contained and the consequence of them behaving otherwise is highlighted through Lucy's character. In her adaptation, Simpson allows for the women to have agency and they have an active role in the conclusion of the story, therefore her production suggests that women are not the inferior. However, Simpson's production highlights the struggle that women still face in today's world, by contemplating on the idea that it would somehow be a surprise for the woman to deliver the final blow to the big villain. In cultural texts today, there are more strong representations of women and there is definitely a lot more focus on strong female characters. Thus, changing the story of *Dracula* can be an important aspect of adapting it to contemporary cinema and stage productions because the original message about women in Stoker's text is not factual, therefore while people may not have considered it misogynistic then, they will now.

Recent revelations about the predatory nature of a lot of powerful men and the unwillingness of some parts of the cultural industries to create respectful work and stop sexually exploiting women and their images in order to sell a conservative idea that women are still a consumable, passive product highlights how much inequality still exists in the world. In 2017 the #MeToo campaign where women began coming forward to report sexual assault especially in the work place "rocked some of the most powerful men in entertainment and politics".[70] Awareness has spread about how men in power to this day think they can control and have power over women. It is shocking to think that in 2018 Stoker's novel, with its depiction of the emergence of strong women and determination to contain their threat to the patriarchal order, is still relevant.

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[66] A. Simpson, Dracula, (24 September 2017).
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] C. A. Johnson and KT Hawbaker, '#MeToo: A timeline of events' in the *Chicago Tribune* (28 March 2018).

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