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BRAM STOKER'S *DRACULA*:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC WINDOW INTO FEMALE SEXUALITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will explore the ways in which Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) shows through the central female characters, such as the three vampire sisters, Lucy and Mina, a powerful female sexuality that critiques and challenges the Victorian notion of female sexual desire. The Victorian belief states that women had no sexual appetite. This thesis will reveal that *Dracula* is a subversive, and even transgressive, text by bringing forth strong images of female sexual desires.

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“I’ve learned that everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you’re climbing it.” – Anonymous

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Introduction

“I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him. I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on his victim. And oh, my God, my God, pity me! He placed his reeking lips upon my throat!”

The glamorization of vampires has reinvented the depiction of the monster. Originally, evil was manifested through non-human creatures, such as vampires or werewolves. They became labeled as villains because of their non-human appearance and qualities, essentially their differences. However, today's culture drastically changes the idea of the monster. Popular media, such as *Twilight* and “Vampire Diaries,” altered the once threatening figure of vampires into likable, even heroic, individuals. The current cultural taste stresses the populous' need to humanize non-human characters. Thus, their human qualities make these creatures relatable. Inevitably, Hollywood's deadly claws sunk into the once feared creature and molded it into a glamorous celebrity; however, society has warped the original presentation of monsters, mainly the vampire. Bram Stoker's classic horror novel, *Dracula* (1897), is the strongest influence on the vampire. The novel places the original emphasis on the vampire as a dehumanized, evil creature capable of anything rather than the typical glorified hero that is represented today.

Stoker's serialized novel, *Dracula*, was written and published in the Victorian period. It was an age dominated by societal constraints and restrictions of expressing individual and sexual desires. *Dracula* emphasizes the lust and sexuality that was suppressed by most Victorians; their fear of feminine sexuality, the Victorian's stereotypical attitudes toward sexuality, becomes a prominent theme within the novel as the literary critic, Judith Weissman, suggests (Weissman 69). Stoker created the figure of the vampire as a creature capable of unleashing the characters' repressed sexual desires. According to Phyllis Roth, author of *Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's Dracula*,

Stoker uses vampirism as a disguise for the characters to show their “greatly desired and equally strongly feared fantasies” (Roth 59). He imagined Dracula, the villain, as a being who is able to expose the sexual desires and lustful actions that lie dormant within the characters. These erotic and sensual acts presented by the women and confronted by the men of the novel reveal the Victorian fear of sexuality. Before beginning this investigation, one must have a basic understanding of the Victorian era, the inspiration for Stoker’s thrilling tale, in order to fully grasp the significance of *Dracula* and the monster persona it has created.

A Victorian View on Female Sexuality

There existed a prejudiced view in regards to women and their sexuality in the Victorian era. A common male attitude perceived women as sexless beings. Women were believed to have no sexual appetite that needed to be fulfilled; instead, their only type of desire was to satisfy the male’s needs. According to Dr. William Acton, an influential Victorian doctor whose essays discussed women’s sexuality:

There are many females who never feel any sexual excitement whatsoever. Others, again immediately after each period, do become, to a limited degree, capable of experiencing it; but this capacity is often temporary, and will cease entirely till the next menstrual period. The best mothers, wives, and managers of households, know little or nothing of sexual indulgences. Love of the home, children, and domestic duties are the only passions they feel. (Acton 180)

Essentially, Acton believed that women had little to no sexual desire. They were very simple in terms of sex since they “are not very much troubled by sexual feeling” (Acton

179). However, Acton acknowledged the idea that some women were lustful and contained an appetite for sex, but he saw these as unusual sexual desires that “surpass those of men, and shock public feeling by their exhibition” (Acton 179). Therefore, Acton’s expert opinion states that women did not exercise an interest in their own sexuality, and if they did it would then be a “shock” to the public and their male partner. Many Victorian women were stereotyped. It was believed that they only desired the role of mother, wife, and daughter. Acton’s attitude to women greatly influenced the Victorian’s belief that women possessed no need for sexual gratification.

According to Nina Auerbach, there existed a wish fantasy by most Victorian men that women would fulfill the role of the “angel in the house” (Auerbach 66). The following passage is an excerpt from Acton’s essay about one of his cases with a young couple. The woman consulted Acton about her desire to have a family with her husband in order to “conduce their mutual happiness” (Acton 181).

She assured me that she felt no sexual passions whatsoever; that if she was capable of them, they were dormant ... I believe this lady is a perfect ideal of an English wife and mother, kind, considerate, self-sacrificing, and sensible, so pure-hearted as to be utterly ignorant of and averse to any sensual indulgence, but so unselfishly attached to the man she loves, as to be willing to give up her own wishes and feelings for his sake. (Acton 181)

Acton believed a woman should sacrifice her personal desires for her man. Thus, the depiction of women as an angel in the household became the idealized and most concrete perception of a proper Victorian woman’s behavior. Coventry Patmore’s poem, “The

Angel in the House,” invented the stereotypical persona that a woman should act as a perfect angelic creature in the household (Auerbach 66). It presented the idea that women are prime examples of selfless beings who are so absorbed in the family life that their identity does not exceed the role of daughter, mother, and wife (Auerbach 66). According to *The Victorian Woman* by Suzanne Cooper, a book dedicated to the exploration of women in the nineteenth century, Patmore’s poem coined the term *angel*, and it inevitably became applied to “every demure wife who created a haven for her menfolk in the well-ordered home” (Cooper 10). Therefore, Victorian culture exhibited an anxiety towards female sexuality. Typically, the women became fearful of their own sexuality because it was considered unknown, undefined, and unnatural. If women were more sexual than their man, as Acton alludes to, then the man would not be the dominant, active, and highly sexual partner; the women would fulfill this role.

Dracula and Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud’s theories of sexuality allow us to better understand how the women were sexual beings before meeting Dracula. For Freud, we are sexualized beings, even from our earliest childhood. Psychoanalysis allows us the methodology of exploring more fully our sexual nature and how it finds expression through dreams, language, etc. Undoubtedly, Freud’s theories regarding sexuality weave a rich tapestry displaying the Victorian fear of expressing sexual feelings and desires in *Dracula*.

Developed by Freud, the original definition of psychoanalysis consists of the “investigation of mental processes which are almost inaccessible in any other way” (Laplanche and Pontalis 367). Currently, psychoanalysis is defined as an investigation in the manifestation of the unconscious meaning of words, actions, and products of the

“imagination (dreams, phantasies, delusions) of a particular subject” (Laplanche and Pontalis 367). Freud believed that investigating one’s state of unconsciousness would reveal repressed desires; however, this definition of psychoanalysis has been enhanced, as noted above. Psychoanalysis continually is redefined, but the central driving force is the examination of the unconscious and the powerful role of sexuality in human beings, both in males and females. Ultimately, the individual never has direct access to the unconscious, and so it manifests in other forms such as physical touch and dreams.

Repressed feelings of fears and desires are predominantly expressed through unconscious states, mostly in dreams. The definition of repression revolves around the idea that we yearn to satisfy pleasurable acts, but the possibility of the requirements and consequences that would incur from fulfilling these desires would make the experience less pleasurable (Laplanche and Pontalis 390). Therefore, we repress satisfying these feared desires during consciousness because we are aware of our actions and the societal repercussions we might experience. The desires are then forced into our subconscious states, i.e. dreams, where the individual is able to fulfill these repressed needs. According to Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan’s introduction to Sigmund Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud believed that “the mind harbors wishes or desires that lie outside awareness but that nevertheless manifest themselves at night in dreams” (Freud, Rivkin, and Ryan 397). Each individual possesses desires, wants, and needs that are forced into their unconsciousness, and therefore must be expressed in unconscious states because there are no consequences in such a state. In Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he expresses the belief that these repressed desires are unable to be acted upon in the conscious state as it is deemed as unacceptable, but the unconscious state allows one to

express these desires because there is no need for censorship or judgment in one's own imagination (Freud, Rivkin, and Ryan 397). Their sexuality can be expressed and their desires can be met. The essential understanding of the fascination of dreams, according to literary critics, is that even "fear-dreams" are still a function of dreams as "wish-fulfillment" (Freud 4). In essence, Freud believed that we show our sexual activity in ways that we try to repress.

Dracula and Sexuality

Ultimately, Stoker constructs a tale where dreams become a reality that unleashes the characters' own repressed desires due to the mere influence of Dracula's character. The application of Freud's definition of dreams will allow us to uncover the characters' underlining fear of expressing their own sexual desires which is seen mainly through the women. Therefore, the characters in the novel project their desires onto the character of Dracula where they can be acted upon.

In the Victorian era, there existed an examination of multiple discourses that ranged from sexology to psychology that presented the idea of multiple sexual identities (Foucault 892). "The nineteenth century and our own have been rather the age of multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, a multiple implantation of perversions" (Foucault 892). According to Michel Foucault, the research from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and so forth produced the multiplication of sexual identities, which began to erode the traditional Victorian roles. These multiple identities expanded the Victorian view on women. Victorian women are capable of expressing other sexual roles and desires besides that of wife and mother.

Dracula explores the idea that women are more sexual than men, and, therefore, they desire more than being a nurturer. The identity of a sexual woman is highly pronounced in *Dracula* as Stoker erases the defining line between dreams and reality. In the traditional Victorian era, the idea of sex and sexual acts was seen as a ghastly subject. Directly discussing such intimate details was unacceptable and often repressed. Foucault has demonstrated how the Victorian age often broke “the rules of marriage” by “seeking strange pleasures” (Foucault 893). Similarly, Stoker shows his characters seeking strange pleasures outside of marriage such as the sucking of blood and bodily fluids. The sexual acts that the characters display in their dreams would be classified as “grave sins” and “debauchery” to the traditional Victorian (Foucault 893). This inevitably strengthens the female characters’ sexual identities they display in their dreams that are projected into reality. Stoker fully confronts the issue of female sexuality through *Dracula*, and the female and male characters that are affected by him.

Female Sexuality Uncovered

Dracula’s vampirism is the essential characteristic that attracts and eventually converts the female characters into vampires. Constantly, he indulges in sensual and sexual acts, and, as vampires, the women are able to fulfill their dormant desires that were usually restricted in Victorian culture. His spread of vampirism empowers the three vampire sisters, Lucy Westenra, and Mina Murray to become voluptuous, sexualized women. The vampire figure gives these characters the opportunity to act upon their repressed sexual desires. Therefore, these women directly confront the Victorian fear of female sexuality as their sensual wants and needs are finally exposed to the men in their lives.

The three vampire sisters symbolize the overt female sexuality that most Victorian men feared and, in the case of *Dracula*, desired. They are erotic, sensual, and possess sexual desire that surpass that of men. Lucy represents the ideal Victorian woman, the glorified angel of the household. However, she too is sexualized and is made aware of her desires when she succumbs to vampirism. Finally, Mina serves as the mother figure that descends into the role of the “fallen woman.” Her sensual interaction with Dracula and her progression into vampirism stresses her fallen, rejected status. This section will analyze the three vampire sisters, Lucy, and Mina’s conscious sexual states.

The Three Vampire Sisters

Unlike Lucy who transforms from a Victorian woman into a voluptuous vampire, the three sisters are sexual throughout the novel. The only thing known about the vampire sisters is their connection to Dracula. “ ‘You yourself never loved; you never love’ ” (Stoker 46). This dialogue expressed by one of the vampire sisters infers that they have a past with Dracula, which leads the audience to believe that these women were always sexual since Dracula has been a constant presence in their lives. Therefore, their dominant sexuality confirms the male fear that their pursuit of sexual gratification surpasses that of men. Rather than experiencing the unconscious dream-like states that Lucy and Mina do, the vampire sisters are conscious and indulge in sex and sexuality. Ultimately, the sisters unleash the dormant sexual desires in the male characters. Jonathan Harker and Van Helsing expose their sexual desires through their interaction with the vampire sisters.

The vampire sisters are first introduced in Jonathan Harker's journal entries while he recounts a "dream" he believes he experienced with them.

I suppose I must have fallen asleep; I hope so, but I fear, for all that followed was startlingly real ... Two were dark, and had high aquiline noses, like the Count, and great dark, piercing eyes, that seemed to be almost red when contrasted with the pale yellow moon. The other was fair, as fair as can be, with great, wavy masses of golden hair and eyes like pale sapphires. (Stoker 44)

The presence of the vampire sisters forces one to question reality. Their physical appearances are so striking, alluring, and sexual that Harker cannot discern imaginary from reality. He begins to doubt himself because of his uncertainty if his interaction with them was a dream or "startlingly real" (Stoker 44). However, their voluptuous, lusty appearances attract Harker more so than his fear of them. Firstly, Harker vividly described their appearance even though he was supposedly "fallen asleep" (Stoker 44). The only striking and abrupt feature of the two vampire women was their dark features, but Harker places greater emphasis on describing the "fair" vampire. He has a clear recollection of the "wavy masses of golden hair" and her "eyes like pure sapphires" (Harker 44). Harker intricately describes every striking and alluring feature he finds attractive. Instantly, the fair vampire tempts Harker because of her light colored hair, skin, and overall appearance. To Harker, she signifies the ideal Victorian woman because of her sexual nature.

I seemed somehow to know her face, and to know it in connection with some dreamy fear, but I could not recollect at the moment how or where. All three had brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. (Stoker 44-45)

The fair vampire begins to awaken Harker's lust for sex and sexuality, but in this passage he begins to become hypnotized by the dark features of the other two vampires. "All three had brilliant white teeth, that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips" (Stoker 45). Each one of them gives off a dangerous, erotic, sexual allure that Harker struggles to repress. "I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (Stoker 45). However, in his conscious state he admits to his wicked fear and "burning desire" to be kissed by them (Stoker 45). As Roth notes, Harker admits to his desire and anxiety with the female vampires that he cannot easily forget (Roth 64). Their dark aquiline features, voluptuous lips, the lapping of their tongue, and their sharp white teeth mesmerize him. He begins to desire and becomes easily seduced by their dominant sexuality. He recognizes this impulse but tries to repress his desire by remembering Mina briefly. "It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth" (Stoker 45). Rather than fulfilling his sexual desires that the vampire women represent, he quickly remembers the repercussions he would endure from the Victorian culture. He becomes conscious of his actions but that does not persuade him to escape from the vampire sisters.

For Harker, the vampire sisters represent a surge of female sexuality that the Victorians tried to repress. Instead of becoming disgusted with their overt sexuality, he is excited and yearns to experience pleasure with them. Unknowingly, Harker's initial desire for the fair vampire is fulfilled as she approaches him first. "The fair girl went on her knees, and bent over me, fairly gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive ... Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed about to fasten on my throat" (Stoker 45). The first impression of the fair vampire's actions to Harker is that she is about to perform oral sex. Before her lips fasten on his throat, Harker notes that there was a sense of voluptuousness that he described as "thrilling and repulsive" (Stoker 45). He was both intrigued and disgusted by her sexuality. Yet, he did not stir or show that he was conscious during her physical contact with him; instead he sits there anticipating her next move. After this sentence, he continues to describe how her head went "lower and lower" which again presents an allusion of oral sex until she suddenly secures her lips on his throat (Stoker 45). Harker expresses an even intense description of his anxiousness of his sexual desire for her.

The skin of my throat began to tingle as one's flesh does when the hand that is to tickle it approaches nearer - nearer. I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waited - waited with beating heart.

(Stoker 45-46)

Harker does not show disgust or an urge to move away from the touch of the vampire, but rather he stresses a longing for it. His skin is “supersensitive” and his flesh tingles by her touch (Stoker 46). Most importantly, his eyes are closed “in a languorous ecstasy and waited-waited with beating heart” (Stoker 46). Thus, Harker’s unconscious desire to experience a dominant sexual woman overrides his desire to conform to the Victorian culture and be faithful to Mina. He permits the fair vampire woman to continue her sensual acts even though he is aware of his sexual pleasure. He has no desire to stop her. Most interestingly, the fair woman and not the dark vampire women stir up these repressed desires. In essence, the fair woman can symbolize another side or version of the virginal Mina, the sexual Mina that he desires.

Van Helsing is another victim in desiring the voluptuous, sexual vampire sisters. He is the most formidable foe and primary leader in destroying the vampirism that Dracula continues to spread; however, the appearance of the vampire women even makes Van Helsing waver in killing them. At first, Van Helsing shows a disgust and disdain for the vampire sisters. When the sisters come to convince Mina to join them, he notices how Harker’s and his perception of the vampire women conflict.

I knew the swaying round forms, the bright hard eyes, the white teeth, the ruddy colour, the voluptuous lips. They smiled ever at poor dear Madam Mina; and as their laugh came through the silence of the night, they twined their arms and pointed to her, and said in those so sweet tingling tones that Jonathan said were of the intolerable sweetness of the water-glasses: -
 ‘Come, sister. Come to us! Come! Come!’ (Stoker 390-391)

Van Helsing is aware of the capabilities and the appearance of the vampires as he states that he “knew their swaying forms” (Stoker 390). According to him, he sees the epitome of evil and disgust. While Harker saw sweetness, Van Helsing saw demons. Yet, his perception unexpectedly changes when he attempts to kill them in their sleeping states.

She was so fair to look on, so radiantly beautiful, so exquisitely voluptuous, that the very instinct of man in me, which calls some of my sex to love and to protect one of hers, made my head whirl with new emotion. But God be thanked, that soul-wail of my dear Madam Mina had not died out of my ears. (Stoker 394)

When Van Helsing opens the sisters’ coffins and attempts to kill them, he is overcome with a desire to hold them. Just as Harker, he too stops to admire their beauty and sexual voluptuous qualities that reawakened the “instinct of man” in him (Stoker 394). Even Van Helsing’s previous experiences with vampires could not hinder the new emotions and thoughts that the vampire sisters stirred in him. Mina’s shrill scream forced Van Helsing to repress his desires and continue his murderous act. Thus, he conformed to the Victorian culture by destroying these sexual women. This small instance emphasize that even the weathered Van Helsing is susceptible to the sexuality that arises from the vampire women.

Lucy

Lucy represents the fair, demure woman that Victorian culture fancied. Similar to Mina’s predicament, she too becomes a fallen woman as her repressed desire of fulfilling her sexual needs are satisfied in her vampire form. In order to fully grasp her character, it

is vital to map out her transformation from Victorian woman into her sexual “bloofer lady” persona as a vampire.

As stated previously, women only sought the role of wife, mother, and daughter. Lucy is the perfect embodiment of this ideal Victorian persona. Her character is first introduced through her letters to Mina. In the first letter, Lucy immediately discusses her interaction with the most recent men she met. Her writing is then consumed with describing her attraction to Arthur Holmwood who she describes as “absolutely imperturbable” (Stoker 63). Through her wide range of suitors, he is the only man that strikes her fancy as she concludes in her letter, “But oh, Mina, I love him; I love him; I love him” (Stoker 64). Within the first letter, Lucy’s character is introduced in an idealized feminine nature. She is quick to discuss her love life and a woman capable of swooning any man. More importantly, she is noticed and looked upon with favor in Victorian culture.

Lucy’s next letter is spent retelling the three different marriage proposals she received in one day. The men of the novel, Jack Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and Quincey Morris, who would later become essential characters, were all infatuated with her appearance and demeanor in public. All three of these men proposed to Lucy, with two shouldering defeat, only Holmwood’s proposal was accepted. Quincey writes to Arthur discussing the engagement, “We both want to mingle our weeps over the wine-cup, and to drink a health with all our hearts to the happiest man in the wide world, who has won the noblest heart that God has made and the best worth winning” (Stoker 69). Lucy is seen as the “noblest” woman that God had created (Stoker 69). Ultimately, she is the personified angel that Victorian culture desired.

Mina supports the belief that Lucy is the perfect woman during their stay in Whitby. “Lucy was looking sweetly pretty in her white lawn frock; she has got a beautiful color since she has been here. I noticed that the old men did not lose any time coming up and sitting near her when we sat down ... I think they all fell in love with her on the spot” (Stoker 73). Her outward demeanor, mainly her fair beauty and alluring countenance, presents Lucy as an angelic creature. According to Burton Hatlen, author of the essay *The Return of the Repressed/Oppressed in Bram Stoker's Dracula*, “In his descriptions of the impossibly pure Lucy, Stoker reveals the degree to which he shares in his society's obsession with ‘purity’ in women” (Hatlen 123). Stoker is critiquing the Victorian culture's view of female sexuality and sex. She is “immaculately, implacably virginal” and she desires matrimony, the ideal Victorian woman (Hatlen 122). In public, Lucy displays a perfect countenance and demeanor expected in the Victorian period; however, she becomes a different character in private in which Dracula eventually feasts upon.

As mentioned earlier, Lucy is proposed to by two different men, later on a third, and she becomes so ecstatic that she states an unaccepted idea in Victorian society. “Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it” (Stoker 67). This remark, while simple in nature, becomes a repressed desire that Lucy reveals to Mina but then automatically revokes her statement. Essentially, Lucy is stating that she wants to have sex with three different men and for it to be accepted. Instantly, she calls this “heresy,” a belief that is opposite of Christian religion, and retracts her statement because it is not accepted (Stoker 67). Lucy realizes the weight of her words and ultimate desire, and so in order to continue the

façade as the “proper” Victorian woman she denies her desire because it is not acceptable. As Hatlen notes, Lucy is admitting to a need for a more sexual state that differs greatly from her virginal state. “But to Stoker’s credit it should be pointed out that he also reveals an awareness that the sexuality which this society has denied will, in some form, return” (Hatlen 123).

Paradoxically, Lucy’s repressed desire, stated above, is granted through Dracula and his manipulation of dreams. Later in the novel, it is made obvious that Dracula is constantly feeding on Lucy, which in turn causes her to lose a significant amount of blood. Van Helsing notices this and performs a blood transfusion on Lucy from three different men, Arthur Holmwood, John Seward, and Van Helsing himself. Van Helsing notices the sexual implication of the blood transfusion. “ ‘Said he not that the transfusion of his blood to her veins had made her truly his bride...But there was a difficulty, friend John. If so that, then what about the others? Ho, ho! Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist’ ” (Stoker 158). Van Helsing implies that Lucy is a polyandrist, a woman married to more than one man at one time, and he tries to hide this secret from Lucy for it is seen as unacceptable. Previously, Lucy admits to wanting more than one man, but instantaneously disregards such a preposterous idea. And yet, her slow transformation into a vampire and her interaction with Dracula enables her desire to be acted upon in reality. Through Lucy’s sleep and dreams Dracula consumes her blood, and in doing so she is able to make her repressed desire of having more than one man a reality through the blood transfusions. The blood is performing the agency of semen because of the penetration. By giving blood to Lucy, the men are penetrating her and forcing their own bodily fluids into her. This allows her to experience multiple sexual identities as her

blood is mixed with blood from three different men, none of whom are her husband, as she remains single.

Lucy's evolution into vampirism further enhances her repressed sexual desires and acts. As Roth observed, "vampirism is a disguise for greatly desired and equally strongly feared fantasies" (Roth 59). When Lucy is a human she is often described in terms of purity as a fair-haired beautiful woman, but as a vampire she is sexualized. She is characterized as "voluptuous" and dark-haired which gives her beastlike qualities. Instantly, Lucy tries to lure Arthur into her grasp in her sexualized vampire state. Lucy announces this in her vampire form when Van Helsing and Holmwood approach her in the graveyard. " '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' " (Stoker 226). Momentarily, Arthur is hypnotized by Lucy's new sexual appearance until Van Helsing physically restrains Holmwood from approaching Lucy. As a newly awakened vampire, Lucy possesses a desire to obtain as many lovers as possible. As Roth suggests, her sexual appearance in death makes her a threatened figure, according to Van Helsing's group, and therefore must be destroyed (Roth 62).

As a vampire, Lucy's darkened beauty is constantly remarked within the novel and even by the characters as it is learned that she is feasting on children who refer to her as the "bloofer lady," the beautiful lady, and whom the children "wanted to play with" (Stoker 209). Through this "bloofer lady" persona, she is regressing from her acceptable desires of matrimony and motherhood that she expressed as a human. In her new vampire form she attacks the children by sucking their blood and has blood transfusions with three different men. Dracula enables Lucy to act upon her repress desires through her alternate

vampire form. She is now a more sexually deviant woman capable of satisfying her desire of multiple lovers and want for children. She enacts her sexuality to such an extent that the male protagonists must destroy her as they cannot face such abrupt versions of sexuality. This is shown in one of the most intensely erotic scenes in the novel.

Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. (Stoker 230)

This scene sexualizes Lucy to the greatest degree. Here, there are four men in her tomb while she is sleeping. Van Helsing, Quincey Morris, and Doctor Seward chant as Arthur Holmwood takes “the stake and hammer” and drives it into Lucy’s heart, another form of penetration (Stoker 230). Holmwood penetrates Lucy repeatedly which alludes to sex. “The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered” (Stoker 230). The description of Lucy’s body contorting and screaming suggests that she is having an orgasm through Holmwood’s penetration. Even when Holmwood hears her screams and notices the wild movement of her body, he is described as Thor, the god of thunder, as he drives the stake “deeper and deeper” into

Lucy (Stoker 230). Again, this presents the image that he is having intercourse with Lucy as he continues to thrust the “stake” into her. The peak of this sexual activity is “the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it” (Stoker 230). The spurting of Lucy’s blood symbolizes the ejaculation of a man during sex. Once Lucy is dead, Arthur is described as physically exhausted. “The great drops of sweat sprang out on his forehead, and his breath came in broken gasps” (Stoker 231). Again, this description alludes to the impression that Holmwood has had intercourse with Lucy due to his sweaty demeanor and gasps of air. Overall, there is avid penetration performed by all the men. While Holmwood drives a stake into Lucy, the other men penetrate her by chanting as a method that is meant as the “blessed hand for her that shall strike the blow that sets her free” (Stoker 229). It almost appears as a gang rape as all the men take part in the demise of the sexual vampire form of Lucy. As noted by Christopher Craft in his essay, the “violence against the sexual woman here is intense, sensually imagined, ferocious in its detail” (Craft 182). For becoming a sexual woman, Lucy must be punished by sexual means. Thus, her immediate death is caused by a sexual act of penetration by the man she was to marry before her transformation. Ultimately, Lucy invokes multiple sexual identities as she played the role as pure Victorian woman in her human state, but, as a vampire, she is explicitly sexual and craves for sexuality that is finally fulfilled by the men and their destruction of her.

Mina

Mina is presented as the strong willed heroine within the novel, a figure that the men look to with admiration. Yet, as the novel progresses she too becomes the tainted, impure, fallen Victorian woman. The difference between Mina and the other female

characters is that she unknowingly labels this despicable persona as the “New Woman” (Stoker 29). This idea is mentioned within her journal entry while in Whitby with Lucy. “I believe we should have shocked the ‘New Woman’ with our appetites. Men are more tolerant, bless them” (Stoker 99). She continues in the same entry, “New Woman ... will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too” (Stoker 100). According to the footnotes edited by Maurice Hindle, the “New Woman” is defined as a woman who is “progressive,” independent, and expresses sexual indulgence (Stoker 445). As Phyllis Roth highlights in her essay, Mina is verbally assaulting the non-traditional “New Woman” in her culture (Roth 58). Here, she expresses how their appetites would stun “New Women,” but Mina states her happiness that the men are accepting. Thus, she places the men’s expectations and judgment above her fellow women. Mina continues to condescend towards the “New Woman” by emphasizing that it would be foolish looking if the “New Woman” proposed instead of the men. According to Mina, they would make “a nice job she will make of it, too” (Stoker 100). These snippets of journal entries reinforce Mina’s distaste for the “New Woman” and to distance herself from that label.

However, Mina and Lucy slowly begin to fully embody the “New Woman” persona through the influence of Dracula. While Lucy completely transforms into a vampire, Mina never fully becomes a vampire in the novel. Regardless of her lack of complete transformation into vampirism, Mina still exhibits similar traits to Lucy because of her interaction and connection with Dracula. They both seek sexual gratification and are independent in their vampire state. Yet, Mina is the female character who is most resistant to becoming categorized as the “New Woman” even though her repressed desires are rooted in this persona since her desire is of being useful to her husband,

Jonathan Harker. Ultimately, Mina becomes the most sexualized and sensual woman in the novel through her direct interactions with Dracula. Simply, the vampire state is equivalent to the “New Woman” persona. Mina slowly changes from a Victorian woman into the “New Woman” because of the vampirism that begins to spread throughout her body. As a vampire, she exercises independence and an appetite for sexual satisfaction that the “New Woman” represents.

Like Lucy, Mina expresses her primary desire to be of help to her husband within her first letter. “When we are married I shall be able to be useful to Jonathan, and if I can stenograph well enough I can take down what he wants to say in this way and write it out for him on the typewriter, at which also I am practicing very hard” (Stoker 62). Mina’s primary desire is to help Harker in any way possible. She yearns to fulfill the role of wife and revolve her existence around her husband’s needs. Thus, she exhibits the traits of a traditional Victorian woman. She is selfless and bases her desires upon that of her husband’s needs. And so, she tries to master secretarial skills, a feminine role, in order to fulfill this desire in her conscious state. Yet, even though Mina is aware of her desire and works towards it in her conscious state, she has a repressed desire to be independent which is stressed by mastering secretarial skills without Harker’s knowledge. Dracula eventually fulfills this as she slowly transforms into a vampire.

Mina’s desires are traits that the “New Woman” embodies. “I shall try to do what I see lady journalists do: interviewing and writing descriptions and trying to remember all that goes on or that one hears said during a day” (Stoker 62). In this passage, Mina expresses a need to mimic the lady journalists she admires; however, these women

journalists are considered independent as they seek information on their own accord. This is a small glimpse of Mina's desire to be like the "New Woman."

In another mention of the "New Woman," she expresses her disdain for them while also hinting at her desire to become one.

Some of the 'New Woman' writers will some day start an idea that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting. But I suppose the New Woman won't condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice job she will make of it, too. (Stoker 100)

Mina too is expressing her distaste for the "New Woman" who appears more dominant and independent. Yet, these repressed ideas are fulfilled by the influence of vampirism. Firstly, the men of the novel see Lucy in her frail sleeping condition while Van Helsing, Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and Quincey Morris are caring for her. Specifically, they see her sleeping during their blood transfusions. Also, Van Helsing sees the vampire women sleeping in their coffin before he drives a stake through their heart. Similarly, Mina sees Harker sleeping while he is recovering from his time in Dracula's castle prior to their wedding. She even recounts how she is delighted that Dracula was the cause for his illness and not another woman. "The idea of *my* being jealous about Jonathan! And yet, my dear, let me whisper, I felt a thrill of joy through me when I *knew* that no other woman was a cause of trouble. I am now sitting by his bedside, where I can see his face while he sleeps" (Stoker 115). Yes, he is ill from his episode with Dracula, but, ultimately, Dracula created this opportunity for Mina to see his sleeping face even though she is not married to him, and she originally rejected this idea presented by the "New

Woman.” These needs and wishes that Mina expresses were fulfilled through Dracula’s influence.

Yet, these desires are satisfied without her transformation into vampirism, but her intimate acts with Dracula stress the sexuality that Mina is attempting to reject. The act of sleep brings a moment of uncertainty where her repressed desires come closer to the surface and are eventually fulfilled. Mina is presented as the mother figure in the novel that is the main support for the men. However, when Dracula disrupts her dreams and begins to feast upon her strong, protective, and motherly persona, Mina’s demeanor is reduced to a helpless, docile woman. “There now, crying again... I had been crying twice in one morning - I, who never cried on my own account, and whom he has never to shed a tear” (Stoker 274). Uncontrollably, Mina cries after waking from her slumber, unknowing the reason for her tears. Dracula manipulates her dreams to weaken her once strong character.

Horrific scenes of darkness symbolizing Dracula’s consumption of her blood mark the duration of her dreams, and yet she believes these nightmares to be simple illusions. “I took the sleeping draught which you had so kindly give me, but for a long time it did not act. I seemed to become more wakeful, and myriads of horrible fancies began to crowd in upon my mind-all of them connected with death, and vampires; with blood, and pain, and trouble” (Stoker 305). Undoubtedly, Mina craves for sleep but the hypnotic allure of slumber calls forth her repressed desires for sexual acts. Dracula is displayed as the highly sexual being within the novel through his acts of transferring blood and seducing all forms of beings into his grasp. As Roth notes, through sleep,

Dracula seduces Mina to the path of vampirism where her desires of sexuality are projected into reality because as a vampire she is able to do what Dracula can (Roth 61).

Mina's excessive amount of sleep allows Dracula to enter her dreams, and inevitably have Van Helsing's group catch her in a scandalous sexual act with Dracula.

On the bedside the window lay Jonathan Harker, his face flushed and breathing heavily as though in a stupor. Kneeling on the near edge of the bed facing outwards was the white-clad figure of his wife. By her side stood a tall, thin man, clad in black ... With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker'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 the torn-open dress. (Stoker 300)

This scene is the raw manifestation of the sex and sexuality that Stoker alludes to throughout the novel. The descriptions and positions of the three main characters, Harker, Mina, and Dracula, make this scene so disturbing in nature because Mina is engaged in an intensely sexual act with another "man" while her husband is in the same bedroom, on the same bed. Harker is "besides the window" with "his face flushed and breathing heavily" in a "stupor" (Stoker 300). As Judith Weissman notes, his flushed and near unconscious state suggests that either Dracula has cast a spell on him or that Harker has just had intercourse with Mina (Weissman 75). The next description is of Mina who is kneeling on the bed facing Dracula who is standing. The choreography of this scene suggests that her drinking Dracula's blood is equivalent to oral sex since the swallowing

of blood is equal to the swallowing of semen. Even when Mina describes the scene to the men, she never states what she has swallowed. “ ‘When the blood began to spurt out . . . seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the – Oh my God! My God! What have I done’ ” (Stoker 307). Finally, Dracula grips Mina’s neck and forces her face to drink the blood from his breast. “Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man’s bare breast which was shown by the torn-open dress” (Stoker 300). Not only is Mina forced to swallow Dracula’s bodily fluids, i.e. blood, the description of her night dress leaves one to wonder if his broken vein produced all that blood or if it was the first time Mina had intercourse.

Van Helsing’s group witnesses this explicit sexual act of exchanging bodily fluids. Instantly, Van Helsing sees this act and raises the crucifix to ward Dracula off. The use of the crucifix against Dracula and Mina can be seen in a symbolic light as both figures are not married to one another, and are still engaging in overt acts of intimacy, an atrocious sin for traditional Victorians. Weissman points out that though Mina constantly struggles with accepting the call to vampirism, she is marked as “unclean” and tainted, proof of her unaccepted new sexualized state (Weissman 75). “ ‘Unclean, unclean! I must touch him or kiss him no more. Oh, that it should be that it is I who am now his worst enemy, and whom he may have most cause to fear’ ” (Stoker 303). Ultimately, Mina realizes that her oral and sexual acts with Dracula have tainted her and that she no longer wants to have sex with her husband (Weissman 75). Mina has had sexual intercourse with two men, Dracula and Harker, and her new sexuality has turned her into the “New Woman.” “ ‘I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him’ ”

(Stoker 306). Even though Mina was conscious of what happening between herself and Dracula, she did not want to stop it. She felt ecstasy, an orgasm, through Dracula sucking her blood and she sucking his. The vampirism slowly infects Mina as she constantly sleeps and displays a significant intimate mental connection with Dracula. She too exhibits a multiplication of sexual identities as she engages in a sexual affair with Dracula even though she is married, unacceptable to the common Victorian and even in society today.

Before Mina entered the path of vampirism, the men within the novel admired her intellect and courage. She was a prominent figure within Van Helsing's group as she freely made the decision to give Jonathan's and her own diary to Van Helsing to have examined. "Ah, that wonderful Madam Mina! She has man's brain-a brain that a man should have were he gifted- and woman's heart. The good God fashioned her for a purpose, believe me, when He made that so good combination" (Stoker 250). As Van Helsing implies, Mina's character is formed into an androgynous figure where she fashions both men and women traits. Primarily, Mina is the character who begins the expedition to end Dracula through her phenomenal use of recording every bit of information. And ironically, Van Helsing and the other male characters isolate her from this as they feel it is "no place for a woman" (Stoker 273). Phyllis Roth returns to this idea in her essay that this seclusion allows Mina to be preyed on and ultimately transformed into a vampire due to the neglect from the men (Roth 63).

Yet as her transformation into vampirism progresses, her overall character asserts a dominant, independent air. This is primarily evident after the final blood consumption from Dracula. "The poor, dear lady shivered, and I could see the tension of her nerves as

she clasped her husband closer to her...Then she raised her head proudly...After a pause in which she was evidently ordering her thoughts, she began” (Stoker 305). Directly after being caught with Dracula, exchanging blood, Mina gathers her courage and begins describing the sexual act she committed with Dracula while her husband wails in the background. Stoker reverses the roles stereotypically assigned between men and women. Though Mina is the one who was assaulted and burdened with vampirism, Jonathan becomes the prominent figure displaying excessive hysterical emotions while Mina confronts her fate alone. After such a traumatic experience, Mina’s “New Woman” persona is further enhanced as she announces that she will kill herself if she threatens to harm anyone she loves. Van Helsing and the other men are shocked by such a blunt idea. “No, you must live! You must struggle and strive to live, though death would seem a boon unspeakable. You must fight Death himself...I charge you that you do not die-any think of death” (Stoker 310). Traditionally, men assert death as the only avenue and it becomes the woman’s duty to give a dramatic explanation of life and that they must live. However, Van Helsing’s speech and Mina’s potential suicide invokes the opposite. The men are telling Mina that she must survive and live while Mina states that she must die if she succumbs to the vampirism flowing through her veins. Thus, she is establishing her independence from the men in her life by choosing to abide by her own values, the defining trait of the “New Woman.”

As Mina slowly succumbs to vampirism she continuously displays a dominant demeanor. After the initial shock of Mina’s vampire state, the men decide that she must be kept in full confidence regarding the plan to destroy Dracula. Yet, over time, Van Helsing’s group begins to slowly distrust Mina. This is primarily shown after a Wafer is

placed on Mina's head and sears her flesh leaving a red mark. The scar, similar to Dracula's scar on his forehead, implies that she is rejected by God and is condemned to hell. Van Helsing becomes apprehensive regarding Mina and decides to put her at a distance once more from the slaying of Dracula. However, when Mina realizes she contains a mental connection with Dracula, she uses this newfound ability to continually aid Van Helsing after he isolated her once again. "I want you to hypnotize me! Do it before the dawn, for I feel that then I can speak, and speak freely. Be quick, for the time is short" (Stoker 332). From the hypnosis, Mina projects herself *into* Dracula and is able to give descriptive detail regarding his location. Since she is able to see and hear what Dracula can speculate if she can feel what Dracula feels as well. It is only through Mina's heightened vampire state and help that Van Helsing and the others are truly able to destroy Dracula.

Mina's independent thinking and actions support her desire, of becoming the "New Woman." Initially, she rejected the concept of the "New Woman" and favored the traditional Victorian woman, but as the novel progresses so does her desire to become a "New Woman." Mina is forced to face her fate of vampirism, and in doing so she becomes more dominant and assertive while the men become hysterical. Therefore, Mina becomes the "New Woman" that she originally disliked. She is independent and will no longer only abide by the commands of her husband, which is shown as she devises a way to track Dracula. Even though Mina eventually becomes "cured" of the vampirism and returns to her human state, she cannot erase her past sexual experiences with Dracula. She is still going to remain the woman she has become through Dracula's influence.

Renfield

The tale of *Dracula* is prominently focused on Dracula's influence over the women in the novel, and so the importance of a minor character, such as Henry Renfield, is often forgotten. Yet, Renfield plays a pivotal role within the text, one that drastically alters the fates of the characters. The key difference between Renfield and the other characters is that he is already influenced by the presence of Dracula, while the others are still learning about Dracula's existence and power. The two characters that are transformed into vampires, Lucy and Mina, remain blind to his control over them. Lucy dies without even knowing Dracula's existence or influence over her, and Mina is oblivious of Dracula's presence until she is forced to drink his blood. However, Renfield already confronts and accepts his desire of aiding Dracula and becoming a vampire, but Renfield never becomes this creature. He remains human. This leads to the conclusion that Renfield is conscious of Dracula and his control over him.

He is the essential character who understands Dracula's powers and tactics in converting the women the most. And due to his direct connection and avid communication with Dracula, Renfield is characterized as a "madman." As Burton Hatlen mentions in his essay, this insanity only emphasizes his "condition of absolute cultural otherness" because his way of thinking is seen by the Victorian culture as "unacceptable" (Hatlen 127). Therefore, he is labeled as insane and his words are meaningless. This eventually leads Dr. John Seward, the doctor and administrator of the insane asylum, to be attracted to Renfield.

Renfield's character is viewed mainly through the perspective of Seward. According to Seward's phonograph entry, he describes Renfield as "sanguine

temperament; great physical strength; morbidly excitable; periods of gloom ending in some fixed idea” (Stoker 69). He is a patient that Seward cannot seem to comprehend. Due to his level of “madness,” Seward approaches him in a manner that intensifies his “insanity.” “I questioned him more fully than I had ever done, with a view to making myself master of the facts of his hallucinations. In my manner of doing it there was, I now see, something of cruelty. I seemed to wish to keep him to the point of his madness—a thing which I avoid with the patients” (Stoker 68). Seward possesses an urge to keep Renfield at his current state of “madness.” He even desires to join in Renfield’s “madness” as he seeks to become a “master of the facts of his hallucinations” (Stoker 68). And so when Renfield’s “madness” begins to give subtle hints about Dracula’s feeding on Lucy, Seward ignores his ambiguous statements because he is “mad.” “The bride-maidens rejoice the eyes that wait the coming of the bride; but when the bride daweth nigh, then the maidens shine not to the eyes that are filled” (Stoker 111-112). Here, as Maurice Hindle marks in the footnote, Renfield is referring to “blood-filled eyes of Dracula” that recently fed on Lucy (Stoker 445). Yet, Seward does not take any notice of the significance of his statement.

Even when Mina visits Renfield, upon their introduction he tells her “then don’t stay” as a hint to escape from Dracula’s grasp (Stoker 248). Once Mina begins to say goodbye to him, he hints again at her problematic future. “ ‘Goodbye, my dear. I pray God I may never see your sweet face again. May he bless and keep you’ ” (Stoker 249). Unbeknownst to Mina, she becomes outcast by God as the Wafer sears into her forehead and labels her as “unclean” (Stoker 303). Renfield’s warning becomes a reality. In both instances, Renfield is fully aware of what will happen to Mina and Lucy. He realizes that

Dracula has been feeding on them and the significance of such an act. These are all indications of his knowledge of Dracula that Seward continues to disregard.

Let me entreat you, Dr. Seward, oh, let me implore you, to let me out of this house at once. Send me away how you will and where you will; send keepers with me with whips and chains; let them take me in a strait-waistcoat, manacled and leg-ironed, even to a gaol; but let me go out of this. You don't know what you do by keeping me here. I am speaking from the depths of my heart – of my very soul. You don't know whom you wrong, or how; and I may not tell. Woe is me! I may not tell. By all you hold sacred – by all you hold dear – by your love that is lost – by your hope that lives – for the sake of the Almighty, take me out of this and save my soul from guilt! (Stoker 262-263)

Renfield begs Seward to set him free from his confinement. Through his list of physical restraining devices, “a strait-waistcoat, manacled and leg-ironed, even to a gaol,” he is expressing the severity of the matter in clear, concise speech (Stoker 262). Here, he fully grasps the weight of Dracula's influence over him and he tries to flee from it. Even more so in this particular passage he again hints at his knowledge of Dracula that the men still remain ignorant towards. “By all you hold sacred – by all you hold dear – by your love that is lost – by your hope that lives – for the sake of the Almighty, take me out of this” (Stoker 262-263). He forebodes the future that the men will experience if they ignore his plea, but Seward continues to object his request. He continues to reject the truth Renfield is attempting to relay because of his society defined “madness.” “ ‘You will, I trust, Dr. Seward, do me the justice to bear in mind, later on, that I did what I could to convince

you tonight' ” (Stoker 263). This is one of the final warnings Renfield gives before Mina is feasted upon by Dracula and is forced to drink his blood. Once again, Renfield gives numerous warnings about the presence of Dracula that the men ignore. While he desires to fulfill Dracula's commands, he disobeys them by giving small indications of his acts and actions.

Initially, when Reinfield only spoke to Seward, he was prone to act upon his “madness” in order to become a vampire because he was aware that Dr. Seward was his doctor and that he was in the mental institution. He was playing the role as madman. And so to fulfill his desire, he collected colonies of spiders, birds, flies, and even attempted to kill Seward “ ‘for the purpose of strengthening my vital powers by the assimilation with my own body of his life through the medium of his blood – relying, of course, upon the Scriptural phrase, ‘For the blood is the life’ ” (Stoker 249). Yet, when Mina and the other characters begin interacting with Renfield, he begins to change his original desire.

When Mrs. Harker came in to see me this afternoon she wasn't the same; it was like tea after the teapot had been watered. I didn't know that she was here till she spoke; and she didn't look the same. I don't care for the pale people; I like them with lots of blood in them, and hers had all seemed to have run out. I didn't think of it at the time; but when she went away I began to think, and it made me mad to know that He had been taking the life out of her. (Stoker 299)

Renfield compares Mina to watered down tea as a metaphor for Dracula sucking her blood. In this passage he even states that though he doesn't “care for the pale people,” a direct reference to her lack of blood; he states that he was angered by her condition

(Stoker 299). “ ‘I began to think, and it made me mad to know that He had been taking the life out of her’ ” (Stoker 299). By Mina’s fragile condition, he resolves to fight against Dracula stressing that he did possess control over his thoughts and actions. “ ‘He didn’t even smell the same as he went by me. I couldn’t hold him. I thought that, somehow, Mrs. Harker had come into the room ... I had heard that madmen have unnatural strength; and as I knew I was a madman – at times anyhow – I resolved to use my power’ ” (Stoker 298-299). Renfield decides to disobey Dracula in order to save Mina. Her condition, that was a direct result from “his master,” enables him to reject his desire for blood and life in order to allow Mina to live. Thus, this shows that Renfield was not wholly mad, and at certain times he was sane. He was aware of Dracula’s influence over him, his thoughts, and actions, but he decided to follow his labeled “madness” because that was his desire until he saw Mina’s critical physical state.

Stoker creates an extremely complex and ambiguous character out of Renfield. He is the only man that is fully controlled by Dracula. However, while the women succumb to their desires, Renfield has control over his desires, more so than Lucy and Mina, even though Dracula is a constant presence in his life. His dialogue, while it may appear mad in nature, was all indications of his knowledge of Dracula and clues to his power. Ultimately, Renfield’s existence and connection with Dracula allows him to help save Mina because if it wasn’t for his determination to stop him then the men would have never realized that Dracula has been feeding on Mina. While Renfield is considered “mad” by the characters, in essence, they are all mad because they are all influenced by the presence of Dracula. However, the difference is that Renfield fully confronts his

desires and attempts to satisfy them consciously while the other characters persistently attempt to reject the ideas and desires that Dracula unleash in them.

Count Dracula

Dracula is the last influential character that will be discussed in this paper. Undoubtedly, *Dracula* is a tale based upon the expression of sexuality in both females and males. He is a masculine presence whose form of penetration is through the sucking of blood and the women consuming his own blood. He is a slippery and ambiguous character that both the audience and characters cannot seem to comprehend. His rare instances of dialogue and the epistolary format of the text reinforce the ambiguity and “otherness” quality he represents. Ultimately, Dracula exhibits a type of androgyny as he consumes the blood of men, women, and animals to gain more strength and populate his race. In essence, as Foucault states, he is a “violinator of the rules of marriage – stealer of wives, seducer of virgins, the shame of families, and an insult to husbands and fathers – another personage can be glimpsed: the individual driven, in spite of himself, by the somber madness of sex” (Foucault 894). Thus, his unknown demeanor presents him as the perfect manifestation of evil and the “justified” villain in the text. This inevitably leads him to be categorized as the deviant sexual creature that sexualizes the women. However, Dracula simply allows his victims to fulfill their repressed desires and act upon their sexuality. He brings their subconscious repressed feelings to their conscious state where they can be fulfilled.

In terms of sexuality, there lies a clear difference between Dracula’s sexuality and that of the women. Once the women fulfill their sexual needs, they become more sexual than Dracula himself. As Judith Weissman stresses in her essay, Dracula is more

interested in the power and conquest that he receives through his sexual interactions, but the women enjoy the sensual power of being a vampire (Weissman 76). “ ‘First, a little refreshment to reward my exertions. You may as well be quiet; it is not the first time, or the second, that your veins have appeased my thirst’ ” (Stoker 306). Dracula says this to Mina before he feasts upon her blood again. Here, he is the dominant sexual figure who emphasizes through this dialogue that he has had relations with Mina before. “ ‘I was bewildered, and, strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him’ ” (Stoker 306). Though Mina is frightened by Dracula’s presence, she lays in a state of ecstasy, which can allude to her having an orgasm through Dracula’s sucking of her blood because she “did not want to hinder him” (Stoker 306). Dracula’s dominant sexuality influences Mina’s own zeal for sex. Even though her husband, Harker, is on the bed, she is more focused on the elation she is obtaining through Dracula’s penetration. Harker does not even come to her mind.

Judith Weissman returns to the idea of the prevalence of sex in the text, to Dracula “sex is power” and for the women “it is desire” (Weissman 76). “ ‘Your girls that you love are all mine – my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed’ ” (Stoker 326). Dracula is the character that the male characters fear because he is able to seduce their women and “make them sexually insatiable with a sexual performance that the others cannot match” (Weissman 76). Simply, through Dracula’s influence the women want to become sexual. They want to fulfill their sexual urges and in return they exhibit sexual appetites that are greater than the men (Weissman 77). Since Dracula is an unknown creature, he is able to fulfill their sexual needs that the Victorian men cannot. As Burton Hatlen notices, he represents the limitless bounds of

sexuality that the Victorian culture tried to deny (Hatlen 120). Simply, he allows the women to satisfy their repressed sexual needs.

Though Dracula is commonly regarded as the “villain,” the true monster may be the characters themselves. Dracula is simply a mechanism for the characters to experience indulgence in their sexuality, and, as the catalyst, he is regarded to with fear. Dracula releases the inner demons from the characters and through his influence they are able to fully acknowledge their repressed desires. Ultimately, Stoker befuddles the true monster in the novel. The text does not present Dracula as the only monster, rather, the real monstrosity are the characters’ inability to confront sexuality.

Epilogue

Though *Dracula* is classified as a traditional horror text, it is a tale that directly confronts sex and sexuality that some educators are fearful to discuss within their classrooms. Bram Stoker intentionally created this novel to confront the notion that sexuality should not be “watered down” or disguised. As his characters are forced to do, sex and sexuality must be confronted. In order to allow the student to revel in the richness and complexity in this text, it is imperative to discuss the sexual symbolism that Stoker weaves into his tale. Consulting Sigmund Freud’s idea of the iceberg theory would greatly enhance the student’s understanding of how sex is tastefully written by Stoker.

The most effective pedagogy of teaching this sexual novel is through the art of discussion. Create a circle discussion where the students are the leaders with what they discuss. Instead of prompting them with assigned questions and directed instruction, allow them to steer the dialogue and their exploration of the novel. Through personal experience, most students latch onto a recurring theme or word, such as “voluptuous,”

and their interest in the topic creates a free flowing discussion that involves the entire class. This then opens the class to the discussion of sex and sexuality that the characters represent. Along with the discussion portion, assign three two-page reflections that the student must complete throughout the duration of the novel. In this reflection the student must investigate some idea, passage, or theme that they find interesting. In essence, they are reflecting on their reading which will also direct them towards the sexuality of the text.

Another method of teaching the sexuality represented in *Dracula* is through a final assessment of a creative project (see Appendix). Allow the students to develop their own project that serves as their level of understanding of the text. By having a project of choice, students tend to create projects that exceed the expectations of the teacher. Along with this creative work, assign the student to write an apologia where they must explain the meaning behind their creative project, and they must give a short presentation to the class about their project. Ultimately, in all the above strategies the students' understanding is broadened to such an extent that they are able to successfully discuss the overt sexuality that Stoker uses. And through student led discussion, they locate this symbolism of sex through their own investigation and active reading rather than the traditional style of teacher oriented lessons and lectures.

Appendix

Dracula: A Creative Project/Presentation **Due Monday, October 11**

In the spirit of *Dracula*, you will develop your own creative project that explores an element of the novel. Here are some possible examples: creating a comic book, a series of drawings or paintings based on *Dracula*, a movie inspired by the novel, a lengthy poem, a formal paper, an interpretive dance, a song, and so forth.

This is a project of YOUR choosing and so be as creative as you can. However, you must write a proposal for your project to be given to Gary and Annelise and receive written approval to proceed. You should spend at least 4 - 5 hours, including class time on October 7, preparing this project.

While this is a creative endeavor, there are still some requirements to receive full credit:

A written proposal: 10 points, due by October 6th

There should be at least one typed page proposing your intended project.

An apologia (a written explanation): 10 points, due on October 11th

apologia: "a formal written defense of one's work." This should be at least one typed page. It should contain a rationale for the project, an explanation of why the project is in the current format, and the insights you have gained in the process.

The actual project: 20 points, due on October 11th

A presentation to the class: 5 points, due on October 11th

A short 3-5 minute in-class presentation explaining your apologia to the class and why you choose your specific project.

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The Second Mile (non-profit organization)
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Supervisor: Jeremy Fegret
America Reads
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Supervisor: Priscilla Carman
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