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**The Importance of Blood during the Victorian Era:
Blood as a Sexual Signifier in Bram Stoker's *Dracula***

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INTRODUCTION

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a work of fantasy fiction.¹ Its creepy effectiveness comes from its ability to play on human fears, mainly about sexuality and death. *Dracula* reflects the problems during the Victorian period. Most critics agree that *Dracula* should be seen as an excellent example of indulging the Victorian male imagination, mainly regarding female sexuality. Victorian society dictated hard restraints on sexuality, especially female sexuality. As Sally J. Kline claims in her study of *Dracula* and its connections to women issues during the Victorian time, a Victorian woman in fact, had only two options; she was either a virgin or else she was a mother since the Victorians considered that sexual repression was a sign of good breeding and if she was neither of these she was seen as promiscuous. This period was marked by the "cult of true womanhood" and the Social Purity Movement. A woman was only considered as a "lady" if women repressed their "instincts", meaning that they should desist from sex (105). A.N. Wilson describes this issue in *The Victorians* and writes that led by the "cult of true womanhood," which required purity and submissiveness in women, females were told to become almost asexual. Women who were sexually active and who did not deny their sexuality were therefore a threat, both to themselves and to society, which is clear in *Dracula* (451). Leah Wyman points out that the three beautiful vampires that Jonathan Harker (which is one of the protagonists in *Dracula*) encounters in Dracula's castle represent all the qualities of how a woman should not be – voluptuous and sexually aggressive.

As women's sexuality became more and more repressed, Victorian men were also directed to desist from sex but with some few exceptions. The Victorian man was only allowed to have sex within marriage. A woman had to help men to control their instincts to

¹ By writing an epistolary novel Stoker is allowed to juxtapose the rational world of the Victorian observer with Dracula and the supernatural world. Men and women during the Victorian time had a tradition of letter writing where people used journals and letters to write down detailed observations of their world and lives.

become more like the women. Even though men were urged to control their sexuality, the Victorians believed that heterosexual desire was in a man's nature. Therefore the society pleaded ignorance about a man's inability to control his sexuality. However Victorian Society believed that male sexuality was necessary for reproduction.

There were thus harsh restraints regarding female and male sexuality, but male homosexuality was considered even more of a taboo. After the well publicized trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895, sodomy was criminalized, and the public was urged not to commit this evil act. If they did, people could end up in prison. There is no doubt that homosexuality is one of the main themes in *Dracula*, for Dracula penetrates both women and men where Nina Auerbach analyzes the homosexual codes in the book, stressing the evil attractions of the Count. She claims that the Count is a sexual threat who threatens to destroy the moral order and turn it into a depraved society through his violation of people. The violation of the men by penetrating and sucking the blood can be viewed as a coding of homosexual acts, according to Auerbach.

In *Dracula*, sex and blood are closely associated with each other, reflecting the Victorians' belief that blood is sperm. I will base my research on William Hughes and his study on Dracula's blood sucking and its connotation with the "spermatic economy" which claims that feeding on blood indicates an exchange of bodily fluids which can be associated with sexual intercourse.² The association between sexuality and blood is what I will deal with in my essay. In line with Auerbach and Hughes, I claim that the symbolic value of the penetration caused by Dracula represents contemporary issues of sexuality. My aim with this essay is to analyze how blood can be seen as a metaphor for sexuality, and my major focus

²Other important aspect that the Victorians had considering blood are the exhortation not to mix with other races. It can also be referred to religion where the Victorians believed that blood had an important role in Christianity and according to Christianity (during the Victorian time) blood and sperm had the same significance.

will be on Lucy and I will also study homosexuality in the novel by examining this issue in relation to its historical context.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Dracula was published in 1897, a period which was marked by the expansion of the British Empire. Science prospered and it was the century of Charles Darwin and a period of growing industrialisation. Elizabeth Miller describes how British scientists enjoyed describing how England was the peak of social evolution, in which the rights and the powers of individuals were well developed and the rule of law most firmly established (72-73). Although the Victorians praised themselves for not putting boundaries on the individual, claiming that the individuals were receiving advantages from their highly developed Victorian society, especially from the democratic reforms, they were still very strict about not letting the members of the society have an outlet for their sexuality.

Sexuality and gender roles

It is important to stress the contemporary apprehension of sexuality and gender roles in Victorian society, primarily among the middle class. Sexuality, especially female sexuality, was not accepted and therefore was repressed in such terms of regulations. In Victorian England, women's sexual behavior was dictated by society's strict expectations. As earlier mentioned, being a lady meant that a woman should not have sexual desires. Sex was something that was only necessary for reproduction, within the confines of marriage. As Foucault writes;

Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered. It was in the nature of a public potential; it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytical discourses. In the nineteenth century sex

became a “police matter...” not the repression of disorder but an ordered maximisation of collective and individual forces... a policing of sex; that is, not the rigor of a taboo, but the necessity of regulation of sex through useful and public discourses. (Quoted in Levy 19)

Therefore it is not strange that sexuality was threatening and needed to be regulated, Levy argues. She also mentions what Foucault called “a technique of power”, which means that this was a way of discipline for people who could not or would not regulate themselves. The Victorians thought that some people had more difficulties in resisting sex than others and therefore rules and discipline were required.

According to Phyllis A. Roth, much of Dracula’s appeal derives from its hostility toward female sexuality, for the female vampires are equivalent to the fallen women of eighteenth and nineteenth-century fiction (31-32). Roth describes other examples of this in the novel with the two female characters, Mina and Lucy. In the beginning of the novel when Lucy is not yet completely vampirised, Dr. Seward describes her hair in its usual sunny ripples, later when the men watch her return to her tomb Lucy is transformed into a “a dark haired woman”. The fair/dark split which often symbolizes moral casts in an unconscious way reflectes the ambivalence aroused by the sexualized woman (ibid.36). Hughes’ opinions are quite similar to Roth’s, writing that Stoker constructs his heroines as virgins, and virginity was a basis in patriarchal society and where virginity and virtuosity could be seen as a “codification of accepted behavioural standards for the female” (104).

Kline points out that sexual relations in a healthy, well functioning society were dominated by a philosophy of romance, and this demanded precise definitions of gender roles (211). Victorian gender relations were dominated by a complete sexual complementation,

which according to the Victorian feminist writer E.M. Palmegiano, meant that being female was the negation of being male.³

As the sexes were complementary physically, so must they be otherwise. What suited one sex would, in the catchword, 'unsex' the other. Thus if men were strong, women were weak. If men were amoral, women were virtuous. If men were free, women were dependent. Above all, if men were rational, women must be emotional or intuitive or instinctive. Because this tandem theory presumed that social changes affecting one sex would automatically affect the personalities of both, it was the focus of all the interpretations of female behaviour recorded in the press. (Quoted in Levy 79)

In Stoker's novel women are seen as helpless creatures who either are seduced and penetrated or deluded by Dracula to become his helper, since they are the negotiation of the male, weak and easy to impose upon. Therefore it is not strange, according to Gregory A. Waller, that the novel establishes a masculine ideal which is strong and self-controlled, independent man of action.

A *Feminised* helplessness is a consequence of the breakdown of manhood, and the most clear instances of this gender role takes place when Jonathan is alone with the three sexually aggressive vampire women. Building on Waller's thesis, Miller points out that this scene illustrates male vulnerability, in a way which puts Jonathan in a feminine role and ironically (and typically) the man who saves him from the three vampire women is none other

³ Palmegiano writes: according to the Victorians, everything that was associated with manliness meant at the same time that the opposites of these qualities belonged to the woman. If a man was active and strong, the woman on the other hand was passive and weak.

than the only man in the fortress, Dracula (229-30). The connection between the ideas about sexuality, gender roles and class identity are strong.

These middle-class ideas about sexuality were a plain contrast to the aristocracy, for the middle-class codified virtue. Levy emphasizes that the middle class tried to compensate for what they lacked in blood (meaning the belonging of class) through self-regulation of behaviour, especially sexual behaviour.

Levy points out that this is very clear in *Dracula*, where Lucy's seduction is similar to a sexual seduction; the virgin is stained by the aristocratic monster, which is a common theme in gothic literature where the aristocratic man "hunts" women of non-aristocratic origin. As the middle-class grew stronger, the Victorians argued that the straight, middle-class Victorian male was the only one that had the right to comment people in England which meant that they had the power to say what was right and what was not, meaning that they were particularly fit to care for other social and cultural groups who did not suit the Victorian standards (2). Sexuality and especially homosexuality were regarded as something that did not suit their standards.

Repressed homosexuality and Oscar Wilde

According to Auerbach, Stoker began writing *Dracula* one month after his friend Oscar Wilde was condemned for the crime of sodomy in 1895 (82-84). The two men had an intimate history for at least 20 years. In the 1870's, Stoker "established himself as an open member of that nascent homosexual culture centred around Walt Whitman and kept a strong sense of identity as a homosexual man into the 1880's", Schaffer writes. She also points out that it is important to know the textual history of Bram Stoker's repressed sexuality. Through descriptions of his idol and role model Whitman, his employer Henry Irving, his friend Hall Caine and himself, Stoker invented the discourse that becomes *Dracula* (385). Levy writes that Oscar Wilde's trial made Stoker feel guilty because he could do

nothing more than watch, (but Stoker relieved his bad conscious by staying away from the environments of openness and reticence), meaning the homosexual circles. Stoker had the vindictive alternative between writing and silence, and the result was a text that described Wilde in a diffused and hidden way. Wilde is reproduced in *Dracula* as monstrous and evil, in order to work through Wilde's tender popular image of the homosexual and finally change it into an identity model (79).

A judge found Oscar Wilde guilty of "committing acts of gross indecency with other male persons" and therefore he was convicted to the maximum sentence of two years in jail with hard labour (83). The public followed the trial closely and because of this popular forum, this trial and sentencing also came to mark a change in the way homosexuality was thought of by the public. Auerbach writes that the judge imprisoned Wilde because he thought him to be a shameful influence and feared that Wilde would trick Victorian youth into homosexual activity. After Wilde's trial, the British constitution criminalized sodomy, saying that homosexual acts would trick other youth into homosexuality (ibid).

Hughes also discusses the importance of Wilde's trial, which was an important event for Bram Stoker, since these two were very close friends. The publicity and hostility surrounding this event must have effected Stoker, and *Dracula* shows Stoker's suspicion and anxiety toward all forms of sexuality, especially those considered "perverse." The vampire's hypnotic power, his fondness for young female victims, and the sensuality of the descriptions of bloodsucking, indicate that Stoker had more on his mind than monsters (6). As Levy suggests, the sinful attractions of the Count suggests Stoker's fears about his own sexuality. The homosexual nature of vampirism produced an underlying theme in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but it is veiled in such a way that it was hidden from the literary censors of the day (74).

Auerbach claims that *Dracula* is Stoker's striving for expressing a culturally repressed homosexual identity. Stoker's *Dracula* is a compendium of "fin-de-siècle phobias," in which "Dracula's lonely rigidity repudiates the homoerotic intimacy with which earlier vampires had insinuated themselves into mortality" (7). However, Schaffer points out that *Dracula* does not represent Oscar Wilde as the complex of desires and fears. Instead *Dracula* is rather a Wilde-as-threat, "a complicated cultural construction" who should not be mistaken for the historical individual Oscar Wilde.

Dracula represents the grouchily inflated vision of Wilde produced by Wilde's prosecutors; the corrupting, evil, secretive, manipulative, magnetic devourer of innocent boys. (387)

When *Dracula* sucks out the "sacred" blood out of his young victims he also stains them with his awful and immoral acts, just like Oscar Wilde.

The importance of blood

During the nineteenth century medical science was making progress, maybe one of the most important developments during that time. The scientists invented a new science based on blood which was according to them connected to racial and sexual issues. The term "sanguine economy" came with ideas and rules about why English people, for example, should not "blend" with people of other races and giving answers regarding "health" and why people should not waste any time on sex. According to medical science sexual intercourse meant a depletion of sperm which signified blood and that was not something to squander. A depletion of blood brought both personal illness and a lack of moral sanity. Hughes claims that the term "Sanguine Economy" which came up during the Victorian period was a physiological logic that governed the secretion, depletion and transfer of blood, where Hughes

writes, “blood is an item of multidiscursive significance, a cultural concept as much as a literal physiological substance. It is the icon of common identity, of alliance: one is of the same blood” (139). This theme is dealt with by Foucault;

The nation, the race, the family are all structured metaphorically and/or metonymically in terms of blood relations. The individual functioning as a blood-bearing synecdoche of the greater unity in which he-and this blood circulates. (Quoted in Hughes, *ibid*)

Hughes additionally emphasises that the identities invested in blood started to be more powerful, and people in the Victorian age were redirected to a myth of common racial identity. Such encoding is something that exists in Stoker’s writings. In his novel *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, Stoker applauds the seaman of an American warship who in defiance of the official neutrality of the US navy rescued the crew of a British gunboat from defeat at the hands of the Chinese. When an explanation was demanded for the crew’s action, the ship’s commander responded, “blood is thicker than water” (59). These sentiments of racial brotherhood, which unite the English from all parts of the world such as North America, Great Britain and Australia, had to do with bonds of common racial identity which derived from the belief of having the same origin. The “same” blood contributed to the saving of the seamen. The sentiments of racial brotherhood are central in Stoker’s fiction, both familial and racial.

Hughes goes deeper into this and mentions that an important counterpart of the “Sanguine Economy” was the “Spermatic Economy,” a popular medical discourse in which semen is regarded as a product of the blood. The scientists believed that individual and racial health are dependent on pure and plentiful blood; personal vitality was highly connected to

the bodily fluid, blood or semen, in other words there was an equation between a bodily fluid and the quantity of personal vitality. Depletion or contamination brings both personal illnesses, racial and physical depression (139-40).

These scientific theories which had moral and social implications in all areas of society brought ideas which considered that sexual intercourse and masturbation were a depletion of blood. In nineteenth-century medical and religious writings, the masturbator, for example, is frequently depicted as an enemy of society as much as of himself, Hughes quotes a religious script;

...The masturbator, a pallid male who spends his seminal vitality unwisely and unproductively...Likewise, the pale countenance and physical lassitude of the bloodless body signifies a future of decadence, an invalid of the self and a legacy of weakness for one's descendants (Quoted in Hughes 141)

The pale body is, in this case, always disturbing and threatening when the moral is opposed to literal implications of blood loss are emphasized. According to Hughes, this is much evidenced in *Dracula* where Seward is facing the vampiric Lucy in the Hampstead churchyard;

She still advanced, however, and with a languorous, voluptuous grace said: -
Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!. (143)

Therefore what is essentially a medical problem is translated into a sexual one and with that a moral threat to Seward, according to Hughes. Lucy seemingly demands sperm, but wants blood.

EXPRESSIONS OF SEXUALITY THROUGH BLOOD

The heart of *Dracula* is blood. The vampire flourishes on the blood of others, and Van Helsing and his team's whole effort is to fight this flow of blood, by transfusion and any other conceivable methods. Dracula is dangerous because he threatens to turn the Victorian society into a depraved one with his vampire attacks. A lot of critics have researched in detail the sexual implications of the story, and it is obvious in many ways that this novel yields clear indications of what Victorians considered as sexual perversions.⁴ The perversions in the novel are not directly expressed but it is expressed through blood where blood sucking indicates sexual intercourse and these "perversions" are brilliantly camouflaged by blood by Stoker. Therefore blood should be seen as a symbolic expression and that is the dynamic of *Dracula*.

Lucy

Lucy is one of the characters who has been more studied. Even Stoker's choice of name is significant. Hughes emphasizes that Lucy correlates to Lucis, which means light and her character stands for positive feminine qualities such as sweetness and light (142). Lucy is a good-hearted woman although flirtatious and tempting, and because of that she is much more vulnerable to Dracula's seduction which is being clear when she admits to Mina through her letter that she is confused about choosing a man and therefore unable to decide whose proposal she should accept;

Why can't they let a girl marry three men or as many as want her and save all this trouble? (96)

Kline notes that Lucy is hesitating about committing herself to only one man, and therefore confused about the decision she is about to make.

⁴ Sexual sides of a human being regarded as perverted during the Victorian age, such as homosexuality and a sexually active woman are not considered perverted in the West in modern times.

Hughes points out that the word “want” in this context has a sexual significance (155). Kline suggests that this indicates that she obviously does not feel any true love for any of her suitors, but she does fantasize about having them in a “harem-like arrangement,” if she was allowed to. Kline points out that the author shows us Lucy’s casual sexual inclinations and dissatisfaction with the institution of monogamy (117). Levy on the other hand, writes that this strongly shows the cultural need to control female appetite (164).

The scene where Lucy gets a blood transfusion from the men can not only be interpreted as homosexual act between the men, it also emphasizes Lucy’s desire for polygamous marriage, and ironically her wish and desire for polygamy comes true. Lucy’s fiancé, Arthur is ignorant that he has been one among many other blood-donors to Lucy’s circulation regards, his donation as an act of matrimony. Van Helsing, though, sees the irony in the fiancé’-widower’s:

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, and me, with my poor wife dead to me, but alive by Church’s law, though no wits, all gone – even I, who am faithful husband to this now-no-wife, am bigamist”. (176)

What Van Helsing actually means here according to Roth, is that Lucy’s descent into vampirism allows her, through the transfusions, metaphorically to experience intercourse with a number of men before even getting married (36).

Rape

A common issue in *Dracula* is rape which is expressed indirectly through blood. The threat of rape is particularly present in *Dracula* because it strongly demonstrates the power of men over women’s bodies during the Victorian time and therefore important to

illustrate that “fallen” women predominantly were considered who did not own the right of possession of their own bodies. Men of the Victorian society were free to treat them as they pleased too. On the other hand, men who could not control their sexuality were also considered as weak and passive, qualities that characterized a woman. *Dracula* contains several rape scenes, both of women and the attempted rape of men. These rape scenes strongly illustrates how penetration and blood function as a symbol or insinuation of sexuality and intercourse.

“Interfusion of sexual desire and the moment of erotic fulfilment may occasion the erasure of the conventional and integral that self informs the central action in *Dracula*” (95), writes Christopher Craft in an essay, where Craft interprets one of the most famous scenes of the novel. It is the scene where Jonathan falls asleep and has a “dream” of three stunning women who enter the room and talk about who will “kiss” him first. Jonathan is full of fear, at the same time as he is full of desire and lust, and does not move but still continues to watch the women through half-closed eyes.

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. (35)

This is a scene which establishes Dracula’s power and can be considered as very sexual and sensual.

One of the central themes in the novel is the combination of terror and desire. Even as the vampire women approach Jonathans throat, his terror is mixed with desire. He does not pretend to sleep, but he does not try to escape either. The scene is a reversed rape:

this time, it is a passive and weak male who is being attacked by a female aggressor. Wyman writes, the parallel between sexual acts and the vampire's bite when the three vampires are talking about "kissing" him actually means that it is an act of draining Jonathan's blood (36). Wyman also points out that Harker's lust makes him disgusted by his inability to control himself and challenges his self-definition as masculine; the violation of him by the three vampires turns Jonathan into a penetrated and therefore passive person, instead of a penetrating, active, and masculine man.

Neither does Kline's opinion differ from Wyman, claiming that desire and evil are mixed all in one in the vampires and this is a scene which conflates sin with sexuality and by that makes a moralizing statement regarding sexual desire, although implicitly (105-7). But the degraded status of the vampire women and the way it is depicted teases the Victorian male in an erotic way, according to Levy (131). This was not an unusual thing since the Victorian society censored everything that had to do with sex, and having three beautiful women approaching a sex-thirsty Victorian male was indeed erotically stimulating. Mixing danger with sex is the most perfect way of catching the interest of the Victorian public.

Since Dracula is not only an evil creature who seduces "fallen" women such as Lucy, he is also a threat to the pure Victorian women such as Mina and even she becomes a victim but only by force, which in this case can be interpreted as rape.

On the bed beside 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 stood a tall, thin man, clad in black. His face was turned from us, but the instant we saw it we all recognized the Count – in every way, even to the scar on his forehead. With his left hand he held both Mrs Harker's hand, keeping them away with her arms at

full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast, which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk compelled it to drink. (232)

“A deliberate highly melodramatic portrait of rape”, as Kline expresses it (47). The diseased blood of the vampire now circulates in innocent and “pure” Mina's veins, and it changes her physical, moral and mental constitution. As earlier mentioned, Victorians believed that moral insanity was in the blood, and Dracula forces innocent and pure Mina to drink of moral insanity (201-2). There are elements that separates Mina's transformation into a vampire than Lucy's transformation. Throughout the novel Mina is not completely “vampirized” and she is able to help the men by working as a link between the two worlds, the world of Dracula and this world. The explanation is that Mina is the true Victorian woman and therefore it is more difficult to affect her with the evil forces of Dracula than other woman such as Lucy who is much more vulnerable to Dracula's attacks because of her flirtatious nature.

Craft mentions another scene from the novel in his essay. One important scene is that in which sexuality is relatively clear and unrestrained and where Lucy's fiancé Arthur is laying her out for her final rest.

Arthur placed the point (of the stake) 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 contortations, 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 merely-bearing stake whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. (204)

The death scene of the vampire Lucy indicates that this is a scene of penetration, sexuality and rape. Since Lucy has only been penetrated by Dracula so the staking is Arthur's first chance as her husband to experience "intercourse." Paul Gutjahr writes that the imagery of phallus, orgasm and penetration are the shapers of the scene. Arthur plunges his stake into Lucy's body with a rage while the vampire Lucy screams and quivers. Seward notes that the body "...twisted in wild contortions" and after the plunging act Arthur is completely exhausted (37-8).

The hammer fell from Arthur's hand. He reeled and would have fallen if we had not caught him. Great drops of sweat sprang out on his forehead, and his breath came in broken gasps. It had indeed been an awful stain on him...(205)

Hughes completes this scene by adding that Arthur is drained of another vital fluid, the saline content of sweat encodes both blood and semen (166).

There are still three beautiful vampire women left in the castle and Van Helsing sees as his obligation to destroy them which indicates that Van Helsing himself also performs a rape on the three tempting women.

...I could not have gone further with my butchery. I could not have endured the horrid screeching as the stake drove home, the plunging of writhing form, and lips of bloody foam, ...And the poor souls, I can pity them now and weep. (327)

Van Helsing not only rapes one but three women, which can be interpreted as a demonstration of complete power of the Victorian male over the women.

Homosexual Acts

Vampirism both expresses and deforms a sexual energy and the sexual desire can be considered as the most basic part of human identity. Levy suggests that Dracula's unsatisfied desire to turn Jonathan into a vampire indicates a total homoerotic longing that is represented as hideous homosexuality. The mission of Dracula is to displace this desire between men through the women (132). Auerbach in *Our Vampires, Ourselves* examines the homoerotic tendencies which are expressed through different acts of penetration, blood sucking and blood transfusions.

She writes that "Innovative in his isolation, Dracula can do nothing more than catalyse homoerotic friendship among the humans who hunt him", continuing, "His story abounds in overwrought protestations of friendship among the men who testify breathlessly to each other's manhood" (82). Auerbach also writes that Van Helsing should thank the vampire for introducing him to such enchanting companions. Borrowing the idiom of Oscar Wilde's letters to Lord Alfred Douglas, he declares himself to Lucy's former Fiancé; "I have grown to love you- yes, my dear boy to love you- as Arthur" (217). For Dracula, blood is the life, but the men who combine against him find life by drinking in each other's "stalwart manhood." Dracula forges this male community of passionate shared admiration, but he is not allowed to join it. The only way for Dracula to gain access to this brotherhood is through drinking Lucy's blood, but after the four men have "married her," but also each other, in a series of transfusions, becomes "stripped of his power of combination catalysing homoerotic friendships in which he can not participate" (Auerbach.83-6).

Dracula announces a deflected homoeroticism when he admonishes the crew of light thus;

“My revenge is just begun! I spread it over the centuries, and time is on my side. Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and all others shall yet be mine.” (126)

The novel does not dismiss homoerotic desire; rather it simply continues to diffuse and displace it.

There is another scene which (in a subtle way) suggests Dracula’s homoerotic tendencies which occurs in the beginning of the novel where Jonathan shaves and Dracula enters the room;

But at the instant I saw the cut had bled a little, and the blood was trickling over my chin. I laid down the razor, turning as I did so half round to look for some sticking plaster. When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demonic fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat. I drew away and his hand touched the string of beds which held the crucifix. (23)

A scene which foretells how Dracula is about to act at the sight of Jonathan’s blood. In my reading of the novel Dracula gets exhilarated at the sight of a man’s blood and this exhilaration can be interpreted as homosexual excitement.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have examined the importance of blood in Victorian culture and what role it had in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. I have shown how symbolic values are associated with blood. In my study I have acknowledged that blood has been a metaphor for political, racial and most important of all, sexual relationships during the Victorian time. Based on Hughes’ thesis that there is a “sanguine economy” which is parallel to the “spermatic

economy” that actually meant that these theories based on a belief that health and vitality were related to the amount of blood and semen in a human being. This “spermatic economy” was cunningly hidden in this “sanguine economy” and I have come to the conclusion that this “spermatic economy” exists in *Dracula*.

Although Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* was not the first novel about vampires it became the most popular and famous novel of the century. Most probably because it deals with many of the issues during the Victorian period, mainly because of its suppressed sexuality.

The sexuality of the vampire is expressed through blood and sexuality forms an underlying theme in *Dracula*. Stoker manages to avoid the sexuality of his characters by excluding it even though there are sexual elements that very much indeed exist in their relationships. It is never discussed because it is never revealed. A lot of things that are either rejected or suppressed appear instead in a “concealed perversion form” through the novel. By constructing Dracula a vicious and dangerous he moulds Dracula into a menace who threatens to destroy the Victorian ideals, especially those about sexuality and his most efficient weapon is his sexuality. It is important to illustrate why his thirst for blood and how he satisfies his thirst, according to me, should be seen as a sexual desire. The scene where Lucy gets blood transfusions from Arthur indicates that Stoker had an understanding of the sexual nature of the vampire attacks. Arthur suggests that after the sharing of blood with her, he “married” her. But this idea of “marriage” was repudiated by the much wiser Van Helsing because this meant a sexual association both for himself and the rest of the men who had given her blood. However, the blood, which was given regularly to Lucy from the men was, ironically drunken by Dracula. The act of blood transfusion and the drinking makes it plain that this a sexual intercourse between the men and Dracula. At the same time Lucy’s longing for marrying all the three men complies much to the fact that she gets blood transfusions from all of the men.

Sexual morality was something that Stoker was concerned with and censoring sexually racy literature was something that he preferred because he believed that this kind of literature stimulated man's sexual tendencies. There are a lot of scenes that revel in sexual language and description in *Dracula* but these pleasures are subdued to a Victorian sense of morality. I believe that Stoker himself did not consider sex as an "evil force", however I do believe that he wrote this novel from the Victorian ideals of sexuality and he manages to write about these taboo things meaning the sexual scenes by moralizing the content by implicitly conflating sin with sexuality.

By the force of the Victorian ideal of purity *Dracula* is destroyed and everything can continue as it used to, but the sexually loaded scene where Jonathans is approached by the three seductive vampires has managed to remain longest in the reader's mind, even today.

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