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Demon or Human: The Various Identities of the Vampire Figure in Literary Narratives

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Demon or Human: The Various Identities of the Vampire Figure in Literary
Narratives

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by
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Acknowledgements

To my dear Aunt,

Thank you for introducing me to the fantastic world of Literature. When I was young and wrote my random stories, you supported me in every effort. You provided me with journals and pens, and you listened to every story I told. You bought me books to read and listened as I read aloud. Without you this could never have been possible and so, I thank and love you dearly.

With love,

Regina (Bena)

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“You think I come from the devil?”¹

What exactly is a vampire? They are often thought of the living undead or an animated corpse that originated from Transylvania. Regardless of its true nature, the vampire is hard to define and with its reappearance in several contemporary novels, it is time to take a closer look at this creature of the night. First, the vampire has always been a mysterious figure due its versatile role within myth and lore. This versatility is demonstrated in its ability to appear in several different literary texts as an antagonist or protagonist, a demon or angel, and even as the villain or hero. Second, the vampire's transformative nature and mimicry is a constant reminder of its adaptive nature in society. The creature is in constant change depending on the nature of the audience, time period, and author. The vampire is malleable in nature and myth, the vampire's nature is in constant change and the plot will follow whatever characteristics the creature adopts onto itself. For example, if the vampire is characterized as a being going through an existential crisis then the narrative will follow this path in hopes of the vampire finding peace.

The most difficult circumstance when it comes to the vampire in literary texts is the difficulty in finding the origin story. The origin story is difficult to locate because there is no singular timeline for the creature of the night. For instance, many will argue that *Dracula* is the origin story for vampires; however, there are stories that have creatures that are similarly described. For example, the poem, “The Giaour” by Lord Byron was published before *Dracula* in 1813.

¹ Rice, Anne *Interview with The Vampire*,

But first, on earth as Vampire sent, 755
 Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent –
 Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
 And suck the blood of all thy race; 758
 There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
 At midnight drain the stream of life; 760
 Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
 Must feed thy livid living corse –
 Thy victims ere they yet expire
 Shall know the dæmon for their sire...
 Wet with thine own best blood shall drip 781
 Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
 Then stalking to thy sullen grave –
 Go – and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
 Till these in horror shrink away 785
 From Spectre more accursed than they!²

Vampirism is the curse that awaits the human in this text. This “vampyre”³ served as a dark double, a figure is forced to walk the earth as the living undead as a punishment that was imposed on the “Giaour.” Also, the vampyre serves as the exoticized “other”, one whose passions and actions condemn him as well. In a way, this “other” does appear in *Dracula*, but not as an exoticized other; the vampire is an imposing and dangerous figure. It depicts vampirism as a disruption to societal order. So, what is vampirism and why is it imposing itself on human society?

Vampires are metaphorical figures, they are stand in for the larger fears in society. It becomes metaphorical in that it takes the place of the unknown, the unexplained and the unspeakable. The vampire is, of course, a more complex creature than just a metaphor for someone that may lust after the unattainable or the forbidden. Instead, they become representations of hidden anxieties. The anxieties can take the form of sexuality, power,

² Lord Byron, “The Giaour” (1813)

³ Vampyre- olde English spelling of vampire

fear of the foreign or the other and can be the reflection of society or the author's own fears. The author and novel cannot completely exist or separate itself from one another; this can be said for the historical narrative as it overlaps with the literary narrative.

Historical events, political movements, and shifts in power can manifest within the literary text. The text is a manifestation of the author's imagination and this imagination is influenced by their lives. In Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire is a manifestation of several anxieties that exist within Victorian England society and Stoker's own feelings towards certain aspects of that time period. These anxieties seep through each of the vampire narratives and though there are some consistencies, each novel has a different set of anxieties. For example, who's to say that Anne Rice's atheism didn't influence the vampire's moral judgments and existential crisis within the Vampire Chronicles series? What about Meyer's Mormon background and its influence its possible influence in *Twilight*? These texts are more contemporary than *Dracula*, but there is a consistency in the role of the vampire. These texts despite their time period and different authors are not mutually exclusive.

This senior thesis explores the various vampire myths that arise from a multi-linear narrative. "The subsequent history of the vampire forms one long series of appropriations, bluffs and creative forgeries."⁴ There is no right way of studying the vampire narrative and in fact, the vampires studied in this project follows the perspective of male vampires. There are female vampires, such as *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu and though *Carmilla* holds an important role in the vampire narrative she is not the focal

⁴ Butler, Erik. *The Rise of the Vampire*. London: Reaktion Books, 2013.

point. The novels chosen for this project were purposely picked for these main reasons: the first being popularity. The vampire novels used are ingrained in popular society; *Dracula* is often thought to be the first vampire narrative, *Lestat* is a pivotal point in the shift in the image of the vampire and *Twilight* is the revival of the vampire in pop culture. The second being: the differences in which vampires are portrayed in the narratives. Each of these novels brings a different perspective to the vampire and helps in exploring the question— what is the vampire? Finally: the vampires represent unique time periods, which contribute the formation of the vampire. By using these texts one can discover whether vampires are simply supernatural beings or a metaphorical entity that stands in for something more complex.

This senior project delves deeper into the very nature of the vampire because the concept of this creature is very complex, so complex that it simply cannot be categorized as only a supernatural being or monster. In order to understand this creature of the night, this project will trace the myth and narrative of the vampire. Furthermore, I would like to argue that the vampires in the novels are a representation or manifestation of the author's own anxieties. The vampire exists outside human society; therefore, this excludes them from participation in the social norm. In their current condition, they are a blank slate, a state at which the author can write history, fears and explore certain concepts on their own.

The first chapter focuses on *Dracula*, which will serve as the starting point in this project. It is imperative that this is the text that begins this investigation due to its notoriety in modern day society. The second chapter focuses on *Lestat*, a vampire from

France who soon finds himself in the Louisiana. This novel is important in not only its geographical shift but also the shift in the perception and characterization of the vampire. It also demonstrates the new anxieties that are reflected through the vampire during the time period that the novel was written. The final chapter will be on *Twilight*, which is similar to *Dracula* in its popularity and has spawned a fandom. Though other vampire novels have been written after this particular narrative, the popularity of this franchise deserves a critical eye and inclusion in exploring the vampire myth.

Overall, this project will explore the ways in which vampires are represented in each of these literary texts. These literary texts serve as a reflection of the author's own personal desires and anxieties during their time period. In doing so, historical narrative and the literary narrative are not mutually exclusive; instead, they intertwine and create a complete vampire narrative. The vampire, a supernatural entity, stands in for the unspeakable. This unspeakable mystery is disguised by the author, in which he/she then chooses to represent and explore through the vampire figure. However, the vampire can only mask the inevitable, which is merely the hidden desires that seep into their literary texts as a result of the changing times.

Chapter One: Societal Anxieties and the manifestation of the Vampire in *Dracula*

The origin of the vampire has always been one of the greatest mysteries. From their predatory nature to their dashing good looks, vampires are a supernatural phenomenon that enthralls the mortal audience. The appearance of vampires in literary texts is a fairly contemporary idea; its appearance in modern day literature is quite common as if the formula for a proper story includes— a beginning, middle, end and vampire. Despite the popularity of vampires, the origin of this supernatural being continues to be contested. There's an overwhelming need from today's readers to trace the vampire back to its roots, however vampiric novels are plentiful and many have different histories. With more recent novels, like *Twilight*, the younger generation is brought into the dark twisted fantasy of the supernatural world, but for the slightly older generation, *Dracula*, seems like the story of origin. Bram Stoker's vampire in the novel *Dracula* reflects societal anxieties of not only the "Other," but also serves as the manifestation of forbidden sexual desires of women during the Victorian time period.

By analyzing the vampire in several novels such as *Dracula*, *Carmilla*, *Twilight* and *Lestat*; the varying vampiric models assist in the discovery of what their presence signifies in the text. It can be said that vampires represent the unspoken; a world of the repressed, oppressed and tyrannized. The novel, *Dracula*, represents the unspeakable sexual desires that vary from polygamy to an almost homoerotic subtext. This vampiric image continues in which Stoker creates a dark twist on maternity and matrimonial values that the characters engage in within the narrative. The vampire is a reflection of personal desires and anxieties, an external supernatural entity that takes the place of the

unspeakable; the vampire masks the inevitable, hidden desires that seep into literary texts as a result of the time period.

The origin of the vampire is commonly linked to Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; the popularity of the novel as well as it being a well-known book, are only a few reasons why the novel is easily recognizable. In the novel, the vampires serve as a moral compass; they have an animalistic freedom and wildness about them that makes it easier for them to reside outside of society. Due to this reason, the vampires serve as antagonists to the human protagonist characters, who are representative of the good and moralistic, technologically advanced society. The different spaces within the novel also stand in contrast to one another— the first being a technological London versus Castle Dracula.

The castle in which Count Dracula dwells is located far within a foreign territory; Jonathan leaves the confines of English society to escape into the untamed land of the “other.” The distance he travels is great; Jonathan travels from several major cities that slowly lead him into the land of the unknown. His route is as follows— London via Paris, Munich, Vienna, Budapest, Klausenburg and Bistritz, he arrives at the castle after being picked up in the Borgo Pass by a mysterious driver, whom he later realizes as Count Dracula. The route starts off with familiar cities that are identifiable, however Jonathan is soon brought into the realm of the vampire, which exists in the untamed foreign East. The home of Dracula follows the gothic trope; the location is very obscure and nothing is distinguishable, the only feasible location that Jonathan mentions is the Carpathians, meaning the mountains. The route descriptions limit any recognizable landmarks; instead Stoker focuses on the untamable nature. Evocations of a wild and snow-covered

landscape ruled by howling wolves is daunting, but wolves that haunt the wilderness lit by supernatural blue flames at night, is anything but welcoming. The castle is an important space in the narrative because it is a space where forbidden temptations can take place.

Castle Dracula is a space with many forbidden places; Dracula locks these places shut before Jonathan's arrival. The only rooms he has access to are his room and the study area that contains several books, magazines and newspapers of varying subjects, which include English law, geology and books that include customs and manners. However, most of the castle is locked tight and Dracula warns Jonathan that sleeping outside of his room would be unwise. For several nights Jonathan follows the Count's orders, but one particular night after opening one of the closed doors, Jonathan ignores the Count's warning and falls asleep in the forbidden chambers:

“I was now in a wing of the castle further to the right than the rooms I knew and a storey lower down...the castle was built on the corner of a great rock, so that on three sides it was quite impregnable, and great windows were placed here where sling, or bow, or culverin could not reach, and consequently light and comfort, impossible to a position which had to be guarded, were secured. To the west was a great valley, and then, rising far away, great jagged mountain fastnesses, rising peak on peak, the sheer rock studded with mountain ash and thorn, whose roots clung in cracks and crevices and crannies of the stone. This was evidently the portion of the castle occupied by the ladies in bygone days, for the furniture had more an air of comfort than any I had seen.”⁵

In this chamber that Jonathan perceives to have once been a women's chamber, it is now a feminine space of decay. The room resides on wing that is “guarded” “jagged” and

⁵ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical, Historical, and Cultural Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave, 2002. (p.59)

“impregnable.” This is the same place where Jonathan encounters the three vampire women that reside secretly in Count Dracula’s Castle.

Jonathan’s encounter with the women in the decaying space is parallel to the women themselves, who are not proper ladies but rather temptresses. Within this womanly space in the castle, Jonathan is overcome with a “burning desire” as the women descend upon him. Jonathan’s interaction with the three seductive vampress transform into a scene of intense sexual desire, hypersexualization and homoeroticism once Dracula returns to the castle. The scene that unfolds, within the room, is one of intense sexual desire that manifests as the women surround him and are delighted in giving him “kisses.” The women urge one another to indulge in him, the language used is suitable for the bedroom, their actions are described as “kisses” and not drinking. The intimacy of kissing is more sensual rather than the animalistic nature involved when drinking someone’s blood. The interaction between the three women and Jonathan almost resembles an orgy as the women encourage one another,

“Go on! You are the first, and we shall follow; yours is the right to begin.’ The other added: —“He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all. I lay there quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood...The fair girl went on her knees, and bent over me, fairly gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal..I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited — waited with beating heart.”⁶ (P.61-62)

⁶ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.61-62



(Dracula's seductress) fig. 1

Stoker's hypersexualization of these women, illustrate the fear and desire one feels when faced with strong sexual desires; these feelings are not only unnatural but should be feared. Jonathan reflects Stoker's own anxieties on female sexuality in the femme fatale archetype. Jonathan is anxious and anticipates contact with the women, during this moment he is both "repulsed" and "thrilled" at what is about to take place. This moment demonstrates a moral dilemma that Jonathan faces at the hands of such tempting women. First, Jonathan is engaged to Mina, but is falling prey to three beautiful "voluptuous"

⁷ Dracula (1931), Browning Tod,

women. However, what is repulsive about their nature? The women are in control and leave Jonathan spellbound as he works through his feelings of lust and desire.

Furthermore, this scene alludes to the fact that Jonathan may lose himself if he allows these women to give him “kisses.” He is in a state of “ecstasy” which is almost orgasmic. Currently, Jonathan is traversing through a forbidden territory that manifests within the castle; this is due to the women that lurk within.

The women that reside within the castle are not the proper sort that would be seen in public. They are almost equivalent to a prostitute in their lecherous ways, however within the space of Dracula’s Castle they are able to act on their desires. Societal standards do not influence nor curve the behavior of these women and so it can be said that they exhibit some form of autonomy and freedom. However, this freedom is limited and Dracula uses his power over the women as a way to control their behavior. The women are prevented from feeding from him as Dracula exerts an enormous amount of power as he disrupts the sexually charged scene. Stoker depicts Dracula as furious— his intervention brings a physical, masculine violence when he uses force against the woman. The “fair woman” was grasped by the neck as the Count threw her back in order to prevent her from claiming the prize that she was once gloating over.

“With a fierce sweep of his arm, he hurled the woman from him, and then motioned to the others, as though he were beating them back...In a voice which, though low and almost in a whisper, seemed to cut through the air and then ring round the room as he said: — “How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me!”⁸

⁸ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.62

The quote inevitably does a role reversal; Jonathan is now the object of desire for the Count. The forbiddingness in the scene now is now in regards to Jonathan's relationship with Count Dracula. Dracula claims possession of Jonathan from the women that want to bear down on him and proceed to give him "kisses." The violence inflicted on the "fair woman" was to ensure that she knew that Jonathan was his and only his. If it is possible to present homoeroticism in this text between Jonathan and Dracula, perhaps his fangs are symbolic as a phallic object that wishes to stake claim in him through biting/kisses. This is purely speculative, but this idea cannot be entirely dismissed due to the scene that preceded Dracula's intrusion and assertion of his male dominance. If so, we can speculate that Stoker is exploring the dangers in homoeroticism and sexuality pertaining to men and women.

Stoker explores gender dynamics in *Dracula*, which is not just shown through his vampire characters, but human characters as well. The men and women in the novel fight different battles; this takes the form of purity, emasculation, technology and intelligence. The men strive to become heroes and the women fight to keep their purity and status. Through the female characters Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker, Stoker creates this image of an idealistic nature for both femininity and womanhood. The two friends stand in opposition to one another and illustrate Stoker's own anxieties of the female body and sexuality. In the novel there is an ongoing battle between purity and innocence versus the unholy and corrupt. The characters, both male and female, battle to control bestial urges that threaten to overtake the characters. In order to explore these ideas of innocence in corruption in the text, the first step in navigating these ideas on sexuality and corruption

lies within the women in the world of *Dracula*. Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker are female archetypes that occupy a complicated space as they strive to fulfill their roles during their time period. In contrast Mina and Lucy the three seductress from Castle Dracula show a more foreboding and sinister side to female sexuality. Stoker's construction of women in *Dracula* in which we have the maternal nature of Mina, Lucy's dependency on masculine characters, and the overly sexualized nature of the three seductress within Dracula's Castle place them in situations of vulnerability and fall to Stoker's critique.

Lucy is the first female victim to fall prey to Dracula's advances. In the novel, we learn that several suitors pursue her; she is flustered by the fact that three of her suitors proposed to her in just one day. Despite being in love with one of her many suitors, she is attracted to and desires all three men. She questions the ideas behind marriage expectations in what seems to be a scandalous question. "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?"⁹ This question would never be asked by Mina and is only asked by Lucy in what she suggests to be a polygamous relationship. This type of relationship would be rejected by societal standards. In this moment Stoker is addressing key moments in sexual anxiety during his time period, the first being the act of sexual freedom of the female body or at least whimsical thinking done by Lucy. The second is the act of polygamy that many would have turned their noses up towards during the time period and the creation of *Dracula*. Lucy's expression of sexual desire is at odds with the typical Victorian female ideals, however, her desire

⁹ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.81

for a polygamous relationship hints more at her own empowerment. Stoker suggests that Lucy's desires are parallel to Dracula's own relationship; Lucy has three suitors and Dracula has three wives. The similarity in the number signifies that Lucy is closely in relation to Dracula, who is a bestial "other" and insatiable being. However, it's hard to believe that there isn't more of a dualism in place with sexuality, desire, and what was acceptable in expressing. One must remember this as a time in which chastity was not only expected, but desired so was the hidden inexpressible desires of the era.

These inexpressible desires are not easily discussed. Divorce, let alone polygamy, weren't casual topics to discuss in public, let alone in person with one of the more reserved characters, like Mina Harker. This conversation shouldn't take place between characters with such high standing, but Lucy is a manifestation of those hidden sexual desires that the characters in the novel strive to avoid. Lucy is described as one of the outwardly pure and innocent characters; why is she one of the first to fall prey to Dracula in the novel? Instead of thinking of her as falling prey to the criminal, Dracula, she is instead more of a liberated woman. This is to say that, Lucy Westenra, who is inevitably drained by Dracula and transformed into a vampire herself, may now act more freely and openly in light of her newfound vampirism. This is the complete opposite of the once beloved as Lucy Westenra, whose true nature was hidden behind a pretty face and white dress.

The Lucy before the transformation was quite limited due to her standards and the expectations placed on her as a woman. Most men flocked to her side and spared her harsh words because she was thought to be dainty and pure. This however, is merely a

facade because Lucy desires something much more than just a monogamous relationship. Reflecting back on the conversation about polygamy that she had with Mina, via mail, Lucy discusses the freedom of women and her own lack of freedom. Perhaps this desire for freedom made her an easy prey for Dracula. She states, “Oh, why must a man like that be made unhappy when there are lots of girls about who would worship the very ground he trod on? I know I would if I were free--only I don’t want to be free.”¹⁰ Lucy demonstrates two conflicting ideas in this sentence, the first being this idea of freedom as not being in a romantic relationship. This freedom she talks about is the freedom to pick and choose a partner; however she would like to have all three men as previously mentioned. However, Lucy holds several aspects of male dependency such as ‘worship the ground he trod on’ and “I don’t want to be free.’ Though she holds some notions of ideas of sexual freedom, Lucy still relies on masculine figures. This is more noticeable when Dracula targets and begins to feed from her; several male characters in the novel strive to save her, yet fail miserably.

Lucy outwardly demonstrates a dualist nature as she represents old archetypal ideas of femininity as well as a hidden sexual nature. Lucy’s character before her metamorphosis into a vampiric body portrays an old-fashioned womanhood that relies on her ability to be saved by masculine figures. Lucy both accepts and denies this characterization of her character due to her performance of a respectable woman as she masks her more sexual deviant side, which isn’t shown until her transition into a vampire. However, this is not to say that she didn’t have these sexual desires to begin with, they’re

¹⁰ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.81

not openly demonstrated until her death and rebirth which then she openly expresses a more uncovered sexual desire. The masking of Lucy's desires is a complicated matter because of her outward appearance of sweetness, which notably has been alluded to through her ability to look "sweetly pretty in her white lawn frock."¹¹ These images of Lucy are complex as they allow her the ability to appear as both a sweet, innocent and desirable person, which is why Stoker takes great care in creating a transformed and twisted image of that same purity.

Lucy's purity is destroyed once she transitions into a creature of the night; her transformation marks her transition from our beloved, sweet and innocent Lucy. She has now become the seductress of the night and lures away the innocent children. With the death of Lucy and her inevitable transformation into a vampire, Stoker illustrates the dangers of uncontrolled female sexuality. Over time, Lucy began to exhibit signs of a weakening body. The reason behind her illness was the blood loss she was experiencing at the hands of Dracula, but Dr. Seward surmises this to be nothing more than Lucy suffering from a mental illness. Whether this was practical diagnosis or not he reaches this decision after merely conducting a blood test. This depicts the illness of women as only being an illness of the mind. Lucy's last moments were a result of her blood loss and not from mental illness. However, this situation may have been avoided if Lucy would have only obeyed Van Helsing's orders in which he told her to keep the garlic around her neck and the windows locked.

¹¹ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.86

In the end it was inevitable that Lucy should die; her sexual desires were not simply calmed by the thought of marriage, she desired more than the monogamous relationship that was dictated by societal norms that stifled Victorian women. This standardized restraint on Lucy left an opening that Dracula was able to douse Lucy's feeble attempt to cling to her life and innocence that warred against her rising sexuality. Van Helsing gave several blood transfusions to Lucy before her death. By using each of the men in her life, he was able to continuously fill her body with blood and their essence. Lucy recognizes this essence when she claims to feel Arthur inside of her. During this procedure Van Helsing did take more from Arthur, Lucy's fiancé, by which he explains, is the 'appropriate' amount. This claim by Van Helsing implies that Stoker is placing and abiding by set behavioral boundaries set in place during the time period, which meant certain things were perceived as being more appropriate than others. In this case it would be the amount of blood, which places a behavioral limitation that these human protagonists must abide by. This is presented yet again in the novel when Van Helsing and Dr. Seward attempt to revive Lucy in the bathtub. The men remove Lucy from the bed and place her "as she was" in the bathtub.¹² The idea is minute and it's placement is during a time of intense climax, but it stands out due to the instructive nature on the appropriateness in the ways that the men should care for her. They demonstrate a gentleman like demeanor despite the fact that death is knocking at Lucy's door or similar to Dracula, barging through the window without an invitation.

¹² Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.161

The once human Lucy has lost the battle in calming her sexual desires. Stoker creates the image of the vampiric Lucy, which is a manifestation of the excessiveness that can exist within women. Lucy is a hypersexualized woman that is detrimental to everyone around her. Lucy's transformation into a creature of the night marks not only a change in appearance, but also her behavior. In what was once the sweet and kind natured young woman now resides a lecherous, sexualized Lucy Westenra. As she slips in between the world of the living and undead, the description illustrates her transition into what appears to be a corpse-like image. In the words of Dr. Seward, "she was ghastly...her breath was painful to see or hear."¹³ Lucy's transformation is slowly changing her appearance and behavior, as she steadily becomes something that is a reflection of her internal nature; her true self is shown during her death.

Lucy's death scene is her one of her last moments as an innocent woman—a reflection of a pure Victorian woman, but is subject to a rebirth that will awaken in sexual nature. Moments before her first death, when she is still a mortal being, she is overcome by her own sexual desire and asks her fiancé, Arthur, to kiss her one last time. The scene that this takes place in is a viable moment in the novel for several scenes in the future draw on the same language, such as the issue in saving the soul and the newly awakened sexual woman.

"Arthur! Oh, my love, I am so glad you have come! Kiss me! "Arthur bent eagerly over to kiss her; but at that instant Van Helsing, who like me, had been startled by her voice, swooped upon him, and catching him by the neck with both hands, dragged him back with a fury of strength which I was never thought he could have possessed, and actually hurled him almost across the room. "Not for your life! he said; "not for your living

¹³ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.136

soul and hers!... “I kept my eyes on Lucy, as did Van Helsing, and we saw a spasm as of rage flit like a shadow over her face; the sharp teeth champed together. Then her eyes closed, and she breathed deeply.”¹⁴

Van Helsing violently separates Lucy and Arthur from one another in the same similar fashion in which Dracula separates Jonathan from the vampiric woman. He prohibits Arthur from kissing Lucy; he claims the kiss would have stolen his life and soul. The parallels in both scenes suggest that men need to be saved from female promiscuity. This scene captures the hypersexualization of Lucy, her loss of innocence and her ability to participate in the vicious cycle of vampirism— which is her ability to contaminate others as well. In this instance, what is being said about vampirism and sexuality? The two terms are closely related in the context that Lucy is more open to engaging in her sexual desires once these changes begin to take over the body. However, this scene demonstrates how easily the male body can be tempted when it faces an object of his desire; this is seen in Jonathan’s encounter with the three women in Dracula’s Castle. In this instance it is Arthur who is easily seduced by his beloved as he fails to recognize the change in her *voice* that both Van Helsing and Dr. Seward easily recognize ring with an air of falsity. This change in her voice is hinting at the transformation of Lucy into a more sexualized being while Lucy’s *rage* is a moment of uncontrolled passion and lust. This moment of passion arose after her failure to indulge in a sexual desire that was denied to her and this was only controlled in her moment of death; a moment at which she could retain innocence and purity.

¹⁴ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.173

After Lucy's death, her body began to change back into its familiar innocent state.

Only in death could her image of purity be controlled by the men that created this ideal image of the women that had at one point of another captured their hearts.

“Some change had come back over her body. Death had given back part of her beauty, for her brow and cheeks has recovered some of their flowing lines; even the lips had lost their deadly pallor.”¹⁵

The return to her original appearance illustrates that Lucy has been reclaimed and reverted back into an image of purity. A change had come over her body that made it natural once again; her transformation implies that her humanity has been restored which may illustrate that Lucy was beyond saving and only through death could she be truly saved. Lucy's corpse in its description indicates that she is both beautiful and chaste in comparison to the corrupted beauty she held just before her death and when she awakens as a creature of the night. The juxtaposition between purity and corruption is shown in the text when the discussion of multiple marriages is once again discussed. Arthur believes that his blood that ran through Lucy's veins enabled him to them to be husband and wife. Van Helsing finds this to be amusing and mentions to Dr. Seward that the donation of blood from the three separate men would inevitably make Lucy a polygamist.

The implications made by Van Helsing suggest that Lucy, as a polygamist would spoil her innocence and heighten her own sexuality and desire.

“Just so. Said he not that the transfusion of his blood to her veins had made her truly his bride? “Quite so. But there was a difficulty, friend John. If so that, then what about the others? Ho, ho! Then this sweet maid is a polyandrist, and me, with my poor wife dead

¹⁵ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.174

to me, but alive by Church's law, though no wits, all gone--even I, who am faithful this now-no-wife a, "bigamist."¹⁶

The conversation between the two men seems out of place after what has just occurred.

Van Helsing's claims of Lucy's polygamist ways, even jokingly, are scandalous. In a period of time where sexual scandals were widespread and negative despite Victorian England's societal changes, especially for women. Van Helsing makes a clear separation between the constitution of marriage in regards to the law and the Lord. Technically, Van Helsing isn't engaging in an act of bigotry according to the state, but if he were wouldn't Lucy have committed the act twice over? This would also be less impactful on his part because he is man and also has a deceased wife. Lucy is metaphorically a succubus, stealing away men's hearts and blood. Her mere existence taints her innocence that does not protect her from the reader's prior knowledge of her desire to engage in polygamy. This quote suggests more lewdness to Lucy's character, which fails to capture her overwhelming desire. Moreover, what comes from this is her second death at the hands of the men that once loved her and by blood filled the role of husband. Once again, there is a parallel to Lucy and Dracula; the marriages of two are polygamist and both are wedded by blood, which seems sacrilegious.

Lucy and Dracula are closely tied together, even more so when she transforms into a vampire. The vampiric Lucy is a mere deconstruction of domesticity, innocence, purity and motherhood. At each moment, Lucy portrays something vehement in nature and in opposition to the image of the idealistic women. She occupies the role of a traditional, pure and sweet woman; before her transformation, Lucy lacked autonomy and

¹⁶ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.186

often listened to what the male figures in her life told her to do. Her pure, angelic nature is soon twisted, as she becomes more of an angel of death that lures innocent children away from their homes. This vampiric Lucy not only disturbs the homes of other women by luring their children away, but she also distorts the idea of maternity. In her new form she is able to enchant those around her as she attempts to lure them. Her power consists of her ability in mimicry and manipulation. This mimicry that Lucy performs is not limited to just her maternity, but her domestic role as well.

The hypersexualization of Victorian women, according to Lesley A. Hall, existed mainly for those of lower class; the upper class women were pure, innocent, maternal angel-like creatures that exist within the domestic sphere.¹⁷ The body of a pure woman was not sexualized because it occupied the space of maternity and natural womanhood. This natural womanhood is what Lucy is evidently going against in her vampiric nature. When the men begin to pursue Lucy, she is caught drinking the blood of a small child. Upon spotting them, Lucy attempts to lure Arthur to her side.

“She still advanced, however, and with a languorous, voluptuous grace, said-- “Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come! “There was something diabolically sweet in her tones--something of the tinkling of glass when struck--which rang through the brains even of us who heard the words addressed to another. As for Arthur he seemed under a spell; moving his hands from his face, he opened wide his arms.”¹⁸

Lucy’s performance, similar to her voice, rings of falsity. Both the vampiric Lucy and innocent Lucy have the ability to lure these men; the difference in this situation is that the

¹⁷Hall, Lesley A. *Sex, Gender, and Social Change in Britain since 1880*. New York: St. Martin's, 2000. Print.

¹⁸ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.219

vampiric Lucy has the intent to harm them. Arthur is lured into her “diabolically sweet” tone of voice as if he was under a spell and this is due to Lucy’s ability to imitate womanhood. She welcomes him to her as if they were indeed husband and wife, which is why the other men are able to hear the falsetto nature of her voice. However, her act is fraudulent and fiendish in its intention. The traditional image of femininity is marred with seduction, desire and the unnatural. Stoker illustrates the unnaturalness of femininity and domesticity that women practice. Through the act of adhering to societal constructs of social norms, women are inevitably portraying a false construct of femininity. Lucy’s sexual inner self does not resemble the innocent and pure nature that she projects outward. The “fallen woman” may not exist in this situation, but traditional women, like Lucy, stand in stark contrast to the women’s sphere, which functions outside of the home. In this world, the world of Stoker, innocent and meek maidens fall prey to the faced paced, advancing world that is forming around them. Lucy’s “voluptuousness” heightens the mockery of her own aforementioned sweet purity, which is tamed by the same men that once nurtured her innocent behavior.

In contrast to the radical role of Lucy, Stoker constructs his idealistic representation of womanhood through Mina. Mina is the wife of Jonathan Harker, yet she goes beyond that identification due to her major role in the novel. We first hear of Mina within the first few pages as Jonathan makes a note of giving her new recipes to try. In this instance, we realize how important she is to Jonathan’s character as well as her ability to fill the domestic role. Despite having domestic roles assigned to her character she is quite practical as well. Mina serves as a figure of the traditional role of a Victorian

woman as she stands in opposition of the New Woman, a group of women briefly mentioned throughout the novel. The New Woman was a feminist ideal that emerged during the 19th century, which pushed the boundaries of the male dominated society. Mina exists outside this realm of a radical feminist woman and instead serves as a tool for the men in the novel. An article by Carol Senf suggests that, “These few quotations from New Women fiction indicate that, while Mina’s statement on the New Women writers tends to lump them all together, third group does not present a consistent view of women...portray the New Woman’s as dangerous limitations of self-delusion.”¹⁹ Mina serves as a medium in which Stoker critiques the concept of New Woman. She serves as a tool that can be translated into— someone that is of use because of their function and malleability.

In any case, Mina’s ability to write in shorthand makes her a valuable piece in pursuing Dracula as well as a form of record keeping. Mina’s writing places her in a position of power that is quite different from Lucy’s own enchantment. Mina’s voice is the root of her power; she is able to record her observations as well as everyone else’s. She has the permanence of pen and paper while Lucy relies on her body and seduction. However, Mina’s existence is intertwined with the domestic sphere; she has the ability to help the men in their business while performing acts of domesticity. These duties within the domestic sphere coincide with that of the professional field, which is similar to the women’s sphere, which is a woman’s ability to function in the real world with a certain practicality. Mina’s professionalism and domesticity serve in a form of dualism; which

¹⁹ Senf, Carol A.. 1982. ““Dracula”: Stoker’s Response to the New Woman”. *Victorian Studies* 26 (1). Indiana University Press: 33–49. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3827492>.

her working skills and femininity are not only useful, but important in advancing the characters. Mina states that her sole reason for gathering these sets of skills was due to her longing to be of use to Jonathan once they were married; she would be able to transcend the domestic sphere and enter the professional sphere beside her husband. The social status for Victorian women allowed them the rare opportunity to work outside the home and make money in order to support themselves. However, Mina is able to use her skills to not support herself, but to instead offer assistance to her husband.

Mina's value as a member of the group is based on her usefulness to the group's endeavors. This validates Mina's diligent work and carefulness when writing in her diary, which she uses a way to practice her shorthand and typewriting skills in order to be more useful to her husband. She also tells Van Helsing that she learns the train timetable by heart so that she may help Jonathan in case he is in a hurry. Her professional skills can be of use without her posing a threat to the patriarchal power because Mina still exists within the home.

Mina embodies several standards and values placed on her, the first being her cleverness and knowledge. Her cleverness is first noted aloud by Van Helsing when Mina presents him with a typed version of Jonathan's notes.

“Oh, you so clever woman! he said. ‘I have long knew that Mr. Jonathan was a man of much thankfulness; but see his wife have all the good things’ ... ‘Alas! I know not the shorthand.’ ‘By this time my little joke was over, and I was almost ashamed; so I took the typewritten copy from my workbasket and handed it to him.’ ‘Forgive me, I said: ‘I could not help it...I have written it out on the typewriter for you. He too it, and his eyes glistened.’ ‘You are so good, he said.’ ‘And may I read it now? I may want to ask you some things when I have read.’ ‘By all means,’ I said, ‘read it over whilst I order lunch; and then you can ask me questions whilst

we eat' ... When I came back I found him walking hurriedly up and down the room, his face all ablaze with excitement.”²⁰

Mina's role is more than just providing her husband and having a set of professional skills. Mina serves almost as a governess, who often scolds and naughty child, as she upholds standards of social norms and often chastises Lucy for not doing the same. Mina is driven by her duty, which is a strong righteousness that is encompassed in her lady-like duties. Mina enforces correct behavior during a scene in which she recovers Lucy after she wanders out into the streets due to her sleepwalking. Mina makes an effort to not only bring Lucy home, but also ensure that they are following all forms of propriety.

“She trembled a little, and clung to me; when I told her to come at once with me home she rose without a word, with the obedience of a child. As we passed along, the gravel hurt my feet, and Lucy noticed me wince. She stopped and wanted to insist upon my taking my shoes; but I would not. However, when we got to the pathway outside the Churchyard, where there was a puddle of water remaining from the storm, I daubed my feet with mud, using each foot in turn on the other, so that as we went home no one, in case we should meet any one, should notice my bare feet.”²¹

Within a few lines Mina manages to demonstrate the importance of maintaining a good name and prevent them from being caught doing something that may seem scandalous. Stoker portrays Lucy as nothing more than fearful child who is protected by a powerful maternal figure. This behavioral correction of Lucy that is subtly placed in scenes of interaction between them. Upon finding Lucy, Mina fastens Lucy's nightdress closed. This image evokes the unconcerned nature of Lucy of her public image and Mina's

²⁰ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.193

²¹ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.11

attempts at correcting the behavior. The daubing of mud onto her own feet is simply demonstrating her tactfulness and her ability to adhere to societal critique.

In the case of social critique, both Lucy and Mina exist in a time period of great change for women. The New Woman were a generation of women at the end of the nineteenth century who believed in the Suffrage movement, education for women, and doing away with the sexual double standards. The New Woman was regularly the subject for unconventional, supposedly unfeminine behavior.²² In *Dracula*, Mina uses the term “New Woman” in a joking manner and in the context of proper behavior. The “New Woman” is in reference point to comment on her and Lucy’s appetite. “I believe we have shocked the “New Woman” with our appetites. Men are more tolerant, bless them!”²³ Mina doesn’t consider herself a New Woman, but instead insults them by stating that men are more tolerant. This remark from Mina hints at an anxiety that Stoker is transferring into his text; the growing power of women was not always positive and this can be seen through his social critique through the use of Mina.

Unlike Lucy, Mina resembles an upper class Victorian woman; Mina is stripped away of any sexual desire or want. Her only desire is the advancement of Jonathan’s career and her own domestic duty. Her maternal instinct establishes her as an emotional safe haven and a source of faith for the men; she possesses the power to be loved by her male counterparts through her wisdom and maternity.

“I suppose there is something in a woman’s nature that makes a man free to break down before her and express his feelings on the

²² Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.108

²³ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.108

tender or emotional side without feeling it derogatory to his manhood...”²⁴

Stoker plays with the idea of masculinity and femininity in relation to gentlemen and proper ladies. Mina’s maternal nature makes it easier for men to expose themselves to her; she exists more as a mother than a lover in the text. Mina is the embodiment of a domestic space; she represents the secure home that Victorian men expect to receive from their wives. Stoker transcribes several other characteristics to Mina as she becomes the idealistic Victorian woman archetype. These qualities consist of her chastity and modesty. Contrary to Lucy with her polygamous tendencies (i.e. desiring to marry three men), Mina is decidedly innocent and morally adequate.

Despite, Stoker portraying Mina as a strong female character, there is a repeating pattern of victimized female characters in *Dracula* as well as the need for heroic gentlemen. Mina’s victimization takes place within her bedroom as Dracula threatens to kill Jonathan if she alerted the other men of his presence. The scene that Stoker illustrates is very dark and forceful; the descriptions sound as if Dracula were raping Mina in the presence of her husband.

“...with his left hand he held both Mrs. Mina’s hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man’s bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten’s nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. As we burst into the room, the Count turned his face, and the hellish look that I had heard described seem to leap into it. His eyes flamed red with devilish passion; the great nostrils of the white

²⁴ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.235

aquiline nose opened wide and quivered at the edge; and the white sharp teeth, behind the full lips of the blood dripping mouth...”²⁵

The scene that takes place in this quote is the inevitable violence that befalls Mina at the hands of Count Dracula. Stoker demonstrates that innocent women with a pure heart and a man’s brain can fall prey to Dracula’s forceful nature. The only way to stop this vicious cycle is by the men transitioning into the role of the hero and vampire hunter. In order to stop this insatiable beast, they must kill Dracula like the beast he is and save the women that are unable to defend themselves. The Count’s forceful handling of Mina as she drinks from his bosom is parallel to the law on rape during the Victorian Era; rape was described more or less as one's inability to resist from terror, or from an overpowering force of a ravisher against a respectable woman.²⁶ This description of Dracula not only shows that there is an imminent threat against society, but the violence women will suffer at the hands of a “criminal.” The mark left on Mina is a testimony of the violence and the misogynistic world that she is forced to exist within.

Stoker’s anxieties manifest in his novel, *Dracula*. Stoker was unable to separate himself from the advancing world around him as the vampire’s illustrate various critiques that Stoker has on the world around him. During the time *Dracula* was written, America was growing as a superpower nation, women were gaining more power inside and outside of the home, and technological advances were taking place. Vampires are representative of these various changes and several roles were devised in the narrative to help address each of these issues. *Dracula* presents the reader with a misogynistic world in which

²⁵ Stoker, Bram, and John Paul Riquelme. *Dracula*: pg.283

²⁶ Hall, Lesley pg. 17

masculinity is at stake when the vampires amplify what Stoker believes to be the insatiable desire of women; women like Mina are able to be maternal figures and helpful to their husbands. They are not supposed to be similar to Dracula's wives/ mistresses or Lucy Westenra, who exhibits an excessive amount of sexuality. Stoker depicts womanhood as something that is fragile and needs to be cared for by both the wife and husband. It is a man's duty towards those whom they love to protect them against the forces of evil.

It seems that Stoker appears to loath women's sensuality and sexuality: Lucy's desires results in her death and she is unable to achieve marriage or motherhood in what would be the proper fashion and not by blood rites. Positive depictions of women are limited in this novel in contrast to the group of male heroes, including Mr. Morris, the American man that sacrificed himself to defeat Dracula while the rest were rewarded with a life of happiness. What's an interesting observation in the novel is that vampirism is primarily a main threat to women, who become hypersexualized creatures. In the vampire coven, Dracula is the only male vampire and the only ones in danger of becoming vampires in the text are both Lucy and Mina, who are both female characters. The men do not have any weaknesses; the only exception is in regards to falling prey to womanhood and voluptuous women. Men to show their weaknesses because there is something alluring and welcoming in a woman's nature, but this can be a negative aspect if the woman is a vampire or sexual. However, there is an insidious part to the anxieties that manifest in this text and it mainly comes from Stoker's female characters, who fall prey to internalized misogyny. Stoker's compliments promote internalized misogyny by

presenting these self-loathing women, whom he regards as "noble" or with a "man's brain." A woman's value is dependent on her contribution to the men around her. Comments that are supposed to be positive are nothing more than backhanded praise on a woman's ability to be clever, which is stressed to be a man's trait. With a violent threat such as *Dracula*, the men must transform themselves into the role of the hero, one who has a strong sense of masculinity. The hero transcends bestial vampires and women with a "man's brain."

Dracula is one of first vampire novels and its influence on other vampire narratives still exists today. Other gothic literature contemporary novels show a wide array of vampires and different depictions of vampirism. Each of these stories constructs a unique origin story for the vampires in the text. Not every vampire poses a threat to society like Stoker's *Dracula*, each come with their own set of anxieties that are tangibles in relation to the supernatural being. Sometimes, vampires are the protagonist and the reader is able to see another perspective, another lens that is through the red eyes of the vampire in question. Furthermore, in tracing the timeline of these vampire novels and by cross-examining the novels with historical evidence one can illustrate the complexities of the vampire. Literature and history cannot be entirely separated from one another; chapters two and three will explore how different vampire narratives follow suite in which vampires manifest from societal anxieties that are repressed and rejected outside of the literary narrative.

Chapter 2- Anne Rice's Sexual Revolution of the Vampire

In Stoker's novel *Dracula*, a new creature, the vampire was born. The vampire represented a period of sexual anxiety during 19th century Victorian England. This anxiety contributed to the birth of *Dracula*. This was a novel written by Bram Stoker, which revealed his own displacement and discomfort; the vampire was used to represent the rapid change that took place during a period of social and political change. Through Victorian society and Stoker's own anxiety, Count Dracula was born. This change evoked Stoker's own anxiety that then seeped out into his fictional world. A world in which Stoker creates a fiendish villain, the vampire, that exists within a dangerously changing world, however through technology and the reason of man, this supernatural world can be conquered and contained. In this narrative, man conquers the fiendish vampire figure and becomes the savior of women's virtue. In Stoker's world, which is cloaked in the existence of the "other" or fiendish villain, from the depths of hell exists man. Man conquers both nature and whatever threatens to shake its solid boundaries. Through Stoker's construction of boundaries the vampire is born; the vampire is a creature that manifests as a multitude of anxieties, but in the end they are inevitable conquered. If the vampire is a stand in for Stoker's own anxieties, what happens when his anxieties are absent from other vampire narrative? What does the vampire then represent?

Dracula continues to be a widely recognizable character in modern society. Stoker's novel has sparked several renditions and film adaptations of the popular novel. Because of this, *Dracula's* popularity has continued to grow with the help of visual representations of the vampire, which further ingrains the idea that Dracula is the first

vampire. In each of these creations of *Dracula*, the meaning shifts further away from Stoker's original creation. With each re-creation of *Dracula* the characters change and even the rules of vampirism. For example, in Tod Browning's version of *Dracula* (1931)²⁷, though it had some semblance of Stoker's *Dracula*, several changes were made to the main plot.

The change in narrative and overall plot of Browning's *Dracula* (1931), creates a new *Dracula* and vampire tale, one that moves away from the advancing Victorian England. In the movie, a young Renfield traverses the mountains; this change in character shifts and eliminates the majority of Stoker's own plot and use of the vampire. Jonathan never encounters the three seductresses so the anxiety surrounding overly sexualized females is lost. The anxiety Stoker has with the "New Woman" is completely absent in this film; Lucy soon becomes known as just "the woman in white." She is nothing more than *Dracula*'s next victim in the movie and so the internal struggles leading up to that moment is lost. Lucy no longer falls prey to a lecherous life and so there is no meaning behind her death. The lecherous life of Lucy and the sexualization of feminine sexual nature is unfortunately lost in the movie as she and Mina simply revert back to the helpless female caricature, which are female characters that are easily interchangeable. We learn through Browning's usage of *Dracula* that the vampire is a blank slate, a Lockean "tabula rasa" in which the author writes their anxieties and fears that manifest as the vampire.

²⁷ *Dracula*. Directed by Tod Browning. Performed by Bela Lugosi. United States: Universal Pictures Corp., 1931.

So though Browning's film adaptation of *Dracula* drops some of the key components of the original, there is one consistency in both. In Stoker's *Dracula* and Browning's *Dracula*, the "otherness" of the vampire is a recurring theme. The overall "otherness" of Dracula is captured as he comes from the mountainous Eastern Europe, a decrepit castle and in the movie has a heavily accented voice. Tod Browning cast Bela Lugosi as Dracula, a six foot one Hungarian actor with a heavy accent to match. If anything, his heavy accent has made him the foreign "other." In the book, Jonathan remarked how well the Count spoke English, as if he were a natural born Englishman. This is not the same for Lugosi, who in fact speaks English poorly and learns his lines phonetically. Both his speech pattern and heavily accented voice separates him from the perfect English speaking characters in the movie.



(Bela Lugosi as Count Dracula) fig.2

The world that the screenwriter and director chose to create surrounding Stoker's narrative, captures the atmospheric beginning in Castle Dracula, however Lugosi creates a fiercely romantic Count Dracula instead of the cunning phantom of the night. With

²⁸ <https://www.google.com/search?q=dracula+bela+lugosi>

Renfield taking Jonathan's role in the beginning of the narrative, the hardships, temptations and fears that mold the original Dracula are lost. Unfortunately, the movie degenerates into the stage play after the first twenty minutes and the Count Dracula that we once knew and loved is lost in generalization of the vampire. Even Dracula's final staking is anticlimactic; this truly was a plot of rescuing the maiden, killing the monster and becoming a hero in the end. Also, despite the major time difference between the novel and movie, the "otherness" of Dracula was kept in the narrative and even increased by their choice in casting. By observing it like Stoker's narrative, what were some of the anxieties hidden away in this film?

First, we must remember that Tod Browning was American filmmaker. The remaking of the vampire narrative removes Victorian England from the narrative of *Dracula*, instead Dracula exists within an American context. By Americanizing *Dracula*, the overall themes and symbolism behind this character shifts as well. Instead of vampire who poses a threat to civil Victorian England, with his immoral coven of lecherous women, the "Americanized" Dracula simply poses a threat to innocent individuals who are victimized by his fiendish nature. His fiendish nature then places him within the category of villain who must be stopped by a hero. Looking at the historical context around the time this film was created; a major event that took place in American history was The Great Depression. The Great Depression began around 1929 and lasted until about 1939. Laemmle's film was released in 1931, which is earlier on in The Great Depression, however this was during a time of increasing immigration, especially from Northern and Western Europe, so Lugosi's Hungarian background is similar to Dracula's

own Eastern Europe origins, which places them at the cusp of “otherness.” The film is the literal staking of Eastern Europe immigration and the triumph of Americanism.

The world of *Dracula*, as demonstrated by the several film adaptations, can easily be manipulated and transformed. Browning’s film shows the ways in which we can take the vampire lore and construct it into something completely different from *Stoker’s* original plot. Now that the vampire has transitioned into America, it takes on a new set of anxieties that exist within the new landscape. Anne Rice, a New Orleans author, has taken the world of the vampires in a new direction; she draws on the vampire’s introduction to American society. The vampires that Anne Rice creates deviate from *Stoker’s* Victorian origin of *Dracula*. Along with Anne Rice’s other books in the Vampire Chronicles series, *The Vampire Lestat*, is an anti-*Dracula* novel. Lestat exists in a world where, “everybody was sick of Count Dracula.”²⁹ The novel acknowledges the power and origin of the vampire narrative, but Rice does everything in her power to deconstruct this narrative and this is done through her vampire characters, namely Lestat de Lioncourt.

The novels *Interview with The Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat* are key narratives in the vampire.... In *Interview with The Vampire* Louis Pointe Du Lac gives has an interview with a journalist that he meets at a bar. *The Vampire Lestat* is the autobiography of Lestat de Lioncourt, who is the creator of Louis. After he reads *Interview with The Vampire*, he feels compelled to counter Louis’s interview and document his own life in hopes of drawing Louis out. During this time, Lestat indulges in

²⁹ Rice, Anne. *The Vampire Lestat*. New York: Knopf, 1985. (p.13)

the 80's culture and becomes a rock icon as he is the rebellious "brat prince". In reading both of the narratives, it is safe to take a precautionary approach to each because it is unclear on who is telling the truth.

Lestat de Lioncourt was born on November 7, 1760, as the seventh son of the marquis d'Auvergne in the Auvergne region of France. He is the youngest of the three that survived to adulthood. Though the de Lioncourt's are aristocrats, the family lives in poverty and Augustin, the eldest brother, immediately spent the small dowry his wife provided. The de Lioncourt's live a life of relative poverty in their decrepit castle. Lestat's mother, Gabrielle, is the only literate member of the family. Lestat both loves and resents her because she can easily immerse herself in a novel and ignore the family and escape. Lestat's unnamed father is blind and spends his days playing chess.³⁰ Rice makes a point in creating vampires with backgrounds; Lestat comes from France and has a human family. He did not simply rise from the ground one day and claim to be of the devil or from hell. By constructing a family unit background for her vampires, Rice complicates the origin story of the vampire; Lestat is not simply a vampire. He was once a human that existed and a Christian as well.

Stoker's sets boundaries for the vampire are broken. The rules in *Dracula* are extensive— from garlic, sunlight, religious symbols and figures— many things can restrict the vampire's mobility in the narrative. The vampires in Rice's narrative are not constrained by these things that are supposed to ward off evil and summon the wrath of God on unholy beings. In Rice's *Interview with The Vampire*, which predates *The*

³⁰ Rice, Anne. *The Vampire Lestat*. New York: Knopf, 1985. (p.23)

Vampire Lestat, a journalist is as the title suggests, interviewing Louis. Louis de Pointe du Lac is Lestat's third fledgling and during his interview he describes his life past human life and vampire life with the unnamed journalist. When Louis reflects on his transformation into a vampire, Louis mentions that during a confrontation between Lestat and his father, Lestat's father asks for his rosary. The journalist then asks about the other myths about vampires, which separates Rice's vampires from Stokers.

"I was going to ask, rosaries have crosses on them, don't they?" "Oh the rumor about crosses!" The vampire laughed. "You refer to our being afraid of crosses?" "Unable to look at them, I thought," said the boy. "Nonsense, my friend, sheer nonsense. I can look at anything I like..." "And what about the rumor about keyholes? That you can...become steam and go through them." "I wish I could," laughed the vampire. "How positively delightful..." "That is, how would you say today... bullshit?" "The boy laughed despite himself. Then his face grew serious." "You mustn't be so shy with me," the vampire said. "What is it?" "The story about the stakes through the heart," said the boy, his cheeks coloring slightly. "The same," said the vampire, "Bull-shit," he said, carefully articulating both syllables, so that the boy smiled. "No magical power whatsoever."³¹

The dialogue between Louis and the journalist references to the myths Stoker creates in *Dracula*. Dracula is a character that can become mist, transform, has incredible speed and power yet can be defeated by a stake through the heart and religious objects and symbols. There are other moments in the text when Rice rejects Stoker's narrative, but in this instance the vampire myths that the journalist's asks is laughable. Every myth is broken, except their vulnerability to daylight, which Rice works around in her later additions to the Vampire Chronicles series. The purpose in the inclusion of this dialogue between the two is to bring the vampiric nature into dialogue and then disengage from Stoker's rendition completely. Simply, dashing Stoker's myths in this narrative is not enough to

³¹ Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. (p.23-24)

distance the vampires in Rice's narrative from his own. Rice recreates the vampire with several characteristics, from their looks to their internal struggle as existing as both vampire and human. However, Rice redefines the vampire within her narrative; Dracula is not only separated from her own vampires in her narrative, Dracula is dead.

Anne Rice's vampires are not simply putting an end to the *Dracula* myth; her vampires are reinventing the vampire narrative. The complexity of Rice's characters stems from firstly, their past lives. The lives that these vampires once led are revealed in the narrative. Rice is careful in placing these characters in backgrounds that are heavily bound to family. Each of their backgrounds helps understand the complexity of the distinct vampire personalities. Secondly, morality or the difference between right and wrong is a common theme. The morality of Rice's vampires further complicates them; if they dwell on their actions it portrays them as more than just bloodthirsty creatures. Thirdly, there is complexity between being human or vampire in which the two are not mutually exclusive. Throughout both narratives there are moments when the vampires reflect on their past human lives as well as their current situation as immortal being. At one point Louis thinks, "Could I not return? Could I not be human again?"³² As Louis reflects on these questions he knows the unbearable truth that this is indeed impossible. The vampires in this narrative deeply feel, there is remorse in their actions, love, anger and jealousy. They exist as both vampire and human, neither one nor the other.

Lestat and the other vampires have both their vampire nature and humanity that is never separate from one another; their existence is a duality or perhaps a collective

³² Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. (p. 87)

identity. This collective identity, of these beings, makes them both human and vampire.

This collective identity is what Dracula never possessed. Rice's vampires maintain their humanity; both their humanity and vampiress become key characteristics and follows these vampires throughout their existence. This concept is reiterated in the text itself, this moment occurs after Lestat comes back from killing the wolves that plagued his town during his human youth. At the ripe age of 21, Lestat ventures into the woods with his dogs, horse and weapons. The wolves are slain, but at the cost of his dogs and horse, whom he had to put to rest. Since Lestat refuses to leave his room nor wash the blood from his clothing for several days his mother decides to visit and leave him with a few encouraging words. Her words to him were, "But you're many things," she said. "Not only one thing. You're the killer and the man."³³ The words spoken to him by his mother allude to the very nature of vampires; they are both man (woman) and the killer as well. It is up to each individual vampire on how much he or she chooses to show or engage in.

It is simple to leave Rice's vampires are simply that—the complete opposition to Stoker's vampire narrative, *Dracula*. First, these vampires are not so different from humans themselves; in fact they operate under the guise of a normal human family unit. Due to Louis's lack of control, he attacks a young girl who is sickly and stands beside her dead mother. Lestat later pays for her to leave the shelter/hospital that she was recovering at and decides to turn her into a vampire as well. Louis and Lestat have successfully gained their "adopted child" Claudia. Second, Rice changes the landscape by destroying

³³ Rice, Anne. *The Vampire Lestat*. New York: Knopf, 1985. (p.38)

the Eastern Europe origin that Stoker has put in place. Claudia and Louis, flee to Eastern Europe after Claudia's attempts at killing Lestat have failed. They venture to Eastern



Figure 3 (Claudia, Louis and Lestat)³⁴

Europe in hopes of finding more vampires. Louis tells the journalist that Claudia had a strong desire to find other vampires in the world; she would not accept that Louis, Lestat and herself were the only vampires in existence. During this journey of redefining the vampire narrative, Rice's characters travel to Eastern Europe and there they experience two key moments. The first moment is when Claudia and Louis arrive in Eastern Europe where they encounter several "creatures" in that landscape. Louis describes the encounter to the journalist:

"A mindless corpse?" The boy asked. "Always," said the vampire. "When we found these creatures at all. I remember a handful at most. Sometimes we only watched them from a distance all too familiar with their wagging bovine heads, their haggard shoulders, their rotted, ragged clothing...." But what were these creatures? "Why were they like this?" asked the boy, his lips grimacing with disgust. "I don't understand. How could they be so different from you and Claudia, yet exist?" "I had my theories. So did

³⁴ <https://www.google.com/search?q=lestat+and+louis>

Claudia. But the main thing which I had then was despair...fear that we had killed the only other vampire like us, Lestat.”³⁵

The key phrase in this passage is “mindless corpse”. Louis does not deny that these creatures are vampires, but they are nothing like him or Claudia. Even the characterizations of the vampires are implying that they are more like “creatures.” However, how are these creatures different from Claudia and Louis if their existence is the same? The creatures are “rotted” and “ragged,” a decaying and deathly existence, in opposition to Louis and Claudia’s thriving lives. Furthermore, the creature’s eyes are vacant, they are nothing more than empty husks. What is interesting about the existence and placement of these creatures is that they exist within the boundaries of Eastern Europe, the origin of Dracula. In this geographical location, nothing but death, decay and “mindless creatures exist there.” As Louis states, “We had met the European vampire, the creature of the Old World. He was dead.”³⁶ Dracula is dead. The original landscape of vampires is dead and has moved elsewhere. The new motherland is New Orleans; a place where the vampire can be itself and not lurk around graveyards or decrepit castles.

Though Louis does not explicitly state it, there is some form of balance and status in being vampires like Claudia, Louis and Claudia. Vampires like them are able to enjoy the finer things in life and maintain their sanity. These vampires participate in society and though they are the “other” it is simply by their nature and not their actions. These vampires exist in America and therefore the rules of vampirism are different. Whereas Stoker’s Count Dracula was vengeful, Rice’s vampires are indulgent. They wouldn’t be

³⁵ Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. p.195-196

³⁶ Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. p. 190-191

caught dead (no pun intended) in a cavern or deprecated castle. The vampires in Rice's narrative live lavish lifestyles and spend the fortune that is readily available to them. For example, Lestat's music career is a prime example. As Lestat states, "Old rules didn't matter to me now, either."³⁷ In this instance Lestat, pulls away from the restrictions that bind him within the text.

In the sacred rules of the vampires, the transformation of a human into a vampire is known as the "Dark Gift." It's dark in its very nature of ending the life of others in order to live, yet a gift in the vampire's ability to pass on vampires and humans to receive the gift. The ritual itself, is seductive, Louis recalls the moment in his interview,

"Listen, keep your eyes wide,' Lestat whispered to me, his lips moving against my neck. I remember that the movement of his lips raised the hair all over my body, sent a shock of sensation through my body that was unlike the pleasure of passion..."³⁸

This moment is so pronounce in Rice's work, her vampires border on the line of eroticism as they delve into what is clearly seen as a connection between maker and fledgling. The transformation is one of deep passion and sensuality. The scene between Lestat and Louis is one homoeroticism and the erasure of boundaries. In both of Rice's works, many of the vampires seek solace in the vampires around them, gender nor age matters. When Louis stumbles across Claudia, Lestat encourages Louis to bite her, "Take her, Louis, I know you want her. And I [he] did."³⁹ The scene is hypersexualized as they focus on the roundness of her face, the golden curls or even the plump and sweetness of

³⁷ Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. p.16

³⁸ Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. p.19

³⁹ Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1976. p.91

her body. The language used is parallel to the way Stoker describes the three seductresses hidden away in Count Dracula's Castle. However, Rice's vampires are eager to sink their teeth in what may be considered forbidden in order to indulge in the essence of their vampire nature.

Though the vampire moves away from the *Dracula* narrative, *Interview with The Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat* are more than just anti- Dracula vampires. The reappearance of vampires during the 70's and 80's is representative of something that has appeared alongside Rice's narrative. In Stoker's narrative the vampires became a projection of Stoker's own anxieties over the changing times of Victorian England, so now we must determine why the vampire has made a return in 20th century North America. In an article titled, "The Dark Gift: Vampires in the AIDS Era" the author argues that the reappearance of vampires is due to the sudden appearance of AIDS during the 1980's. This unknown ailment is a possible causation for the growing popularity of vampires during this time period. Yurguis asks,

"Is there a parallel between the passionate, asexual, and immortal creatures we meet in Rice's novels and fantasies of people in the AIDS era, an era when fear of possible infection restrains human interaction, and concepts such as sex and blood have become synonymous with death?"⁴⁰

Yurguis makes an interesting statement; she mentions that Rice's vampires are "asexual" while others believe them to be "bi-sexual". Though the vampires do not engage in what we would consider to be sexual acts, the desire and passion between these individuals is hard to discount and Rice may indeed categorize them as bi-sexual. However, this is only

⁴⁰ Yurguis, Katia. "'The Dark Gift: Vampires in the AIDS Era'" Accessed April 22, 2016. http://www.arts.cornell.edu/knight_institute/publicationsprizes/discoveries/discoveriesfall2002/01katiayurguis.pdf.

a slight opposition in terms of the overall concept that she argues; what stands out is that “infection restrains human interaction” and “sex and blood have become synonymous”. This indicates that the vampires have a push and pull effect in which they become the sexualized and desired individual, but the blood that they contain is “deadly.”

Yurguis parallels the reappearance of vampires with the appearance of the Autoimmune Disease (AIDS) in the United States. The first case was first reported in the United States around 1981, and these cases were most common among homosexual men. The main argument in Yurguis’s article is that these vampire figures are representative of those infected with the virus because vampires are ostracized and socially rejected, similarly to those infected with the disease during that time. Both groups are excluded from the mass public and seen as the “other.” This is of course, in connection with the eroticism and sexualization of both groups. The vampire is a projection of the current state of these individuals, which Yurguis believes to be a “symbolic death.” where Rice’s vampires are able to participate in during their current state. She quotes Dresser who claims “that sexuality and especially one that differs from the norm like ‘oral, necrophilic, incestual, homosexual’ can be experienced through the figure of revenants.”⁴¹ Vampires are able to engage in a safe sphere of desire and lust because they are nearly invulnerable, with the exceptions of the sun and fire. However, what is seen as deadly becomes something eternal and erotic. Lestat exists in a time that is not infected by the disease; instead it is lush, colorful and inviting.

⁴¹ Nussbaumer, Janina. *The Vampire in Literature: A Comparison of Bram Stoker's Dracula and Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire*. Hamburg: Anchor Academic Pub., 2014. Accessed April 6, 2016.

“People were adventurous and exotic again the way they’d been in the old days, before the great middle-class revolutions of the late 1700’s. They looked the way they had in those times...as far as sexuality, it was no longer a matter of superstition and fear.”⁴²

Lestat participates in a sexual promiscuity that is not limited by the threat of AIDS, which was thought to only exist among the gay community during the outbreak in the United States. In lieu of this idea, the sexuality of Rice’s vampires is ambiguous. At times they seem to desire vampires of the same sex or something that is forbidden in society. At times there is no clear separation of sex nor age when the vampire takes interest, it is simply an indulgence in the physicality and orgasmic nature of the “Dark Gift.” Anne Rice’s vampires are at times bi-sexual, and others almost incestuous. There are no boundaries between age nor sex. Rice makes this clear by the relationships that the main vampire characters have with one another. Louis both loves and hates Lestat; the same relationship is in place with Armand after he kills Claudia. Claudia is the “daughter” of Louis and Lestat, but Louis describes her in a more erotic and sexualized way. They often kiss each other’s mouths or cheeks. Finally, the relationship between Lestat has with both Nicki (Nicolas de Lenfent) and Louis is one of love as both are turned into his fledglings. However, the relationship he has with his mother is more complex. He both loves and hates her as well, but when he transforms her back in Paris, he wishes to “ravish” her. Referring back to Dressers quote, the forbidden nature of certain sexual tastes, such as homoeroticism and incest, is heightened when vampires are present. They are erasures to social boundaries that the once strictly enforced social order to disrupt. Everything seems plausible or acceptable when one is undead.

⁴² Rice, Anne. *Interview With The Vampire*. 1993. p.7-9

Going back to Yurguis's question, "Is there a parallel between the passionate, asexual, and immortal creatures we meet in Rice's novels and fantasies of people in the AIDS era, an era when fear of possible infection restrains human interaction, and concepts such as sex and blood have become synonymous with death?"⁴³ Instead of death, the question that should be posed is whether; the act of giving one the "Dark Gift" is synonymous with sex and desire?

In order to answer any of the questions posed, it is beneficial to observe how the vampires in the text engage in the act of feeding or the transformation of humans into vampires. The first example is the scene when Louis feeds from a human for the first time. Though many of the scenes or descriptions that Rice gives use are laden with passionate language, this scene is important nonetheless because it is the feeling Louis has from his first kill which is described from the perspective of the vampire. We are unable to have this point of view from *Dracula*, so Rice is the first to shed light on the feelings vampires receive from the act of feeding.

"...Once the wound was made, the blood flowed. And once that happened, once I was locked to it, drinking... all else vanished... the sucking mesmerized me; the warm struggling of the man was soothing to the tension of my hands... the drumbeat of his heart—only this time it beat in perfect rhythm of my own heart, the two resounding in every fiber of my being until the beat began to grow slower... I was drowsing, falling into weightlessness..."⁴⁴

The mood and tone within the scene that Rice constructs is very passionate. The act of sucking blood for vampires is an intimate act, as the scene suggests there is a connection

⁴³ Yurguis, Katia. "'The Dark Gift'" Accessed April 22, 2016.

⁴⁴ Rice, Anne. Interview With The Vampire. 1976. p.30

between the victim— in that moment they become one. This may be parallel to the act of love making which engages two partners in an act of intense physical contact. Also, this passionate moment that he has for the first time is with a man. An act so intimate, an embrace so passionate is between the vampire and man, both of which are male. In his act of passion, the world around him is lost as he indulges in the moment and body of his victim. These moments are numerous in the novel and are contingent in Lestat's feelings towards the physical nature of his victims and Louis. After reading Louis's interview in *The Vampire Lestat*, Lestat desires to find Louis and the language about him is quite romantic:

“In fact, after reading his account of things, I ached for him, ached for his romantic illusions, and even his dishonesty. I ached even for his gentlemanly malice and his physical presence, the deceptively soft sound of his voice....Of course I hated him for the lies he told about me. But the love was far greater than the hate. He had shared the dark and romantic years of the nineteenth century with me, he was my companion as no other immortal had ever been.”⁴⁵

Lestat “aches” for Louis, the language is both sexual, but romantic in the sense that the bond between the is eternal. The blood bond between the two individuals trumps any lies or misfortune that Louis wishes upon Lestat because he will miss and desire him either way. Yurguis captures the relationship that vampires have with one another as well as a possible metaphorical meaning. She believes that vampires are able to be promiscuous

⁴⁵ Rice, Anne. Interview With The Vampire. 1976. p.16

and erotic in a non-physical way, which doesn't jeopardize their existence. Their fantasies are one sided, non-dangerous modes of sexual satisfaction.⁴⁶

The vampires in *Interview with The Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat* are nothing from the original lore. They are a separation of the Victorian Era vampire or the Stoker's *Dracula*. There is no room for vampires that exists in the way of the Eastern European vampires, which are nothing but wraiths— ghost-like renditions of the 19th century vampire. In this world where vampires co-exist with humans, sexuality and desire are predominate in a materialistic culture. Rice's vampires are not bound by the old myths and they are free to indulge in their immortality. They are invincible, indestructible and not deterred by societal pressure. They are not hidden away within decrepit castles along a mountain; vampires are easily accessible in french-styled townhouses and penthouse suite hotel rooms. Their clothing is made of velvet, silk— the society that they live within is filled with people who wear brilliant colors, longhaired men, androgynous women, skin tight clothing and skimpy skirts. The vampire figure is a normalized entity in a space of liberation and freedom of sexuality and expression, the space is as bizarre as the vampire itself. Rice's vampire narrative is not weighed down with anxiety over sexual repression; instead it is a celebration of sexual freedom. The narrative silences societal anxieties so that they are able to freely immerse themselves in the experience of the vampire.

Still, what do these vampires in this text represent? If we believe the vampires to be a social commentary on the outbreak of AIDS during the 1980's, we still have

⁴⁶ Yurguis, Katia. "'The Dark Gift'" Accessed April 22, 2016.

Interview with The Vampire, which was published before *The Vampire Lestat*. This narrative follows the biography of Louis and has less to do with the vibrant culture of New Orleans unlike the other narrative, so what then does Louis represent in Rice's narrative. The vampire still exists as the "other", this is not lost in the reconstruction of the vampire narrative, but they are more human-like. These vampires feel fear, compassion, sadness, and love. These human characteristics were not lost during their transition from human to vampire. In both novels, vampirism is metaphorical for homoeroticism or at least the erasure of boundaries and anxieties around sex and sexual pleasure. However, in *Interview with The Vampire*, there is a complex relationship between love and lust. As aforementioned, the relationships between many of the vampires are complicated— depending on their previous relationship (mother and son), their gender (homoeroticism) and age (Claudia and Louis). The relationship between vampires is less sexual and more on the physical contact they can offer one another:

"Rice's vampires focus not on the anatomy but the total experience and proximity and contact, offering an alternative, disease-free erotic fantasy for human imagination. Rice's narrative also plays on the fears and anxieties of being transformed by this experience."⁴⁷

The transformation process is more than the physical change to one's body or the act of becoming undead. Louis is a conflicted being and he often agonizes over the act of ending the life of others just for the sake of feeding. As a human he was more or less suicidal, but he viewed himself as a weak being and was unable to end his life. Louis is a

⁴⁷ Yurguis, Katia. ""The Dark Gift"" (p.7)

morally conflicted person and will often feed from criminals rather than the innocent in his attempts to not become a monster.

Louis depicts Lestat as a monster, which Lestat vehemently argues against in his autobiography. The complexity of Rice's vampires is the personality and characteristics of her immortal beings, who have moral conflicts yet find a way to participate in the life around them. However, with a physical freedom of her vampires, they are often plagued by moral constraints. Battling one's own desire, needs and existence creates a very conflicted vampire. There is no lust for the human body, but rather lust for blood, which is just as passionate or intimate in the interaction with vampires and their prey.

New Orleans, Louisiana is the new home of the vampire or at least makes these vampires an "Americanized" vampire narrative. New Orleans is a lively place, filled with sexual freedom of the individuals that exists there. Unlike Dracula, who is hidden away in the Carpathian Mountains, these vampires exist within the public sphere and fully participate in the culture that exists there. Lestat, unlike Louis, relishes in his vampire nature and lives his life on the basis of freedom and indulgence. The city of New Orleans during the 1980's, allows for a time in which self-expression and more importantly sexual freedom can exist.

In comparison to Stoker, these vampires embrace sexuality, physical contact and unadulterated lust. Stoker's vampires represented a hypersexualized version of these feelings which he used to present as a negative aspect of society. Of course, these feelings or hypersexualized individuals were women in contrast to Rice's sexual male vampires. Lestat is representative of the sexuality and eroticism that vampirism can offer

to the individual. The ritual between blood giving ceremony or transformation results in the eternal bond between two individuals who then become lovers. The process and ceremony is an intimate performance. Despite the vampire narrative that Rice creates, the anxieties of the author seep into the text and they merge into a single narrative; a narrative that makes the characters and author inseparable from one another. The characters become a manifestation of the author's anxieties, personalities and beliefs. For example, New Orleans is a major setting in Rice's novels; the city also plays a major role in the life of Rice. By placing the familiar within the unfamiliar or fictional world, Rice creates an alternate reality, one that allows for the movement of her vampires.

Similar to *Dracula*, the vampire does not represent one single anxiety that presents itself in the text. Louis stands in for loss and the anger, confusion and moral conflicts that arise with immorality and lust for blood. The narrative's historical silence is that of the current state of the homoerotic culture during the 1980's, or more specifically the appearance of HIV/AIDS during this time in the United States. New Orleans, a major city that Rice is familiar with, is a melting pot filled with lively individuals. In this world, Louis and Lestat are a stand in, together they are representative of a same sex couple. They have a sexual freedom, which allows them to occupy the space that enables Rice to commentate and challenge public opinion. She validates this experience with the interaction of the vampires with each other, society and pushing the sexual boundaries or lack thereof that exist within the narrative. When it comes to relationships in Rice's Vampire Chronicles series, the erotic language and relationships is a tangled web of lovers and victims. In order to create a vampire, a maker must drain their victim before

giving them their blood in return. After the exchange is done, the fledglings live in a state between that of the living and dead, it is a cyclical existence.

The creation of the vampire in this way would put any person living in state of paranoia in a state of distress. Since the vampire is neither living nor dead, but exists in a state of being, vampirism is an infectious disease that spreads through the creation and passing of blood to a fledgling. The vampire figure itself, is representative of several things. In *The Vampire Lestat* and *Interview with The Vampire*, vampires are relative to each character and their relationship to Rice and then the audience. In this case they become an emotional outlet, an erotic desire, representation of a homosexual relationship and defender of it as well. Anne Rice strives to normalize the relationship between her vampire characters and the audience in order to create an understanding of sexual freedom, while rewriting the vampire narrative.

Rice creates a new culture surrounding the vampires. Her vampires are a sexual and free to do as they please. They exist alongside one another and engage in society. This type of behavior of the vampires is mimicked and the rejection of the Stoker's *Dracula* is a recurring process in many vampire narratives. It is common in contemporary vampire narratives for the vampires to be handsome or pretty, rich and a conflicted moral being. All of these characteristics came from "The Vampire Chronicles" series, in which she creates the origin story for the "American Vampire". This duality in the vampire nature began with Rice's vampires— they are both human and vampire. This is more so a "Western vampire phenomena." The initial shift began with Carl Laemmle and Tod Browning's *Dracula* that "americanized" Stoker's original narrative. The film paved the

way for Anne Rice's own narrative to gain footing and instead of drawing from *Dracula*; she disengages from the European vampire narrative. These different works demonstrate the malleability of the vampire trope.

In contemporary vampire narratives, the vampire is still an erotic figure, but they are romantic vampires. Similar to *Interview with The Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*, Meyer's vampire narrative reconstructs the vampire narrative. Meyer's *Twilight* is important to the vampire timeline for several reasons. First, the popularity of the vampire narrative cannot be denied, especially among teenagers and young adults. Meyer tosses away the menacing and slightly unattractive *Dracula* trope in favor of Rice's alluring characterization of the vampire. Second, Meyer's narrative grounds the vampire narrative in the West so that it is truly an "Americanized" narrative. In her narrative, she includes Native Americans and adds on more folklore to the vampire narrative. Third, Meyer introduces werewolves, another supernatural being, into the narrative. This allows for interactions between werewolves, humans, and vampires all at once. More importantly, her vampires are dateable, they are less of a fearful "other" and presented as more of an "exoticized other". Finally, Meyer deals with her fair share of sexual anxieties, religious symbolism, and lore which is much more different than Stoker and Rice.

Chapter 3- The Romantic Vampire figure in *Twilight*

Twilight is a familiar franchise to many, the novel is not only popular but it earned a spot on New York Times Bestseller. The *Twilight* film was just as popular and had a high grossing amount of \$190 million from just the first film alone. Whether someone saw the Hollywood version or read the book on their way to work or school, *Twilight's* name has become as familiar as *Dracula*. However, *Twilight* is often thought of first as a romance and then as a vampire narrative. Often you hear, “that’s a better love story than *Twilight*. ” This is a negative critique amongst the anti- fan base that has formed around this series. The romance of *Twilight* has transferred outside of the vampire narrative. The lead characters, Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart have become synonymous with their characters, Edward and Bella.⁴⁸ Romance in both the movie and novel were the key elements. So, if this is thought of as a romance, what does the supernatural or vampires offer in this narrative? The vampire is a versatile figure and the role of vampires in *Twilight* because is similar to its predecessors in the fact that it alludes to a greater issue at large. Essentially, the vampires in *Twilight* help teens and young adults navigate the pressures of sex, relationships and high school.

In the *Vampire Chronicles*, Anne Rice helped shape and mold what we now know to as the “American vampire”, which is the reinvention of Stoker’s own vampire narrative, *Dracula*. The fearsome monster in Rice’s narrative is an exoticized “other”, a being that indulges in sexual pleasure and physical contact without disrupting social order. Thus, the vampire has remained in the adult sphere for quite some time, but in

⁴⁸ The *Twilight* movies were a sensation and the lead characters, Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart became synonymous with their characters Edward and Bella.

contemporary novels, vampires are not full adults, instead they are teens. In Meyer's *Twilight*, the vampire is a romantic figure, not as sexualized as the figures in Stoker or Rice's work, but they fit within the spectrum nonetheless. *Twilight* is the reimagination of the vampire narrative as it moves away from what has been seen as an adult fictional genre. With *Twilight*, the vampire has now become accessible to teens and young adults. In order to accomplish this, Meyer transforms the fearsome figure into a romantic figure and places it within the romance genre. The vampire narrative has now become a love story and not just any—it is a tragedy.

Meyer's writing is influenced by many of the great classics such as Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and William Shakespeare. These authors have their roots both in poetry and of course, romance. In reimaging the vampire, Meyer seems to draw from the classical tale of *Romeo and Juliet* or the Shakespearean love story trope, which is just as eternal as the vampire figure. What more can you ask for in a story? Shakespearean romances have drama, romance and most of all *tragedy*. Also, Meyer draws on the figure of romantic heroes. Edward is a dark, brooding man; he's inaccessible by his vampire nature. He is alluring and elusive, similar to Jane Austen's Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* or Emily Brontë's Heathcliff. This consists of a internally tortured male characters that soon overcomes their flawed nature for the sake of romance and love. These key elements and characteristics weave together a narrative that pulls on the heartstrings of the audience and places the vampire into a vampiric Romeo.

Twilight draws on the idea of star-crossed lovers, which is a common trope for Shakespearean romance as well. On one level, you know the two lovers are doomed

from the start, but their tenacity draws you in and their tragic end leaves you breathless. This very essence creates Meyer's vampire narrative; it is a story about young love and the hardships that come with that unbridled love. However, the tragic nature of the vampire and the complicated relationship between the human and vampire is what makes this story a *Shakespearean* drama. This romantic plot has become timeless; the eternal struggle between one's love and nature of their being reappears in contemporary novels such as *Twilight*.

Twilight may be the last thing one thinks of when tracing the vampire narrative. Vampires are present in the text, but this shifts completely away from Rice's hypersexual vampires. However, they embody the compassionate, human-like rendition of vampires introduced in the 1970's. Meyer creates a vampire narrative that captures the characteristics of being human while remaining a creature of the night. *Twilight* is a paranormal teen romance⁴⁹ novel, which is a combination of romance, supernatural and young adult (YA). The vampire's appearance in Meyer's vampire series is not incidental because as proven before, the vampire is a malleable figure. However, by observing the role of Edward and his human interest, Bella, one can begin to shift through the true meaning of the vampire within the text. In order to understand the relationship between Edward and Bella in, it is easier to imagine *Twilight* as a modern spin on the tale of *Romeo and Juliet*. Instead, these two star-crossed lovers that have made their way to the supernatural narrative of Meyer's alternate reality, which both vampires and werewolves run the night. In this narrative, the dashing handsome Edward plays the role of Romeo

⁴⁹ Paranormal Teen Romance- is a genre for teens and tweens at Barnes and Noble and elsewhere. It is a blooming genre, which combines gothic literature, romance, young adult and fantasy. This is a subcategory for paranormal romance, which Meyer leads.

and Isabella “Bella” Swan fulfills her role as Juliet. Though the narrative takes the form of the *Shakespearean* tale it is anything but natural; the supernatural roam free occupy the space in which adolescent and teenage angst mold the text under the guise of first love.

The narrative begins with Bella Swan leaving her home in Phoenix, Arizona in order to live with her father “Charlie.” Immediately, Meyer draws on the same classic trope of ostracizing individuals, which makes it easier for the vampire to enter the narrative. Bella arrives in Forks, Washington which is similar to Stoker’s technique of locking away the vampire or removing them from society. Forks, Washington is Dracula’s new castle. Anne Rice’s colorful and flamboyant New Orleans setting is cast aside. Forks not only displaces Bella, but puts her in the extreme of the region. Within the first few pages Bella describes her new home to the reader:

“In the Olympic Peninsula of northwest Washington State, a small town named Forks exists under a near-constant cover of clouds. It rains on this inconsequential town more than any other place in the United States of America. It was from this town and its gloomy, omnipresent shade that my mother escaped with me when I was only a few months old... It was now Forks that I now exiled myself— an action that took with great horror. I detested Forks.”⁵⁰

Forks is a small town, which she confines herself to out of love for her mother, who took her from this small town at a very young age. The town is described as “gloomy” and “rainy,” which are key elements in the gothic trope, which creates this type environment in hopes of creating an atmospheric effect, one that conceals the true intentions of the narrative and adds onto the enigma of the story. Also, this creates an environment that

⁵⁰ Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight*. (p.3-4)

Bella is now trapped within. A place that is she considers to be the “other” or “unnatural” to her. This is an environment that brings and creates great discomfort.

Furthermore, Washington is at the most northwestern corner of the United States. This western location is parallel to Stoker’s own Eastern Europe. The foreignness of the Carpathian Mountains is parallel to the lush green nature of Forks, Washington. This is a place where the supernatural can exist under the cover of clouds and rain. The environment creates a feeling of entrapment and impending doom, “when I landed in Port Angeles, it was raining. I didn’t see it as an omen— just unavoidable. I’d already said my goodbyes to the sun.”⁵¹ The “impending doom” part may be a little heavy handed, but the inescapable feeling is still present; Bella has already “said her goodbyes to the sun.” With this casting away of the outside world to the confines of Forks, Meyer can now fully immerse the Bella and the audience within her vampire world.

Meyer creates her vampiric space in two ways: through isolation or ostracization of the characters and combining the fictional world with actual historical narratives or realism. By merging the real world with the fantastical world of the vampire, Meyer is able to weave a vampire narrative that is validated by the real world. Forks, Washington is a real location, similarly to Rice’s New Orleans setting. Without a doubt, the reader is able to understand that these locations are authentic and so there is some truth in her vampire narrative. Also, in closing them within the space of a town, the narrative, people and culture are carefully manipulated around a vampire character. The surrealism of vampires and werewolves simply merge together. Furthermore, the realism that Meyer

⁵¹ *Twilight* pg.5

draws from is the local legend of Forks, Washington, which centers on the indigenous narrative of the Quileute Nation.

In reality, *Twilight*'s setting is enriched in culture and home to an indigenous narrative that exists within the narrative as well as outside. Before Meyer discloses the full history of her vampires, the Cullens, the Quileute Nation is first revealed. The Quileute Nation's narrative was used to situate the vampire narrative within a historical frame. This is executed during the conversation between Jacob and Bella as he explains the local urban legends at the reservation.

"Do you know any of our old stories, about where we came from—the Quileutes, I mean? He began."

"Not really," I admitted."

"Well, there are lots of legends, some of them claiming to date back to the Flood—supposedly, the ancient Quileutes tied their canoes to the tops of the trees on the mountain to survive like Noah and the ark." He smiled, to show me how little stock he put in the histories. "Another legend claims that we descended from wolves—and that the wolves are our brothers still. It's against tribal law to kill them. Then there are the stories about the *cold ones*." His voice dropped a little lower."⁵²

Meyer easily slips the history of the *cold ones*, her fictitious background of the vampire into the Quileute Nation's historical narrative that already exists in Washington. During their conversation, Jacob refers to the "Flood," and after some general research one can find that this event took place in the Quileute's narrative. According to their ancient creation story, a wandering "Transformer" changed the Quileutes from wolves to a human form. The only kindred that were once tied to the Quileute nation, the Chimakum Tribe, which was washed away by the "Flood" and left the Quileute tribe without any

⁵² *Twilight* pg.124

known relatives.⁵³ Since this narrative already exists, Meyer's own vampire can exist beside this pre-existing historical narrative. Though it places the spotlight on a Native American tribe from the Pacific Northwest, the Quileute tribe, their narrative validates and verifies Meyer's own. Instead of journal entries like *Dracula*, one has the Quileute nation's narrative to confirm the existence of these vampires, or as Jacob states, "they are the *same* ones." By merging her own narrative with a historical narrative that already exists, Meyer is creating an alternate reality in which her own historical narrative intertwines with the supernatural reality of vampires. Now that the historical narrative of the Quileutes nation and Forks, Washington has been set, who exactly are the Cullens?

According to Edward, the Cullen family began with the creation of Carlisle. The most noticeable aspect of Carlisle's history is when Edward states "he (Carlisle) was studying in Italy when he discovered the others there. They were much more civilized and educated than the wraiths of the London Sewers."⁵⁴ In Meyer's narrative, she predates Carlisle's existence before that of Count Dracula, which means Carlisle, would have been in the London sewers even before Jonathan's existence. This not only predates *Dracula*, but insinuates that London is full of "uncivilized" vampires. Also, Carlisle's history throws a shadow over Count Dracula's own origin because Stoker doesn't give an actual birthdate for Count Dracula. This means in Meyer's narrative, Carlisle is older than Stoker's own vampire creation— Count Dracula. Carlisle's history is also a contrast to Rice's own narrative, specifically the journey both Claudia and Louis take in order to

⁵³ "Joomla Templates." Quileute Nation. Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.quileutenation.org/history>.

⁵⁴ *Twilight* pg.340

meet other vampires in Eastern Europe. Why does she do this? One reason may be that Italy is the place of love, romance and culture and this is a romantic tragedy of some sort. In the end, Carlisle leaves the Old World for the New World, which centers the vampire narrative in America.

The main attention of Meyer's vampires however is given to teenage/young adult vampires that attend Bella's high school. Though Meyer's vampires are not as flamboyant as Rice's Lestat de Lioncourt, they are just as alluring and eye catching. Bella first meets the Cullen "siblings" during her first day of school. When she first lays eyes on the Cullen family, she is in awe over their unnatural beauty and grace. The Cullens are unlike anyone she has encountered so far and their abnormal beauty causes them to stand out and exist as the "other." The "other" that is different from the mass majority, but desired because of the beauty that each one contains.

"The didn't look anything alike. Of the three boys, one was big—muscled like a serious weight lifter, with dark, curly hair. Another was taller, leaner, but still muscular and honey blond He was more boyish than the others, who looked like they could be in college, or even teachers here rather than students. The girls were the opposites. The tall one was statuesque. She had a beautiful figure, the kind you saw on the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, the kind that made every girl around her take a hint on her self-esteem just by being in the same room. Her hair was golden, gently waving to the middle of her back. The short girl was pixielike, think in the extreme, with small features. Her hair was a deep black, cropped short and pointing in every direction. And yet, they were all exactly alike. Every one of them was a chalky pale, the palest of all the students living in a sunless town. Paler than me, the albino. They all had very dark eyes despite the range in hair tones. They also had dark shadows under those eyes—purplish, brusiellike shadows....I stared because their faces, so different, were all devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Twilight* pg.18-19

The Cullen family members are physically different, which is why they are all “adopted” rather than described as biological siblings. Meyer describes each one vampire in great detail, each vampire is characteristically different, such as ‘golden hair’ versus ‘cropped hair.’ Even though they are drastically different from one another there is a key “sameness” to them as well. They are “inhumanely beautiful,” which amplifies the “otherness” of these vampire characters, but their desirability as well. The vampires in *Twilight* are similar to Rice’s own vampires. The Cullen’s beauty, uniqueness and defining characteristics castaway Count Dracula’s undesirable features. In this narrative, as well as other contemporary vampire narratives, *Dracula* vampire is thrown away and the divine/alluring vampire is formed. These vampires are graceful, desirable, beautiful and striking, which makes them appealing to the human eye. Like Bella observes, they are different yet the same and that sameness is their vampire nature. A characteristic that Meyer hints at being the “purplish bruises.” The vampires are physically different in size; eye color and hair but a distinguishable feature is the bruises under their eyes. Despite their ability to look different they are still the same in nature—vampires. The Cullens are

appealing to Bella, not in just their beauty but their “otherness” as well.



(The Cullens in the movie “Twilight”) fig.4

The otherness is a comfort for Bella. In a way she feels that she and the vampires both have a lot in common.

“I felt a surge of both pity, and relief. Pity because, as beautiful as they were, they were outsiders, clearly not accepted. Relief that I wasn't the only newcomer here, and certainly not the most interesting by any standard.”⁵⁷

Bella is relieved that she herself and the Cullens are both newcomers. Her feelings of both ‘pity’ and ‘relief’ reflect the complications and anxieties that arise while being an adolescent. No one wants to be labeled as the outsider and this is an anxiety that Bella holds throughout the novel. The existence of vampires normalizes her in a way, but also glorifies her difference from the people of Forks. She is different and an outsider, therefore she can socialize with the Cullens.

In comparison to the Cullen family, Bella considers herself to be extremely ordinary. She has an acute self-conscious nature, which in her opinion, demonstrates how plain and ordinary she is compared to others. Despite living in Phoenix, Arizona she didn't tan at all or athletic in any form. In other words, Isabella Swan is an outsider in her

⁵⁶ <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+cullens+at+the+table>

⁵⁷ *Twilight* pg.22

own rights. Her outsider status, her ease with the Cullens is hinting at something much deeper than appearance alone. In fact, Bella occupies a complex space— she plays both the damsel in distress and Juliet to Edward's Romeo. A damsel in distress dates back to the Middle Ages, there is usually a woman/girl in a dire situation and a chivalrous man swoops in and saves her from demise. In the end he is rewarded for his bravery, usually through a token of her favor or love, which may be synonymous in the situation.

Regardless, Bella is constantly in dangerous situations, whether it's her clumsiness or the danger she attracts, Edward is soon there to save her. Bella's role which is due, "Possibly my(her) crippling clumsiness was(is) seen as endearing rather than pathetic, casting me(her) as a damsel in distress."⁵⁸ Whatever the case may be, Edward Cullen is there to save her, which he feels is equally as dangerous because tends to attract things that are bad for her. The examples are numerous, she is often claims to be clumsy, a group of men tried to rape her, she was almost crushed by a truck, and a vampire hunter her down and broke her leg. There are more instances in the novel, but the attraction of Edward to Bella is the biggest danger of them all. Edward serves as both protector and predator, which are similar due to his vampire nature. This is where the true star-crossed lover scenario takes over.

The relationship between Edward and Bella is precarious. Edward often states that Bella is fragile and he could kill her in an instant. There is an allusion to Romeo and Juliet in the relationship between Edward and Bella. It was Juliet's beauty that first enticed Romeo and this is similar to the attraction that Edward has for Bella.

⁵⁸*Twilight* pg.55

“I found myself caught up in your expressions...
and every now and then you would stir the air with your hand or your hair,
and the scent would stun me again...”⁵⁹

Edward loves the humanness Bella has to offer, her “scent” and “expressions” are what captivates Edward. Their love is similarly face paced and without reason. Bella was captivated by Edward’s beauty and his “otherness.” The relationship between them has a lot at stake. The treaty between the vampires and werewolves, at La Push, if Bella is harmed in anyway the treaty will be void. The Cullens won’t be able to stay in Forks any longer, however these are aspects of teenage romance. There is no logic, only passion and what is thought to be love. In the end, it is merely obsession, obsession with beauty, grace and humanness. Vampires are Bella’s way of escaping dull Forks, the place where everyone knew each other.

The vampires in *Twilight* share some characteristics with Stoker and Rice’s vampires, but they are definitely unusual. There are two types of vampires that exist at this time, the first being the *hunter*, which are vampires similar to the wandering vampires that the Cullens encounter. These vampires live nomadic lives and feed off the blood of humans. The second is the coven, the Cullen family is one of the largest covens and their lifestyle is based off living in permanent residency. Though there are other covens, the Cullen family live are seen as peculiar to other vampires because of their feeding habits, which is the hunting of animals. This is not the first time that someone depicts vampires as feeding off of animal blood. In *Interview with The Vampire*, Louis explains that he and Claudia fed off rats on the ship when they went to Eastern Europe.

⁵⁹*Twilight* pg.272

The Cullen family achieves this alternative lifestyle as they hunt for animals that better suit their tastes. After Bella's conversation with Jacob, she decides to do some research on her own; she starts by typing in the word "vampire."

"When the results came up, there was a lot to sift through— everything from movies and TV shows to role playing games, underground metal, and gothic cosmetic companies.⁶⁰

Bella's research demonstrates the hold vampires had on the human world. In Bella's reality, vampires exist but as nothing more than a fictionalized reality.⁶¹ Vampires exist in pop culture as games, movies and underground metal. Maybe, Bella came across Lestat's band in the process, but this scene demonstrates how vampires have literally bled into society. Their existence is nothing more than a highly commoditized niche or camp within mainstream society. However, there are two quotes that Bella reads on the website and they are both equally important in both the construction of the vampire narrative and the representation or symbolism within this novel. The first is by Montague Summers and it's an excerpt from his novel *The Vampire, His Kith and Kin*, which is an investigation of the vampire myth. The quote that Bella finds on the website is as follows:

"Throughout the vast shadowy world of ghosts and demons there is no figure so terrible, no figure so dreaded and abhorred yet delightful with such fearful fascination, as the vampire, who is himself neither ghost nor demon, but yet who partakes the dark natures and possesses the mysterious and terrible qualities of both." --Rev. Montague Summers⁶²

This quote is a complete contrast to the angel-like image of the vampire that Bella describes. Rev. Montague Summers, describes the vampire in the same fashion of Stoker;

⁶⁰ *Twilight* pg.133

⁶¹ Fictionalized reality- fiction that is validated or ground in reality. (ex: America versus Mordor- *Lord of the Rings* made up realm)

⁶² *Twilight* pg.133

they are horrid creatures that are inherently evil. What is interesting about this quote is that the vampire is “neither ghost nor demon.” The vampire is often placed within two existences— human or monster, dead or alive, angel or devil— they exist on the cusp, yet never teeter over to either side. Their existence is a duality or rather a synchronous balance between two extremes. The quote captures the nature of the vampire that society is accustomed to, an image that even influences the way Edward views himself— a monster, damned to hell for all eternity.

The second quote has a similar effect on the vampire narrative or rather proof of its existence. The quote following the first is from none other than Rousseau.

“If there is in this world a well--attested account, it is that of the vampires. Nothing is lacking: official reports, affidavits of well-known people, of surgeons, of priests, of magistrates; the judicial proof is most complete. And with all that, who is there who believes in vampires?”— Rousseau⁶³

This quote is from Rousseau’s Letter to Beaumont” 1764, but the quote itself is incomplete. The last sentence is missing, “Will we all be damned for not having believed?” Why did Meyer not include this tidbit of information, did she not want to darken the seemingly light, romantic text with such a dire question? The quote claims that there are numerous documentations on the existence of vampires and each of the sources come from highly respected individuals. There is no crazed Renfield telling us of Count Dracula’s existence from the asylum, the quote comes from a philosopher. What’s more is that he claims “judicial proof is most complete” and this judicial proof is given by logic, psychology, and general experience, and illustrated in judicial trial. Overall, the quotes validate the vampire’s existence within the narrative; they further ground the

⁶³Twilight pg.133-134

vampire into reality because the quotes are by men that exist in reality. By claiming this reality, Meyer is able to manipulate the vampire narrative.

Meyer's narrative is parallel to the reality of the world; the historical narrative that she ties into her fiction makes an alternate reality. Prominent figures like Rousseau have a voice in this. What's the purpose/reason for quoting these individuals? They validate her vampire narrative, though she is essentially making her own, Meyer is drawing on a reality that is familiar to the readers in order to situate the Cullens. However, similar to Rice she breaks free from the constraints of *Dracula*. The first being that Edward and his siblings are able to go out into the sunlight,

“Edward in the sunlight was shocking. I couldn't get use to it, though I'd been staring at him all afternoon. His skin, white despite the faint flush from yesterday's hunting trip, literally sparkled, like thousands of tiny diamonds were embedded in the surface. He lay perfectly still in the grass, his shirt open over his sculpted, incandescent chest, his scintillating arms bare, His glistening, pale lavender lids were shut, though of course he didn't sleep. A perfect statue, carved in some unknown stone, smooth like marble, glittering like crystal.”⁶⁴

When it comes to sunlight in the vampire narrative, it is quite tricky to pinpoint the effect it may have on the vampire. For example: as Claudia and Madeleine demonstrate in *Interview with The Vampire*, the sunlight is fatal to vampires. On impact the vampires are scorched by the rays and turned into nothing but ashes. However, the sunlight in *Dracula* only weakens the Count and he is not able to shape shift as often as he could during the nighttime. Since there is no definitive rule on sunlight within the vampire narrative, Meyer's vampire are able to sparkle in the sunlight. Edward is described as having pale,

⁶⁴*Twilight* pg.260

cold, hard and reflective skin. His exterior makes it possible for the sunlight to glint off the surface, also the possibility of having one's boyfriend suddenly combust is not a romantic outcome. Though, the use of sunlight is different in every vampire narrative, Meyer is similar to Rice in her rejection of *Dracula's* limitations.

In *Dracula*, the Count is strictly bound to the rules of vampirism. Count Dracula is affected by religious items, water, sunlight and staking. The vampires in *Twilight* are almost invincible and few things can actually destroy them. When Bella questions Edward about vampire myths, he rejects them all:

“Don’t laugh — but how can you come out during the daytime?
He laughed anyway. “Myth”
Burned by the sun?”
“Myth.”
“Sleeping in coffins?”
“Myth.”⁶⁵

This line of questioning is parallel to the conversation between the journalist and Louis in *Interview with The Vampire*. A simple Q&A format which clarifies the myth of the authors' vampires. Within a few lines Meyer rejects the majority of vampire myths, even the ever popular one of being burned by the sun.

“Will you turn into a bat?” I asked warily. He laughed, louder than I’d ever heard. “Like I haven’t heard *that* one before!”⁶⁶(p.279)

Meyer’s use of drawing on these vampire myths is in order to have a light-hearted dismissal of these vampire myths from her narrative. Even though there is a clear

⁶⁵ *Twilight* pg.185-186

⁶⁶ *Twilight* pg.279

dismissal of Stoker and Rice's myth from her own narrative, there isn't a clear explanation on her vampire legends as well.

“Do you think I could walk down the street in the sunlight without causing traffic accidents? There's reason why we chose the Olympic Peninsula, one of the most sunless places in the world. It's nice to be able to go outside in the day. You wouldn't believe how tired you can get of nighttime in eighty-odd years.’ “So that's where the legends came from?’ “Probably.”⁶⁷

However, her dismissal of Stoker's vampire myth and Rice's vampires allows for hyper realism of Meyer's vampires. These characters literally spill outside the text as demonstrated with in terms of Bella and Edward's relationship. Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart, key characters in the Hollywood production of *Twilight* began to date during the movie series production. The vampire aspect wasn't a transferrable feature, but the romance between Edward and Bella was. Meyer's vampires offer a safer alternative to the sexual vampires that were created in the 1980's to combat the fear of physical love. Bella and Edward indulge in an emotional love. This emotional love is restrictive and heavily monitored; each of these characters is careful in the ways they choose to demonstrate love.

“I caressed his cheek, delicately stroked his eyelid, the purple shadow in the hollow under his eye. I traced the shape of his perfect nose, and then, so carefully, his flawless lips. His lips parted under my hand, and I could feel his cool breath on my fingertips. I wanted to lean in, to inhale the scent of him. So I dropped my hand, not wanting to push him too far.”⁶⁸

The vampires are desirable, “flawless” angelic-like creatures that are dangerous by their very nature, yet tamable by the mere action of love. Similar to the point made about

⁶⁷ *Twilight* pg.291

⁶⁸ *Twilight* pg.277

Rice's vampires, [Meyer's] "vampires focus not on the anatomy but the total experience and proximity and contact, offering an alternative, disease-free erotic fantasy for human imagination."⁶⁹ The relationship between Edward and Bella is more innocent than the relationship between Lestat and Louis. Rice's language implies that something is taking place within the coffin, but there is no mystery about what is happening in the bedroom with Edward and Bella. Meyer brings the audience into what is considered an intimate space, but it is an innocent space because nothing sexual is occurring.

Young and old delve into the world of Meyer's vampires and one can't help but wonder why these particular vampires are appealing to both age groups. First, Edward Cullen helps young readers to experience love, lust and sexual desire, which are contained by the vampire figure. The novel is a romance, but is carefully monitored by friends, Charlie (Bella's father) and Edward who rejects Bella's more intimate advances. Also, Edward is dangerous just as he is alluring. The juxtaposition between the two is a constant reminder that this is not a simple alluring teen. He is a vampire and therefore he is dangerous. Chastity is sacred in the text and nothing happens until (spoiler alert) until after they're married. Despite the sexual desire and tension in *Twilight* that arises between Edward and Bella, they do nothing more than kiss or hold on to one another. The relationship is virginal, pure and subdued. Even the act of feeding is a restrictive act. In the text as it is simply confined to the hunting of animals. Those that hunt animals have golden eyes and those that hunt humans have red eyes; there is a hierarchical othering in the act of vampirism. It insinuates that the Cullens are "one of the better ones". The

⁶⁹ Yurguis, Katia. ""The Dark Gift"" (p.7)

Cullens are vampires, but don't behave in a fashion that is associated with vampirism. It is also important to note that once the vampire bites a human an immediate transformation begins to take place. There is no time to indulge or enjoy the blood of the victim. Unlike Rice's vampire narrative, Meyer's vampire transition is extremely painful and undesirable. Thus this sets limitations through the usage of pain. Louis's ecstatic sensation of being a vampire is lost in this narrative, instead there awaits only an intolerable amount of pain and death for Meyer's vampires.

The differences in Meyer's vampires compared to other vampire narratives are plentiful. However, Rice began the complex vampire character or the idea that vampires can retain their human characteristics, which is adopted by Meyer. The vampires are complicated figures in her novel. Meyer's vampires have humanistic qualities and so they are able to maintain sympathetic creatures. Each of the Cullens was created without their consent and so the struggle between their human nature and vampire nature. These vampires have feelings. Edward similar to Louis in their romantic sentiments, but actually there are numerous similarities. Both are in love with mortality or that human nature should remain as such. They are adverse to the creation of fledglings, but nonetheless they desire a connection and both are plagued by their vampire natures.

Further into the novel, *Twilight*, Edward opens up more about his plights with vampirism. In many of his arguments with Bella, Edward takes a hard stance against his vampire nature. It is a critical view, which he sees himself as a monster.

"What's your definition? But he ignored my question and asked me another. "Do you think that I could be scary?...I decided to go with the truth. "Hmmm... I think you *could* be, if you wanted to." "Are you

frightened of me now?’ The smile vanished, and his heavenly face was suddenly serious.”⁷⁰

The state of nature his vampire nature is in conflict with his human characteristics.

“Well...’ He paused, and then the rest of the words followed in a rush. “I’ve decided as long as I was going to hell, I might as well do it thoroughly.”⁷¹ Edward is fixated on the idea that due to his vampire nature that once he is destroyed that he will be condemned to hell. Unlike, Rice’s vampires who are weary of the idea of a higher power such as the Devil or God, Edward is weighed down by this idea. He believes it almost to be a monstrosity to exist as a vampire. Vampires survive by consuming the blood of their victims, which is a major sin in the Christian religion. Blood consumption is dangerous because “the life of the body is in its blood”⁷² and this leads to the killing or transformation of the human body. This is the condemnation that Edward faces and he is aware of the dangers in pursuing a relationship because Bella’s life and soul are at risk. Edward believes that by changing Bella into a vampire, she too, will be condemned to an afterlife in hell. Rice’s vampires weren’t as weighed down by those ideas of hell or eternal damnation. Louis strongly believed that hunting humans were moralistically wrong, but soon never adopts the “vegetarian diet” that the Cullens rigorously follow. Instead, Edward’s consumption of human life is in the past and the soul that he has is damned to hell once he is destroyed. Edwards’s anxiety is not without reason, there is

⁷⁰ *Twilight* pg.107

⁷¹ *Twilight* pg.87

⁷² 17:11 (chapter 17 Verse 11) *Or to make atonement for you.*

strictness to his behavior and though it isn't explicitly stated, boundaries are set in place for the vampires in the narrative.

Bella is an innocent, pale virgin that is susceptible to not only danger, but love as well. Edward is her savior and he so the vampire appreciates her. There are boundaries placed on the role of the vampire, they are domesticated figures— lovers of human nature. They serve as safe fantasies of romance. Meyer gives young teens a taste of sensuality that is not overwhelming sexual. Vampires are safe as fulfillers of teenage notions of love and relationships. Meyer accomplishes by normalizing Bella and Edward, if we remove the vampire from the narrative, it is simply a teenage love story, complete with awkward first dates, over protective fathers and the infamous love triangle (or in Bella's case the love square). Vampires exist to make the transitional period feel less overwhelming and the anxiety over sex is contained in a simple yet complex romance. It is a romantic to feel desired and sought after by an unbelievably rich and handsome man. The only way for this to happen is of course, by one meeting a vampire and him falling in love with you. However, this hyper-reality is made possible through the combination of the vampire and classic gothic and romantic tropes.

In an interview with acclaimed writer, Stephen King, who states that Meyer's, "writing to a whole generation of girls and opening up kind of a safe joining of love and sex in those books. It's exciting and it's thrilling and it's not particularly threatening because they're not overtly sexual." The vampire is an indestructible, characteristically human, romantic figure that is not "overtly sexual." Bella and Edward's love for one another is thought of first because that is the most important aspect of their relationship.

Their connection does not stem from physical contact, but the contact that they engage in is careful, measured and appropriate. The vampire is a safeguard against the anxiety that stems from sexual desire or lust. It is a metaphorical abstinence ring that protects Bella from her clumsiness and human hormones that way she can focus on school, friends and her own personal growth. In the end, she will be rewarded with immortality.



(Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart as Edward and Bella) ⁷³

⁷³ <https://www.google.com/search?q=bella+and+edward>

Conclusion

The presence of vampires in contemporary literature has become increasingly popular. Unsurprisingly, there are hundreds of articles, books, and research projects dedicated to discovering everything about the elusive vampire figure. These sources are equally dedicated to unearthing the mystery on the origin of the vampire as if their origins can clarify the myth and their enigmatic existence. There is a possible origin, but it is lost amongst the piles of vampire material circulating in the world. In fact, it is hard to determine what are distinguishable features in vampire lore. “Duplicity and ruse are innate features of vampirism. The undead embody falsehood and all stories about them serve their cause in one way or another.”⁷⁴ This is precisely the case when it comes to figuring out vampire lore or the origin story where in most cases vampirism is fictionalized. Vampire stories served the purpose of creating a fearful “other” that threatens social order and in the end is defeated by man.

The fearful “other” has been linked to Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia, who killed his victims in a torturous manner or by impaling them on long poles, which witnesses claimed even while he ate a meal. As disturbing as that may sound, many believe Vlad the Impaler to be the origin of vampires, but that is incorrect. Vlad the Impaler was the inspiration of *Dracula* and other sources prove the “vampire” is documented before Stoker’s creation. In this case, popular vampire narratives are taken for truth and often are the starting point, such as *Dracula*. However, other narratives like Sheridan Le Fanu’s

⁷⁴ Butler, Erik. *The Rise of the Vampire*. London: Reaktion Books, 2013.

Carmilla and Lord Byron's poem, *The Giaour* both predate *Dracula* and are viable options to the vampire's beginnings. However, this still leaves the main question unanswered: what does the appearance of the vampire in a novel signify?

Are they human or monster? Depending on the text they can be either. *Twilight* demonstrates the romantic vampire with human-like characteristics. The vampire exists in many forms; the meaning shifts and depends on the text in order to assign it a role within the text. The vampire exists as a dark "other", an anti-hero or fiendish creature that preys on the innocent. More importantly, the vampire is cursed among the living. It is an exotized and ostracized "other" that is both alluring and repelling in the eyes of mortals.

The vampire's role is constantly shifting; it can play the role of the anti-hero, villain, or sexualized supernatural creature. However there is a common belief or accusation in each of the narratives, in which the vampire comes from the devil. This may be a Christian damnation of the vampire figure, in which beings that are unfamiliar are then dangerous and from the devil. The creation of vampires is by transforming the innocent, a body that was once human and made by God, into a fiendish creation that is of the Devil. The condemnation of vampires is heavily ingrained in religious dogma and belief system. However, if we cast that aside we are left with Anne Rice's vampires who claim, "they have never seen the devil." In their world, God and Devil play minor roles; only evil and goodness control their actions. This emphasizes the vampire's ability to reason, an ability that is inherently human. If vampires are condemned or subject to moral judgments, which are all constructs of mortal man, then they too are man.

In novels such as *Twilight*, *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Vampire Lestat*, the vampire's viewpoint is finally revealed to the audience. The desires, fears and anxieties of the vampire are exposed and one is able to understand the motives behind the actions of these creatures. However, the vampire's viewpoint is rather limited to just a male perspective. The female vampire is lacking in many narratives, vampire narratives may shift drastically if the female vampire's perspective were included in the narrative. There is Claudia in *Interview with The Vampire*, *Carmilla* and the women in *Dracula*, but the female vampire is always projected as a hypersexualized being and a tragic end awaits them in the conclusion.

In each of the novels, vampires function in a multitude of ways. They are eternal supernatural entities that possess physical bodies. They are representative of the unspeakable or the fears that can metaphorically manifest. The vampire is a reflection of personal desires and societal or personal anxiety. They mask the inevitable; the hidden desires that seep into literary texts as a result of the changing times. Vampires become the "other", a feared and desired entity that serves a platform for social commentary. These vampires are publicized, no longer are they hidden in the shadows but appear in novels, movies and similar popular platforms. More importantly, vampires are not manifested out of thin air, vampires are ourselves or at least the anxieties and fears that are hidden away inside. We only need to pull away from the teeth that are embedded into our necks and put a stake in it.

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