

DRACULA AND NINETEENTH CENTURY ANXIETIES:

Reverse-Colonization, Homosexuality, Female Sexuality and Madness.¹

Drácula e ansiedades do século XIX: Colonização Reversa, Homossexualidade, Sexualidade Feminina e Loucura.

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Artigo recebido em: 31/03/2020

Artigo aceito em: 01/07/2020

ABSTRACT

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the vampire seduces his victims in a way they feel they are being willingly corrupted, and thus they believe to be transgressing a number of codes established by the society they are inserted in, such as moral and religious values. This famous vampire has the ability to embody nineteenth-century anxieties, such as the fears of reverse-colonization or immigration, homosexuality, overt female sexuality and psychological disorders, thus defeating the monster means to restore what it is considered to be the rightful social order.

KEYWORDS: *Dracula*, Reverse-Colonization, Sexuality and Madness.

RESUMO

Em *Drácula* (1897), de Bram Stoker, o vampiro seduz suas vítimas de forma que elas sentem que estão sendo corrompidas por vontade própria, acreditando transgredir uma série de regras estabelecidas pela sociedade em que estão inseridas, como valores morais e religiosos. O famoso vampiro tem a capacidade de encarnar ansiedades do século XIX, tais como os medos de colonização reversa ou imigração, homossexualidade, sexualidade feminina evidente e desordens psicológicas. Portanto, combater o monstro significa restaurar o que é considerado como a ordem social legítima.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Drácula*, Colonização Reversa, Sexualidade e Loucura.

¹ This article is the result of a chapter from a previously produced master's thesis. SOUZA, Érica Sudário Gomes. *Dracula's seductiveness as a representation of temptation and original sin*. 2015. 94f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Estudos Literários) Programa de Pós-Graduação em letras, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, 2015.

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1. Introduction

One of *Dracula's* accomplishments is its monster's ability to embody Victorian *fin de siècle* anxieties. However, what exactly are these anxieties, discussed by so many critics.³ This article will tackle this question and explain why these anxieties are important for the analysis of the novel. In order to understand how the analysis will be done, the epistolary structure of *Dracula* has to be considered. The multiple narratives that constitute the novel offer different perspectives on the same story. Initially, Jonathan Harker, a young lawyer from London, renders the first account of Count Dracula, with whom he had business, at his somber castle. While Jonathan travels to Transylvania to meet his prestigious client and conclude the real state operation of the property the count was acquiring, he decides to keep a journal of his trip to share afterwards with his fiancée, Mina Murray. The lawyer remains skeptical toward strange events that take place in his stay in the castle, until his safety is threatened.

Although Jonathan is convinced he is dealing with the supernatural, he also acknowledges he might have lost his senses. Thus, the reader cannot trust Jonathan's accounts. This is when the reader has access to Mina's journal, and letters, which are also filled with odd events. Mina is also on a trip, visiting her friend Lucy Westenra, but differently from Jonathan's trip, Mina's setting is not unfamiliar or peculiar. A few hours from London, Whitby is supposedly a safe place, somewhere meant to provide an enjoyable time by the sea. Peace is disturbed, however, when Dracula comes to town. Mina's narrative, then, is not jeopardized by strange customs and people in a foreign land, unlike the one her fiancé registers. Her perspective on the story is essential to comprehend the view of a young and respectful English lady from the nineteenth century.

Mina is also the link between Jonathan's story and Dracula's first known

³ In this article, some of these critics will be cited, such as Nancy F. Rosenberg, Martin Willis, and Nina Auerbach.

victim in Whitby, her friend Lucy Westenra. Lucy is being proposed by three suitors: Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, and Quincey Morris. When Mina visits Lucy, the second gets very ill and Dr. Seward invites a former professor, Van Helsing, to see her. Van Helsing knows the real reason of Lucy's illness, i.e., a vampire. He attempts to keep her away from the monster and save her life, but in vain, as Lucy dies and resurrects as a vampire. When her suitors and Van Helsing destroy the creature she has become, they also believe to have restored her soul to eternal rest. Besides Jonathan's and Mina's narratives, there are Dr. Seward's journals, newspaper pieces, and other characters' accounts that help assemble the entire story. Therefore, each character's perspective is relevant when considering their views on religion, science, and their perception of Dracula, who can be seen as a demoniac figure, according to Van Helsing's view, as a seductive being, like for Lucy Westenra, or even as both a demonic and a seductive creature, as the Count is for Mina. Since there is not a narrative unity in the novel, the same event can be narrated more than once and from multiple viewpoints. Rather than being an obscuring factor, the multiplicity of narrators enables a broader analysis of an event, as it enables a consideration of the social perspective of that narrator. Mina's encounter with Dracula, for example, is narrated by herself and twice by Dr. Seward, which allows the reader to see this event through the eyes of a young lady and of a male physician.

Dracula's ability to deal with different nineteenth-century anxieties was discussed by Nancy F. Rosenberg in "Desire and Loathing in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (2000). Rosenberg comments on Mina's statement about good men fighting monsters,

Mina's use of the plural form suggests the additional meaning of the 'monsters' of the late nineteenth century, among them the emerging New Woman, homosexuality, immigration, syphilis, the theory of evolution, and the perception of an overall decay of traditional Victorian values. (1)

Dracula is not one. His multiplicity requires a band of good men, and a woman, from different backgrounds and with different beliefs, to defeat him. The weapon used by these good men and Mina against Dracula, i.e., knowledge, has to be

as multiple as the monster is. Refusing to be an unchanging monster from the past the vampire changes to improve his hunting methods. Dracula learns about his prey's weaknesses and he strikes when they are ignorant and conceited. Dr. Van Helsing, Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris, Jonathan and Mina Harker, however, prove to be able to change as well, believing in what once they did not.

The infected and contagious monster, Dracula, can represent disease itself, and the strategies employed by his enemies in order to destroy him can be compared to sanitation methods, commonly used in the nineteenth century. Martin Willis in “‘The Invisible Giant,’ *Dracula*, and Disease” (2007), writes a historical analysis of the novel, considering Victorian disease theories. Willis defends that Stoker seems to be familiarized with at least two lines of thought concerning public health in the nineteenth century: the miasmatisist and the germ theories. He also believes that a discussion about both theories can be perceived in *Dracula*, vampirism being a metaphor in the novel for infection and disease. Those who advocated the miasmatisist theory believed that the environmental conditions, such as bad water and air, were responsible for diseases. The Miasmatisism appeared as a reaction against another theory, the Contagionism, in which it was believed that diseases were transmitted by touch and originated in particular individuals, who were considered contagious and had to be isolated. This attitude towards the ill, also led to discrimination against the poorest, who were often more victimized by diseases as a result of the terrible sanitary conditions they had access to in the nineteenth century. On the other hand, by the 1870s, scientists started developing the idea that microorganisms, bacteria, could be the cause of diseases, i.e., germ theory. Willis believes that Stocker discusses the social impact of these theories in his novel,

Dracula examines the shift towards germ theory in its portrayal of the vampire and in its construction of the opposition to vampirism by the text's scientific authorities, Abraham Van Helsing and John Seward. The novel also clearly draws on contemporary disagreements over the sources of contagion and the etiology of infectious disease, most effectively in its lengthy evocation of Lucy Westenra's treatment and her eventual (un)death from vampiric infection. (p. 302)

One example of social implications of the vampiric infection is the result of

contact with vampires by Jonathan and Lucy. Ascending from the working class, Jonathan is responsible for bringing the disease into motherland. His contamination, however, seems to be less relevant than that of Lucy. He mentally suffers from what he saw in the castle, but miraculously he escapes the three vampire ladies' kisses. Nevertheless, the rich girl Lucy suffers the ultimate punishment for her misconduct and is completely destroyed.

In *Dracula*, vampires are blamed for other characters' considered immoral behaviors. The same happened with germ theory and the invisible enemies, the microbes. Willis explains that,

germ theory did offer one clear difference from these previous systems of belief [Contagionism and Miasmaticism]; that disease was the product of a living organic being - the microbe or bacteria - whose life, like the life of the vampire, depended on human illness. (p. 312)

Both threats, germs and vampires, require sanitization and elimination, in order to preserve the victim/patient's life. The vampire, seen as an organism that can spread disease, entails other fears from the nineteenth century besides the one of contamination itself. The question about what disease vampires could represent has more than one answer. Not one "disease," alone, according to Victorian moral values, but *Dracula* can also represent madness, homosexuality, overt female sexuality, and immigration. The fear of immigration or reverse-colonization in *Dracula*, mentioned by Rosenberg, is not the perfect metaphor for disease itself, but for the diseased, who could "contaminate" English culture with his foreign customs or even try to overrule the natives.

2. Fear of reverse-colonization

Dracula's wish for dominance is one of his core motivations in the novel. His well designed voyage has an expansion purpose and is planned in a businesslike fashion. In "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the anxiety of reverse-colonization" (2000), Stephen D. Arata defends that *Dracula* enacts the fear of reverse-colonization

through the move the count takes from the oriental, mythical and overruled world to the occidental, civilized and ruler world.

Stoker thus transforms the materials of vampire myth, making them bear the weight of the culture's fears over its declining status. The appearance of vampires becomes the sign of profound trouble. With vampirism marking the intersection of racial strife, political upheaval, and the fall of empire, Dracula's move to London indicates that Great Britain, rather than the Carpathians, is now the scene of these connected struggles. The Count has penetrated to the heart of modern Europe's largest empire, and his very presence seems to presage its doom. (p. 166)

The vampire in *Dracula* is more than a corporeal monster that can harm particular individuals. Its presence in London relocates issues that once were thought to be inherent to colonized areas. Going to London also represents a movement from the medieval past, narrated by Dracula to Jonathan, to the industrial turmoil in which the big city was inserted. In London, the count could create monsters like himself, but that would dominate in a new era. Arata continues,

All the novel's vampires are distinguished by their robust health and their equally robust fertility. The vampire serves, then, to highlight the alarming decline among the British, since the undead are, paradoxically, both "healthier" and more "fertile" than the living. Perversely, a vampiric attack can serve to invigorate its victim. (p. 167)

Lucy does look more alive than ever when she resurrects as a vampire, and more than that, she can finally enact a sexuality once retracted by social conventions in her human life. Her voluptuousness suggests that she is ready to procreate, and create more vampires, in the same way Dracula did to her. Finally, Lucy's transformation into a vampire can also imply a fear of contamination. Her English blood is tainted by Dracula in a slow process which makes her gradually more like the monster. The result of their union is a being that resembles Lucy but carries vampire blood in its veins. This offspring represents the result of miscegenation, the foreigner genes being the most evident in this equation.

Dracula's wish is not solely to "procreate" his race, but to mingle so much into British culture any person does not recognize him as a foreigner. He uses Jonathan to learn all he can about London's customs and to improve his accent. Arata

writes,

The shock of recognition that overtakes Harker, and presumably the British reader, when he sees Dracula comfortably decked out in Victorian garb is, however, only part of the terror of this scene. The truly disturbing notion is not that Dracula impersonates Harker, but that he does it so well. Here indeed is the nub: Dracula can “pass.” (p. 170-71)

An unrecognized evil is unstoppable; therefore, those who know about Dracula’s true identity become responsible for destroying him and preserving the ignorant citizens of London.

Besides Dracula, another character who can be connected to the fear of reversed colonization is the American, and one of Lucy’s suitors, Quincy P. Morris. Despite being a member of the hunting crew, Morris, like Dracula, comes from abroad. His death by the end of the novel, then, restores the natives’ secure and ruling place. According to Moretti, Morris is a vampire, but Stoker could not make this explicit because,

To make Morris a vampire would mean accusing capitalism directly: or rather accusing Britain, admitting that it is Britain herself that has given birth to the monster. This cannot be. For the good of Britain, then, Morris must be sacrificed. But Britain must be kept out of a crime whose legitimacy she cannot recognize. (MORETTI, 2000, p. 152).

However, similar to the critical uncertainty surrounding Dracula’s final death, Morris’s presence does not completely vanish from Jonathan and Mina’s life, and they name their son after the hero. Morris’s residual presence, and possibly Dracula’s, could symbolize that restored London/Britain still had challenges and other monsters to fight ahead.

It could be argued that if Morris represents a threat, for being a foreigner, so does Van Helsing. Nevertheless, Van Helsing’s position is very different from Morris’s. The doctor also has different accent and ideas, but he by no means represents a threat. He does not show any intention to stay in London rather than what is required of him. Moreover, his lunatic wife back in Netherland represents a strong link to his own country. Van Helsing’s stay is requested and important as long

as he and his friends from England fight against the same enemy.

Nina Auerbach in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995) believes that the relationship established between Dracula and its prey is based on the strangeness the count is perceived. Jonathan's response to Dracula is the result of fear towards the unknown, and not primarily sexual.

Dracula is in love less with death or sexuality than with hierarchies, erecting barriers hitherto foreign to vampire literature; the gulf between male and female, antiquity and newness, class and class, England and non-England, vampire and mortal, homoerotic and heterosexual love, infuses its genre with a new fear: fear of the hated unknown. (AUERBACH, 1995, p. 66 – 67)

For Auerbach, the count first seeks power. His wish to go to London, a metropolis peopled with several mortals, is coupled with his desire to rule over his prey, and the ones he transforms into creatures like himself. If establishing hierarchies is at the heart of Dracula's motives, this could also be seen as Van Helsing and his team's core motivation to resist him. Dracula, the monster, the different, the outsider, the other, cannot be allowed to acquire power over London or any of its citizens.

The relationship established between the Count and his lawyer, Jonathan Harker, also illustrates Dracula's wish for dominance. Auerbach believes that there is no affinity between the two characters and they assume opposite and complementary roles right in the beginning of the novel:

Critical ingenuity can detect various subtle affinities between the horrified young man and the horrible old vampire – Jonathan, does, for instance, crawl out of the castle in the same lizardlike fashion that appalled him when he watched Dracula do it – but finally, both assume the rigid roles of master and servant, spectacle and spectator, tyrant and victim, monster and human, making no attempt to bridge the distance. Caste, not kinship, determines their relationship. (p. 70)

Dracula's interest in Jonathan continues provided that the lawyer helps him to get to London, a city full of possibilities for the Count and his thirst for blood. After Jonathan serves Dracula's purpose, he is discarded, left to the female vampires in the castle. However, although Auerbach's claim that Dracula seeks dominance is

very sound, it does not invalidate the possibility of the novel to deal with homosexual anxiety as well.

With a wish to dominate, procreate, and intermingle, Dracula is an aspirant imperialist who becomes frustrated. Owing to some of its resistant natives, Britain is saved, at least for that moment. If a troubled future is indicated by certain doubts concerning Dracula's death, the novel's final scene reinforces tranquility, as seven years after the vampire's destruction London and Transylvania remain undisturbed.

3. Fear of homosexuality

Dracula's longing to dominate Jonathan as a master can also be understood as sexual desire. Dejan Kuzmanovic in "Vampiric Seduction and Vicissitudes of Masculine Identity in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (2009) disagrees with the idea that there is no affinity between Dracula and Jonathan, and explains that *Dracula* is primarily about Jonathan Harker's initiation to professional and sexual maturity. This initiation is only possible provided the Count's disturbance of the lawyer's unconscious, and re-conciliation after that disturbance or crisis. Kuzmanovic claims that in chapter three Jonathan identifies with the ladies who once inhabited the room he is in, and that such identification implies a homosexual desire for Dracula (412). However, if the lawyer experiences such a reversal of sexual position, Jonathan's feminine identification would only reinforce Dracula's heterosexual power, since his victims would feel weak and defenseless confronted with the monster's male seduction power.

Nevertheless, Kuzmanovic has a point when he explains that seduction in *Dracula* plays an ambiguous part in both shattering and enabling the reconstruction of social order:

If in some relatively obvious ways Dracula stands for transgression, he also stands for – or, paradoxically, enables – a recuperation of stability and order. In psychoanalytic terms, Dracula is as much a ruse of the ego

conjured up for the purpose of protecting the ego against disruptions as he is the initiator or facilitator of such disruptions . . . The vampire's seduction is partly a trace of, or a promise of a return to, that pre-symbolic, pre-ego-formation state of complete fulfillment in as much as he is an immortal, inexplicable, shape-shifting force whose presence is mysteriously felt by humans; on the other hand, as soon as Dracula acquires a particular shape, is assigned a particular motivation as well as a set of positive characteristics (things he can or cannot do, for example) – in other words, as soon as Dracula is diagnosed, primarily by Van Helsing – he becomes a figuration conjured up by the ego for the purposes of preventing its further destabilization. (p. 413-14)

Dracula represents a threat to Victorian social order. He blurs the lines between desire and rejection. Since this threat is materialized in the figure of the Count, it can also be physically destroyed.

The absence of some elements in the novel deals as much about homosexuality as if they were present. One of these missing elements is the lack of intimacy between Dracula and humans. Auerbach writes that,

I suspect that Dracula's primary progenitor is not lord Ruthven, Varney or Carmilla, but Oscar Wilde in the dock. The Labouchère Amendment of 1885, which criminalized homosexuality among men, not only authorized Wilde's conviction: it restricted sexuality in the next decade 'by shifting emphasis from sexual acts between men, especially sodomy, the traditional focus of legislation, to sexual sentiment or thought, and this way to an abstract entity soon to be widely referred to as 'homosexuality.'" (Dellamora, *Masculine Desire*, p.200) The Wilde trials of 1895 put a judicial seal on the category the Labouchère Amendment had fostered. As a result of the trials, affinity between men lost its fluidity. Its tainted embodiment, the homosexual, was imprisoned in a fixed nature, re-created as a man alone, like Dracula, and, like Dracula, one hunted and immobilized by the 'stalwart manliness' of normal citizens. Now unnatural and illegal, the oath that bound vampire to mortal was annulled. (p. 84)

Not only Wilde was put to trial but also some of his works, such as *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* (1890) and *Phrases and Philosophies for Use of the Young* (1894), accused of being immoral and filled with homosexual themes. After Wilde's verdict, artists were afraid of persecution because of works considered polemical. The suggestion that Stoker might have been influenced by the famous trial is not a mere supposition as the atmosphere in arts in the late nineteenth century changed. As discussed before, in *Dracula* vampires lost their intimacy with human beings, similarly as same sex friends lost public intimacy with each other after the Wilde trials.

Queer criticism also detects and discusses homosexual themes in *Dracula*. In “Heterosexual Horror: *Dracula*, the Closet, and the Marriage-Plot” (2010), Barry McCrea claims that *Dracula* is about heterosexual relations narrated with a queer eye:

In telling us something about the relationship between private, individual desire and the social mechanisms through which it is channeled or narrated, the examination of *Dracula* through the lens of the closet can also tell us something about the creative imagination — itself a kind of closet, a sealed realm of private fantasy — and how it relates to the “real” or “official” world outside . . . *Dracula*’s subtle but persistent focus on marriage, and the uncanny continuity between castle Dracula and the happy English home both suggest that the horrified fantasy is about life outside, not inside, the closet. *Dracula*. . . is a novel about heterosexuality as it is viewed from inside the gay closet — as an exotic foreign world, at once alluring and frightening. (p. 252, 253)

McCrea’s closet is not essentially homosexual and rather represents what is secluded from the public eye. He continues,

But even if the vampire terrorizes the characters in the novel by his foreignness, a series of powerful textual signals suggests that the real horror of the story comes from *Dracula*’s “insiderness”— from his familiarity, in every sense of that word. (MCCREA, 2010, p. 255-56)

Therefore, one of the most threatening characteristic about the count is his ability of being simultaneously foreign and familiar, as the other characters are at times able to identify themselves with the monster, and thus be monsters themselves. This “insiderness,” and at the same time foreignness, can be related to Freud’s “The Uncanny,” which is a feeling of doubleness that consists of a sense that something strange coexists with that is most familiar inside ourselves, something, which should have been repressed but comes to surface.

Homosexuality in the nineteenth century was considered an immoral practice, and a way of life commonly associated with artists, who were even seen as sick or perturbed individuals. Homosexuality, then, was considered by many a feared disease that could contaminate especially young people under the influence of a homosexual. The homosexual artist, like Wilde, was put to trial like a vampire would have been, i.e., a figure of power and influence, with the ability of contaminating younger or weaker minded people in his immoral activities. Rosenberg also

comments on the fear of homosexuality in the nineteenth century that can be identified in *Dracula*,

In addition to attacking the women, there is also an undercurrent of fear that Dracula may penetrate the men as well. He is at his most threatening when he declares of Jonathan: “This man belongs to me!” This exclamation does have homoerotic overtones, and is important in its implication of power and control, as well as its reflection of the gender controversy of the nineteenth century. The debate over sexuality was active; two years prior to the 1897 publication of *Dracula*, Oscar Wilde stood trial for sodomy. (p. 3)

Rosenberg, like Auerbach, draws a connection between the Wilde trials and *Dracula*. However, Rosenberg argues that the identification of homosexual anxiety in the novel is due to what can be noticed in Dracula and Jonathan’s relation. For her, Dracula’s claim of possession expresses homoerotic feelings without compromising the novel’s heterosexual power. Dracula and Jonathan can or cannot play a homoerotic game. The novel, however, deals with nineteenth-century audience’s anxiety of homosexuality as a threat, dreading that, like Dracula, Oscar Wilde, or other non-fictional characters, are vampires that can contaminate others. This can be perceived either by Dracula and Jonathan’s intimacy and connection identified by some critics, like Rosenberg, or exactly by the lack of it, as pointed by others, like Auerbach.

4. Fear of female sexuality

There is much uncertainty about *Dracula*’s homosexual content. Critics generally agree, however, that the novel deals with female sexuality, usually by repressing the women, or female monsters, that enact this sexuality. The fact that those who show this sensuality are monsters, the three vampire ladies and vampire Lucy for example, already illustrates the fear of overt female sexuality. In other words, to be voluptuous in *Dracula* is to be dangerous. The men in the novel have to resist vampire sexual power or be destroyed by it. Paul Goetsch in *Monsters in English Literature: From the Romantic Age to the First World War* (2002) analyzes *Dracula* through

questions of sexuality, identity, colonization, exploitation and degeneration. Discussing patriarchy and sexuality in Victorian Age and its literary monsters, he states,

Dracula's enemies dread racial contamination and sexual impurity, but above all they are concerned about the vampires' influence on women. This fear explains the barely veiled misogyny of the text and its contradictory fantasies of absolute male power over women and extreme male dependence on them. In this context, Dracula is the monstrous other whose bite awakens female sexuality, changes women into monsters, and thus endangers the status quo of the gender system. (p. 299)

Once again, Dracula can be read as the threat that needs to be destroyed, otherwise jeopardizing social order, morality and Victorian gender hierarchy. The woman who is not biddable to a man and the social code she is inserted in is seen as a monster. Since Lucy shows this awakened sexuality described by Goetsch, her behavior is often considered inappropriate and frowned by Mina. Even before her transformation into a vampire, Lucy already insinuates a certain rebellion. Her encounter with Dracula, then, seals her destiny: she and her sexuality have to be extinguished, as they menace to ruin other good women.

Mina, on the other hand, is the role model of purity and respectfulness. That does not mean, however, that she only plays a passive role in the novel. Some critics, such as Charles E. Prescott and Grace A. Giorgio in "Vampiric Affinities: Mina Harker and the Paradox of Femininity in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (2005) even compare her to the *New Woman* of Victorian Age. They state that,

Mina's commitment to work positions her as something other than Jonathan Harker's passive, chivalric ideal. Despite her disclaimers of wifely propriety, writing represents for Mina an attempt to establish a strong sense of self, which in this charged historical moment carries the political resonance of the New Woman. (p. 490)

Thus, her claims of submission towards her husband seem to be an excuse for her wish of professional betterment, and even a disguise for her male brain. This excuse, however, is important to preserve Mina's image as the perfect wife.

Tanya Pikula in "Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Late-Victorian Advertising

Tactics: Earnest Men, Virtuous Ladies, and Porn” (2012) reads *Dracula* as a cultural product of Late-Victorian society. She analyzes the marketing tactics employed by Bram Stoker in order to sell his novel, saying that the writer commodifies sex. In her opinion, the novel relies on the assumption made by advertisers of the time that women are more susceptible to the power of propaganda. She states,

If one accepts the notion that *Dracula*'s monstrosities are in large part shaped by a conservative reaction to fin-de-siècle, female-oriented consumer decadence, then it is obvious that the text identifies consumption with overt eroticism and transgression of Victorian gender norms. (p. 290)

Contrary to Prescott and Giorgio, Pikula does not believe that Mina can be identified with the “New Woman,” accepting Mina’s disclaims of other aspirations besides the assistance of her husband. Even so, Mina and Lucy, first acknowledged as models of what society expected from them, also start changing and this change is threatening to Victorian society. Their change in the novel can also be understood as a reflection of the real changes experienced by some women in the Victorian scenario. Unfortunately, what enables their transformation is a being, essentially evil, which establishes their transformation as something evil as well.

Mina’s repressed self can come to surface when Dracula makes, or rather, allows her to drink his blood. In this sense Dracula’s blood is for Mina what the novel is for the reader, as both novel and blood confer what is desired but repressed, i.e., transgression. Mina is a mirror image for the female reader from nineteenth-century London, because behaving like a respectable girl and being considered as such by the men around her, she still gets to experience something different and drink from Dracula’s blood, which gives her the excuse to become, like Dracula, a transgressing figure, free from all the rules imposed on her by her condition and society. Her indulging experience, however, is not free of punishments and it costs one of her friend’s life, Morris, and almost her own.

Sexuality in *Dracula* menaces gender roles. The good and respectful bride, Lucy, becomes a sexual and powerful monster, and it takes four men and an arsenal

of crucifixes, holy wafers, and a big stake to destroy what once was a fragile lady.

Rosenberg writes that,

The anxiety about gender roles also surfaces through *Dracula's* depiction of the friction arising from suppressed sexuality. In the Victorian era, sexual impulses were to be resisted . . . In *Dracula*, female characters are depicted as being sexually aggressive, and the results of their aggression vary in the novel's three primary sexually-anxious scenes: Jonathan's seduction by Dracula's three brides/sisters; Lucy's final death at the hands of the brothers-in-altruism; and Mina's drinking blood from Dracula's chest as Jonathan lies powerless close by. (p. 3-4)

The three scenes mentioned above have in common the victim's power to resist or not the vampires. In the first one, Jonathan fails the test and is ironically saved by Dracula. His disbelief in what he sees in the castle is what almost dooms him, but as a male figure he can be pardoned while the fault of his potentially adulterous behavior is transferred to the intimidating and sensual vampire ladies. The first danger about these three figures is not due to their fangs but to their sexual appetite and promiscuity, as a woman who shows her sexuality becomes a metaphor for monstrosity in *Dracula*. In the second scene, there is another example of the parallel made between seductive and dangerous. Lucy has to be resisted by the four men in charge of her destruction. This time, with the help of the other three, Arthur is able to pass the test and complete his duty in destroying the sensual monster that Lucy had become. The unity of these four friends becomes a lesson of how to defeat evil. In the last scene mentioned by Rosenberg, there is no sensual female vampire but a potential one. As a female, Mina is too weak to resist the physical and psychological male power exercised by Dracula. The sensuality of the scene, however, is what posits Mina as a potential threat as well as Dracula. Rosenberg writes,

The concept that woman can be sexual is a radical one, but the women of *Dracula* are allowed no middle ground and are not necessarily empowered. The brides/sisters are the Eves to Jonathan's steadfast mother/fiancée Mina's Mary and it is made clear that, although he does desire them, it is wrong for him to do so. Jonathan later writes in horror: 'I am alone in the castle with those awful women. Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the pit!'. We find, nevertheless, that the four women have more in common than Jonathan thought, and that Mina does have the capacity to be like them. *Dracula's* women, unfortunately, cannot be sexual without also being diabolical. (p. 4)

Women in *Dracula* do have much to say about social conventions and what is expected of them, but they are not necessarily empowered because they are punished as soon as their speech ends and their actions begin. It is almost acceptable to lament the impossibility of marrying three husbands, as long as a girl does not start acting in a provocative and sensual way.

5. Fear of madness

Since the beginning of the novel, the reader can notice that Jonathan fears becoming mad. Jonathan narrates the first days of his trip with an incredulous and doubtful mind. Describing in detail all the strange events that happen, he prefers to question his sanity rather than believe his own eyes. This happens because he cannot understand or explain what he encounters in the castle. In “‘I Live in the Weak and the Wounded’: The Monster of Brad Anderson’s *Session 9*” (2008), Duane W. Kight makes remarks that go beyond the monster and the movie he discusses but that can be applied to many other monsters such as *Dracula*. He directly tackles Bram Stoker’s monster by setting examples from *Dracula* that are shared by other monsters in literature and cinema. Addressing the issue of comprehending and categorizing evil, Kight explains that human reason tries to fit everything into its frames of knowledge, and what is left out, because of its incomprehensibility, is considered monstrous:

Tracing those boundaries, categories and hierarchies of evil, however, always leaves an excess that cannot be accounted for in our schemes: the monster that expresses this excess always occupies a space between, beyond, beneath human reason, and its resistance to an incarnation that could pin it down and allow for its colonization, control, domestication, domination and ultimate expulsion dooms our strategies to failure. *Dracula*, no matter how many times he is staked and falls to dust, remains undead and returns. This is the tragedy of human existence. (KIGHT, 2008, p. 12)

Incapable of finding a logical explanation for his experiences in Transylvania, Jonathan becomes mentally destabilized. Even after he escapes and is sheltered by nuns in Romania, he spends months partially recovering and the mere sight of

Dracula in London makes Jonathan collapse again.

One attempt to explain those who are different is the creation of prisons and mental institutions, which categorize individuals whose behaviors differ from what is expected by other members of society. In *Dracula*, Renfield is an example of one of these individuals who apparently does not belong anywhere but in an asylum. His incarceration operates as labeling, i.e., putting him aside categorizes him as insane while the others are categorized as sane. Considering Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), Kight maintains that

The prison/asylum is an enclosure where the central power establishes a machinery that 'explores [the human body], breaks it down and rearranges it' so that an initial categorization and hierarchisation ranging from the most to the least insane of the inmates can lead to a homogenization of bodies ready to be released into the world outside. (p. 14)

What is most peculiar about Renfield, however, is that he seems to be the one that better understands Dracula. The lunatic believes Dracula to be his master, mimicking the count's survival method of preying on living creatures to strengthen his power. Renfield is locked up because his behavior is not consistent with what is expected by society, and if difference cannot be contained it has to be destroyed. Renfield is a lunatic with a method, as notes Dr. Seward. His awareness of the danger surrounding the asylum makes him less a fool than Jonathan, who is ignorant in the first days at Castle Dracula.

The madhouse supposedly represents logic, and when the place is invaded by monsters and supernatural beings, madhouse and reasoning are damaged. Rosenberg also writes about the madhouse and establishes a relation between the place and the novel.

That Dr. Seward's home is a madhouse is the perfect setting for this Gothic horror novel. The insane asylum is where the characters eventually base themselves, and it represents the safe place in which desire is controllable and reason prevails. However, Mother Mina is not safe in this home, a further example of how *Dracula* embeds conflicting gender roles. Terror in the form of Dracula not only penetrates the peace of first Lucy's mother's home, then the insane asylum; it also penetrates the women. (ROSENBERG, 2000, p. 2)

When Dracula penetrates the asylum, he shatters all possibility for reasoning, safety and control. The madhouse in *Dracula* has a peculiarity that makes the invasion even more disturbing, since Dr. Seward not only works there but he also inhabits the place. Homes and women are linked in the novel, as both are supposed to represent a safe harbor for men. According to Victorian ideals, good women belonged to their households, taking care of their children, keeping things in order, and waiting for their husbands. Dr. Seward's "home", however, lacks the caring wife, who he thought could be Lucy. When the vampire hunting crew decides to keep Mina out of danger by leaving her at the asylum, they consolidate the ideal that women belonged to the private and secure life, far from the public eye. At the same time, these good intentioned men are responsible for creating the ideal scenario for Dracula to penetrate/corrupt their homes/women.

Dracula is never an uninvited guest, though. Far from an ideal home, the asylum becomes susceptible to disturbance because Renfield grants access to the vampire. This hints that Lucy's home is also dysfunctional, what could be noticed in the mother-daughter relationship, and it explains why Dracula can disturb that household as well. The key characters in *Dracula* take for granted that they are the only victims the Count makes in London, which seems reasonable, as in them the vampire already finds the perfect prey. Dracula is a premeditating and calculating hunter, and nothing in the novel suggests that he randomly selects his victims, but rather, chooses them because of their weaknesses. These victims' mental frailty, especially Jonathan's and Renfield's, expresses the fear of madness in the nineteenth century, as even men become vulnerable to behaviors usually associated with women, like Van Helsing's hysterical laugh. Those are some of Dracula's power: to destabilize gender roles, reasoning, taboos, and traditional concepts. He enters places that were once considered safe (the home, the squarely discourses, and the strict compartment rules), and disturbs them. Dracula, however, is only capable of disturbing, because he preys upon weaknesses, predispositions, and desires already found in his victims. If not invited to enter, Dracula remains a looming danger, powerless to do harm.

6. Conclusion

In “Vampiric Typewriting”, Jennifer Wicke states that “The incongruity – and mastery – of *Dracula* lies in its willingness to set the mythological, Gothic, medieval mystery of Count Dracula squarely in the midst of Printing House Square” (p. 172). In other words, *Dracula* updates the mythological and supernatural content to an age of science and industrial revolution. Holy water, garlic, and crosses are as important for the monster’s destruction as the typewriter and the gramophone. Because Dracula is an evil from the past but learns to survive in a new age, his enemies are only successful when they finally combine old and new weapons against him.

Victorian taboos, fears, and religious values intermingle in *Dracula*’s plot. Exemplarily, translated into the fear of reverse-colonization in the novel, we have the characters’ response to the foreign vampire. Dracula is a foreigner with imperialist ambitions. His wish for dominance in London represents the fear that once small colonies became developed, they could rise against their colonizer. From small Transylvania, Dracula’s conquering aspirations are perceived as an insult and have to be annihilated. Moreover, vampirism also represents the fear of overt female sexuality in the nineteenth century. The female vampires in the novel show an awakened sexuality that is understood as monstrous, according to the strict moral and religious values of the Victorian Age, which demonized women who behaved differently from what was expected from them. Mina frowns upon her friend Lucy, Dracula’s first female victim in England, because of Lucy’s indecision in choosing a husband out of her three suitors. Lucy’s indecision might indicate a promiscuous inclination in herself that she achieves when she becomes a vampire. In Victorian society, women’s new aims worried conservatives, who only praised qualities which allowed a woman to assist her husband and take care of her children. When vampire Lucy harms little children, feeding on their blood, she becomes exactly the opposite of what is expected from a respectful young lady.

Every character in *Dracula*, without exception, has to fit a certain set of rules, otherwise be eliminated or marginalized by society. Single women are supposed to get married, live reservedly, and be faithful to their husbands; none is expected to eat insects nor drink blood; and the dead should not rise from their coffins against the living. Any deviant behavior in the novel comes with a punishment. Renfield, for instance, is set aside in a mental institution, a place especially designed for those who did not behave accordingly. One consequence of Jonathan's stay at Castle Dracula is that he becomes mentally unstable, which indicates a third fear: madness. As part of the narrative takes place in a lunatic asylum, madness is a recurrent subject in *Dracula*. Nevertheless, Renfield's behavior, announcing the coming of his master, questions who is sane and insane in the novel, especially when his pleas are finally proven to be the truth. *Dracula's* destruction allows for the restitution of a previous undisturbed state because he is considered a primary source of evil.

Finally, *Dracula's* own seductiveness is his weapon for tempting his prey. Seductiveness is not solely related to sensuality in the novel, but to the vampire's great power of persuasion and the ability to offer exactly what that person desires, but does not admit even to him or herself. His victims become willing prey because *Dracula* grants them the opportunity of transgressing the strict set of moral codes that restrained them their whole lives.

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