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# The Threat of Otherness in Bram Stoker's Dracula

Eszter Muskovits

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- <sup>1</sup> Hand in hand with scientific research on sexuality for modern culture, gothic fiction became immensely popular in the Victorian era, serving as a displaced field of any kind of sexuality that crossed the barriers or 'normality'. In order to define normality and anomalies, the prevailing sentiment and public beliefs are determinant. Springing from Puritanism, anything apart from heterosexual monogamy was liable to cause suspicion and was regarded as a sexual dysfunction. The paraphilias gathered by Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his famous collection of pathological case histories, *Psychopatia Sexualis* (1886) illustrate the social consensus on sexual normativity very well, where sexual maladjustment could result in imprisonment. More than a century later we can observe a loosening tendency compared to Victorian judgments on deviations, but I restrict my research on the last decades of the nineteenth century, and focus on anomalies which were considered some forms of deviance at the time.

## "This man belongs to me!": Several Aspects of Homoeroticism in *Dracula*

- <sup>2</sup> Erotic same-sex relations were among the paraphilias of the time, homosexuals were cast into opprobrium by society. The famous trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895, in which he was sentenced to two years of hard labour for his sodomy, turned the attention to "the other Victorians". Schaffrath states that "if fixed gender roles represent order and gender roles in flux stand for chaos (a lack of order), then one might argue that Dracula, the vampire, represents chaos and threatens English values of gender roles" (98). The character of the vampire definitely carries in itself the anxiety in respect to homosexuality. The act of bloodsucking is a metaphor for coitus as the canine tooth penetrates into the orifice on the neck. With this intimate moment between the vampire and his victim, those who fall prey to the bloodsuckers will be converted into a creature possessing two genitals, thus the vampiric metamorphosis provides a kind of

hermaphrodite status. As Schaffer notes, the turn-of-the-century approach considered homosexuals neither male nor female but an intermediate sex (472) and the vampiric two-sex model can be associated with this notion.

- 3 “Dracula’s desire to fuse with a male, most explicitly evoked when Harker cuts himself shaving, subtly and dangerously suffuses this text,” assumes Christopher Craft (466). Jonathan is the only male whom Dracula threatens with the danger of vampirism. The Count’s homoerotic desire is the most explicit when he intervenes and chases away his lecherous daughter-wives when they are about to attack Jonathan. “This man belongs to me!” (D 53) – he says. This is a manifestation of homosexuality and also the desire for possession, although the fusion between them never comes about. Craft claims that Jonathan enjoys a feminine passivity while awaiting the penetration of the vampires, which entails the subversion of the conventional Victorian gender codes (Craft 444-445). Having protruded teeth, the female vampires are endowed with a male genital and together with the emasculated Jonathan; all these characters represent the fear of gender reversal. However, it seems that despite the ominous castle situation, Dracula is never really menacing Jonathan, at least, not explicitly.
- 4 The “murderous phallicism” (Craft 455) of the staking puts an end to Lucy’s vampiric existence, but as Belford opines, Dracula was spared this orgiastic death, because the male-to-male vampire death would be too overtly suggestive for the novel (267). Hence, the Transylvanian count is murdered by Jonathan’s and Quincey Morris’s knives. However, taking a closer look at Dracula’s actual death and the marks of the vampire that are left behind, it is arguable that some strong homosexual aspects can be found in his connection to other men through the mediating body of Lucy. The Crew of Light, as Christopher Craft has entitled the group consisting of Van Helsing, Dr Seward, Quincey Morris, Arthur and Jonathan, that is the vampire hunters (445), a group of men experience same-sex sexual activity through blood transfusions. Arthur, Lucy’s husband-to-be gives his blood to the girl, three days later followed by Dr Seward, one of Lucy’s former suitors. The third operation is done by Quincey Morris and finally Dr Van Helsing provides blood. Symbolically, blood is interchangeable with semen.
- 5 In his life, the vampire count transgressed women by way of vampirization, but after his extermination, he still leaves his mark. When Dracula enforces Mina to drink from his chest, their bodily fluids intermingle. When Mina’s condition is getting really worse, she makes an ambiguous remark: “Let us go to meet my husband, who is, I know, coming towards us” (D 441). She is married to Jonathan by love, and to Dracula by blood. Mina and Jonathan pay tribute to the memory of Quincey Morris by naming their son Quincey. Mina thinks that the brave spirit of Quincey Morris has passed into the child, but in reality, it is Dracula’s blood that has been transferred into the veins of the little boy. Quincey has two fathers: Jonathan and Dracula. Schaffer calls this “the rehabilitation of Dracula’s and Harker’s love” (482) and Quincey can be seen as “the child of Dracula’s and Harker’s mutual desire” (Schaffer 482).
- 6 It is interesting to note that no other male vampire is mentioned in the novel except for Dracula. Furthermore, female vampires do not reproduce in the novel. Dracula is the only vampire who creates other bloodsuckers. The crew of Demeter is destroyed. Jonathan, the only man, who seems to be really endangered by the Count, escapes. Renfield, Dracula’s servant is saved, too. The Transylvanian vampire transforms only women. Again, this masks the same-sex desire in a gender-anxious culture, culminating in the scene when Dracula announces to Dr Seward, Quincey Morris and Van Helsing

that “your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine – my creature, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed” (D 365). Women seem to be a means to carry out the monstrous transgressive men’s homosexual intentions.

- 7 In the nineteenth century, homosexuality became an object of medicalization. According to Schaffer, the epidemiological horror fiction, including *Dracula*, encodes the fear and anxiety of the homophobic society, that is, homosexuals want to ‘corrupt’ heterosexuals (481). George E. Haggerty points out the connection between xenophobia, sexual transgression and the gothic novels of the period. The deep-rooted fears expressed in anti-Catholic writings went hand in hand with attitudes towards sexuality; it was a commonplace in people’s imagination in England that sodomy was transported from Catholic countries as Italy and France, or from more exotic places (66). Sodomy had been looked at with more suspicion and condemned when it came to be seen as the chief cause for venereal diseases, associated with syphilis.
- 8 Sexually transmitted diseases, like syphilis could be used to cast a shadow on anyone infected by this unhealthy condition. Transgressive sexuality has always been part of gothic novels, and the fear of infectious diseases has easily found its way into the genre. Syphilis has different stages, so death does not befall immediately, only after a certain latency period. Similarly, in *Dracula*, the victims of the vampire change gradually. Due to its fatal consequences and ignorance of its real nature, syphilis had been labelled as alien. Susan Sontag points out that venereal diseases are traditionally described as punishments of the individuals as well as of the general licentiousness of certain groups (54), thus it challenged the moral stance of the whole Victorian society.
- 9 When syphilis became hazardous to the health of the population, “sexual practices” were put under control by the British authorities. Several Contagious Diseases Acts were introduced to regulate the spread of this disease (1863, 1866, 1869). Intercourse with prostitutes endangered not only the men’s health, but also their wives’ condition, so the Acts were drawn in defense of women, too. Prostitutes were put into lock hospitals for a certain period of time when they had been found suffering from syphilis. As Duncan Crow describes their situation very aptly, “everyone must be regarded as innocent until proved guilty [Habeas Corpus], where under the Acts [a] woman was guilty unless she could prove herself innocent” (244). So, guiltiness was attached to promiscuity and it was almost impossible to get rid of the brand it had been concomitant to. A woman could be ruined for life if suspicion had been cast on her. Apart from the sexually active women, homosexuals were suspicious, because they were able to transmit the disease. In Stoker’s novel, the highly sexualized vampireesses and *Dracula*, the only male vampire epitomize this threat.
- 10 Vampires usually attack their victims regardless of their gender. Using Sigmund Freud’s term, it can be claimed that vampires are not exclusively homosexuals, but they are amphigenously inverted (30), that is their sexual objects are members of both sexes. However, the concept of bisexuality has largely been ignored in the history of sexuality (Angelides 24) when it was beginning to be observed as a sexual identity, it challenged the binary epistemology of sexuality, that is the gender structure of hetero- and homosexuality (Angelides 5). Like homosexuality, bisexuality triggers negative social reactions; thus bisexuals are outcasts and socially isolated. Both homosexual and heterosexual communities are inimical to them, so bisexuals have to cope with ‘double marginality’ (Weinberg, Williams and Pryor 190). Homosexuals think that bisexuals are

inherent homosexuals who simply dare not admit this fact — not even to themselves — and are engaged in opposite-sex relations in order to keep up public appearance. On the contrary, heterosexuals usually lump bisexuals with homosexuals. Both are false. Bisexuality is a continuum of sexuality, but not always a transitory state between the shift from heterosexuality to homosexuality as many might think; it is an established sexual identity.

- 11 Dracula overtly victimizes women and covertly men, which may indicate his bisexual preference. The disgraced vampire fights back in fiction; the anger and contempt felt for same-sex preference and peripheral sexuality are being reversed to heterosexual community. Dracula threatens the accepted heterosexual monogamy by way of effeminizing Jonathan and masculinizing Lucy. He generates gender fluidity. The “fusion of sex, sin and death” (Weinberg, Williams and Pryor 202) concerning STDs lurks behind Dracula’s machinations as well. Menacing sexual activities are connected with death; and plague, the highest standard of collective calamity is a metaphor often used for venereal diseases (Sontag 44). Perhaps it is not a coincidence that in some twentieth-century movies Dracula is associated with the plague.

### Polymorphous Perversity: The Hidden Paraphilias of the Vampires

- 12 Krafft-Ebing was progressive well before his time, because despite the mentioning of several cases of homosexuals, he did not favour the idea that inversion was a product of some sort of mental illness. Having already discussed the idea of inversion, I focus on anomalies which were considered perversions. Some hidden aspects of sexual pathology are lurking in vampires as well. Fetishism, sadism, masochism, and homosexuality were sub-divisions of *paraesthesia* for Krafft-Ebing.
- 13 Fetishism is using with sexual connotation as a substitute for the sexual object. It can be a piece of clothing or any anatomical part(s) of the partner. Freud calls the fetish “a substitute for the penis” (*Fetishism* 953). In the case of vampires the substitute element is blood. Blood becomes the exclusive object of sexuality. Haematophilia and haemotodipsia are under the class of blood fetishism. The haematophilic has an erotic attraction to the taste, sight or smell of blood. Haemotodipsia is a stronger form of this disease. People gain their whole sexual satisfaction from blood, that is “what coitus is to the lover, the bite and the sucking is to the haemotodipsiac” (Florescu and McNally 173).
- 14 Blood and lust pervade the legends of Vlad Țepeș, Elizabeth Bathory and Stoker’s Dracula. Sexual sadism, this psychosexual disorder links these stories, where mutilation of the body is connected with delight and pleasure. Burning, boiling, beating and several other brutal and tantalizing tortures have become essential parts of the popularized image about the lifestyle of these “vampirized” historical persons. Functionally, these sadistic elements satisfy all demands of people’s insatiable appetite for dread and horror in the given era. In spite of the common belief that the novel is saturated with sadism, in Stoker’s *Dracula* there is only one explicit sadistic incident. When Renfield reveals that Dracula has been entering the asylum and vampirising Mina, Professor Van Helsing and Dr Seward burst into Mina’s room and a horrid scene unfolds before them. Dracula stands by the bed and Mina kneels before him. The count holds the girl’s head and compels her to drink blood from his chest. It is described as a violent scene. Dr Seward remarks in his diary that the “attitude of the two had a

terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (D 336). The blood and milk analogue is an overt reference to semen.

- 15 Sadism is not only a wish to hurt somebody, but also "the desire for absolute control over another being" (Fromm 101). Bloodsucking includes the desire for possession. The dichotomous elements of love in vampire stories are "domination and servitude, possession and deprivation, exploitation and allurements." Dracula can control his descendants, exploiting their weakness; it is visible in his sexual relations that he has a sadistic inclination. Dracula's victims are reduced to the level of objects. The count's sadistic nature is the most obvious when he makes Mina drink from his chest. He forces the girl to do whatever he wants without restrictions. Dracula's obsession with power is evident.
- 16 Men tend to the sadistic and women to the masochistic side as far as the traditional dominance-submission axis is concerned. Sadism and masochism both include the combination of cruelty and lust. The terms were coined by Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, referring to two different poles, while Wilhelm Stekel later ascertained that the decisive thing in the phenomenon of sadomasochism is the affect, which is fed from two sources: in the sadist, from his own sense of power in overcoming the resistance of another and from his feeling himself into the humiliation of his partner; in the masochist, from the overcoming of his own resistances (power over himself!) and the feeling of himself into the partner who humbles him, in which we were able to show that we have to do not with separate events, but with polar expressions of a single complex. (57)
- 17 The victims of Dracula do not experience bloodsucking as a painful happening. Despite its violent nature, vampiric kiss is a source of sensuality and pleasure. Bloodsucking provides some thrills on the spot, but later, recalling these situations, it is considered to be dreadful. The after-effect of these intimate moments, the loss of blood enfeebles people. Lucy weakens physically as well as mentally, whereas Mina shows only physical weakness.
- 18 Daniel Lapin, a psychotherapist has examined victims of so-called vampiric sexual abuse. He argues that most vampire stories pervaded by sexuality are derived unconsciously from such traumatic experiences. He has compared real incest victims' symptoms with the characters of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and has found that both Mina and Lucy are victims of this special type of incest. I intend to sum up Lapin's traces briefly. Lucy's symptoms are as follows: she does not want to sleep, mother refuses when she wants to sleep in her room, after Dracula's kiss she is gasping for breath and feels compelled to go to Dracula whenever he wants her. (6-14) The same thing can be noticed when Lucy becomes a vampire: children want to go to her. Mina feels this inherent force to go to the Count too after her victimization. When Dracula forces her to suck the blood from his bare chest, Mina either has to drink or suffocates. Lapin calls this a "coerced fellatio" (41). Mina feels unclean and similarly, victims of incest feel shame after their molestation.
- 19 Dracula visits Lucy and sucks her blood when she is asleep or is in an unconscious state. He metaphorically rapes her. The girl cannot decide whether the horror she experiences is a product of dreams or reality. Dracula's visits evoke a strange reaction from Lucy, she feels bitter and sweet at the same time. Since Lucy gets a taste of vampirism, her longing for blood becomes the centre of her interest. Stoker splendidly illustrates where one's fate leads whose life's goal is confined to pursuing a desire, be it

sexuality or power. They concentrate only on this pursuit, which wears out these people. They think that if they can fulfill their greedy desire, they will be happy. This is not so. Lucy's life – similarly to other vampires' – will be full of suffering, iniquity, loneliness and misery. Similarly, sexually deviants often suffer from *melancholia*, a sense of guilt and solitariness. In addition, the excessive sexual activity might correspond to satyriasis and nymphomania, both involving moral turpitude.

- 20 The converted Lucy has a peculiar feature in her aberrant behaviour; even compared to *Dracula*. It is learnt from *Westminster Gazette* that Lucy seduces little children, although there is no explanation why she haunts only them. Probably because she is a "new" vampire and does not have enough power. Taking vampirization's sexual nature into consideration, this suggests Lucy's inclination for paedophilia. The other female vampires also feed their sexual appetite on children. When in *Dracula's* castle, they are offered a living child by the count instead of taking advantage of Jonathan. The young attorney was "aghast with horror" (D 53) as they disappeared with the bag. This criminal act of the vampiresses totally subverts the conception about women's vulnerability. The woman, who is weak, helpless and exposed to physical exploitation, turns into something different. After her virtue is violated, she corrupts those who are weaker than her, the children. Vampirism is contagious, and when infected, the victim becomes the victimizer.
- 21 Turning the girls into lustful vampiresses bring about the image of voluptuous death-like sexuality. Copulation with the vampire has a touch of necrophilia. Necrophilia means sexual intercourse with a dead body, where the possibility of resistance is excluded. Vampires are not dead, but undead, so they are moving objects of desires. Symbolizing forbidden passion, they keep coming back from the dead until they are killed by men of moral conviction. Necrophilic imagery, where sex and death are intertwined, was quite popular in the fin-de-siècle movement, and – although a borderline case with her semi-lifeless condition – the vampire figure was a proper manifestation of necrophilic longing with her connotation of death and sexuality.
- 22 Bunson describes necrophilia as "the uncontrollable desire to engage in assorted sexual activities with a cadaver" (187). The disability to control desires has proved to be a key motif in the interaction with the vampire. It is at night when the subconscious contents are without control, they come to the surface and gain power over the individual. Being a somnambulist, Lucy is unable to control herself, and becomes an easy quarry for the count. Similarly, Mina is seduced at night. The sexually active women are so hideous that they are described as nymphomaniac, who cannot control their desires. In Stoker's fiction, the passive Victorian woman has turned into a beastly libidinous creature.
- 23 To be put back to their original passive place, women have to be transformed into death-like condition as well. The erotic dead women of the late Victorian art symbolized liberation from temptation. On the other hand, the sexual attraction to dead bodies unfolded the patriarchal "obsession" with power. In the first place, this dominance could be maintained in the bedroom.
- 24 Ideally women would produce children by parthenogenesis; failing that, male impregnation should take place in a dark bedroom into which the husband would creep to create his offspring in silence while the wife endured the connection in a sort of coma, thereby precluding any stigma of depravity which would have been incurred by showing signs of life. (Crow 25) Women were forced into a comatose state, they became the embodiment of passivity, the dead "paramours" of their husbands. The Victorian



woman became an automaton with clear-cut functions, and a penitent for the sin of Eve (and of all women). Meanwhile, her moral advancement was the slogan for being in such a situation. The focus is not on the preoccupation with death, but a desire for absolute control which can be easily achieved on account of the passivity of the partner.

- 25 Another paraphilia which lurks in the vampire figure is bestiality. In the novel *Dracula*, the only male vampire is seen to take shape of animals. Lucy and the other vampiresses do not have animal alter-ego, and it seems to be unnecessary to have one, because of the gender discrimination of the period. Women were thought to be closer to animals than men; the (supposed) bestiality of their nature connected them to animals. Originally, folkloric vampires were beasts until the revolutionary human-like literary depictions in the Romantic era. It is true, that even at the time they were associated with animals with hidden, nocturnal lifestyle which impersonated their demonic nature. Wolves and bats have become the animal emblems for vampires, just as the cat is strongly connected with witches. Throughout the witch-hunt hysteria in Western Europe cats accompanied witches or witches took cat's form according to superstitious beliefs, and fornication with the devil in the form of an animal was one of the fatal counts of those being accused of witchcraft. The zoosexual act entails the exploration of the pleasures of bestiality, and animality always refers to the instinctual, more primitive stages of mankind.
- 26 The vampire does not need a woman to give birth that is why he is a divine creature. In this sense, he is father and mother at the same time. Since he is also the lover of the victim, a very strange incestuous relationship can be disclosed. The act of incest is a cultural taboo and as Freud notes "persons who obey the taboo have an ambivalent feeling toward what is affected by the taboo" (*Totem and Taboo* 54). This is most explicit in the novel when Dracula explains to Mina that "you, their best beloved one, are now to me flesh of my flesh; blood of my blood; kin of my kin [...]" (D 343). Vampire love is always incestuous. Sexual intercourse between relatives, thus close blood relations might have repercussions on the mental health of the offspring. In vampire narratives offsprings perpetually hand down this kind of "love," which always bars out the possibility to reach the high(er) standards of civilization.

## The Alleged Promiscuity and Immorality of Women

- 27 Apart from marginal individuals with sexual anomalies there are a number of other fields connected with sexuality where the person could be branded, at least in moralistic terms. Illegitimacy, or more precisely the violation of the sanctity of conjugal motherhood was one of them. There was a surplus of women in the Victorian era. Since the woman's place was in the home, they were financially dependent. Those having brothers and/or being married were in a lucky position, since they had people to support them. The others had to earn a living by themselves. It was rather difficult to find a proper job for a woman. They received less wages than men even when they did the same work. Amongst the poor one of the opportunities of earning money was to turn to prostitution. A lot of young girls chose the streets to overcome their temporary difficulties. Poverty was definitely one of the reasons to follow this path. Most of these girls had lost one or both of their parents, they were single, local young women and before going onto the streets, they had already had sexual experience (Walkovitz 19). Some were forced by circumstances, however, prostitution also offered an independent



way of living for girls. Pleasure was acted out in a business-like manner. Being sexually active, prostitutes were in great(er) danger of venereal diseases and pregnancy.

- 28 Pre-nuptial pregnancy was quite frequent in the nineteenth-century England, therefore pre-marital sex must have been a widespread phenomenon among all classes, opines Mason (72). Prostitutes became easily pregnant, so these mothers were not too attached to their children emotionally. There may be some resemblance between Stoker's vampiresses and the stereotyped prostitute. The loose attachment between woman and child is clear when Lucy sucks the blood of a baby and throws her away, and similarly, Dracula's vampiresses feed on an infant. Night is when prostitutes are most active, and this is the time when female vampires stalk at night. Furthermore, Lucy is a somnambulist, she often goes out in a nightdress while sleepwalking. According to the Victorian ethos, loose dress meant loose morals. As Walkovitz remarks, the "most visible symbol of the prostitute's relative affluence was her dress" (26). Obviously, appearance was emphasized in order to attract male clients. Although, there is no comment on the female vampires' dress in *Dracula*, their outward beauty is thoroughly stressed.
- 29 Lucy and the count meet at night when it is dark, which assumes the importance of secrecy for various reasons. It is important to note that it is the prostitute who seduces while in this case Lucy is being allured by the count. This can be considered as the first step, because Dracula's appearance is the primary reason for the changes in Lucy, who begins to have semi-sexual nightmares and not only her sleep but also her morals get corrupted. She becomes openly voluptuous. If discovered, her nocturnal dalliance would endanger her reputation. Lucy is engaged to Arthur Holmwood, and her liaison with another man would not be tolerated. This form of the double standard in Victorian society is obvious, the infidelity of the husband is tolerated, whereas the unfaithful woman's act was seen as a moral depravity and could result in exclusion from society. The patriarch's opinion is reflected in Krafft-Ebing's writing, according to which
- 30 [t]he unfaithfulness of the wife, as compared with that of the husband, is morally of much wider bearing, and should always meet with severer punishment at the hands of law. The unfaithful wife not only dishonours herself, but also her husband and her family, not to speak of the possible uncertainty of paternity. Natural instincts and social position are frequent causes of disloyalty in man (the husband), whilst the wife is surrounded by many protective influences. (16)
- 31 The hypocritical attempt of men to justify their own infidelity is resonant. It was thought that women were inferior and weaker, and they were held responsible for the fall of man due to the Christian Church's misogynist approach.
- 32 The way of looking at women as subsidiary is what lurks in the nature of female vampire figures. There seems to be allusive harlotry in Lucy and the vampiresses; their nocturnal appearances (sexuality is conventionally associated with darkness), their polygamy, their attachment disorders and their seductiveness provide similarities with prostitutes. They can be connected with syphilis, so they can represent women with loose morals in terms of prostitution as well. But despite this evocative analogy, it would be exaggeration to say that Lucy and the vampiresses are "Victorian prostitutes", rather, bearing in mind the era's strict mores and ethos, attention is focused on their predatory sexual appetite. This picture results from the ideal image of the angelic woman where anaesthesia is a key feature. The vampiresses upset the

Victorian standards for females, and their sexual activity is depicted in a very negative way. They are associated with the promiscuous whores in the sense that they are also considered “low women” of defective moral sense.

## Conclusion

- 33 Vampire narratives are tales of forbidden desires. *Dracula* echoes many threatening aspects of sexuality but order is restored at the end of the novel. Same-sex desire was a menace to the moral sentiment of the Victorian period, where xenophobia and homophobia were not only projected onto certain groups, but these notions were linked together. Taking the vampiric sexual nature into consideration, it can be stated that there are anatomically heterosexual relations in the novel, homosexuality is not present directly, only metaphorically. Same-sex desires can be found in heterosexual displacements. Though, the character of the vampire represents more than simple homosexual tendencies, namely the fluidity of gender identity in a seemingly rigid gender structure of the Victorian society. The question of morality is accentuated, although the dominant presence of the patriarchal society is lurking in the background, most conspicuously in the case of the woman: women with sexual impulses are also associated with *the monstrous*.

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## ABSTRACTS

The second half of the nineteenth century was a turning point in conceptualizing sexual practices and behaviour in Western societies. Monogamous heteronormativity was beginning to be challenged, and it was probably the gothic novel that offered the most flexible medium for subverting the traditional concept of sexuality. The purpose of this paper is to explore the ambiguous character of the vampire in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897); a possible agency of what the normative patriarchal gender system marginalized as 'other.'

La deuxième moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle a constitué un tournant dans la conceptualisation des pratiques et comportements sexuels dans les sociétés occidentales. L'hétéro-normativité monogame a commencé à être contestée, et c'est probablement le roman gothique qui a offert le médium le plus adapté pour renverser le concept traditionnel de la sexualité. L'objectif de cet article est d'explorer le caractère ambigu du vampire dans le *Dracula* de Bram Stoker (1897), un agencement possible de ce que le système sexuel normatif patriarcal a marginalisé comme « autre ».

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