

The Victorian Fin de Siècle and The Criminal Other



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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Victorians and crime by looking at how a unique set of anxieties that appeared throughout the Victorian era formed society's perceptions of crime and criminals. It argues that progressively the figure of the criminal other, the social enemy emerged, and this combined with the omnipotent fear of crime and tinted with the notion of degeneration resulted in even the pettiest of criminals being regarded as a monstrous threat to society and ultimately to all of civilization (Foucault 1978). Respectively, the 'literature of crime' appeared and flourished, concerning crime and reflecting the social anxieties, such as immigration, sexuality- particularly of women, moral degeneracy, and reverse colonization. Bram Stoker's renowned book, Dracula, with the frightful illustration of the Count and his influence touched with his readers in the setting of the closing hours of civilization.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about the Victorians and crime. It explores how a peculiar set of anxieties that emerged during the Victorian era influenced how crime and criminals were perceived. In particular, it examines the construction of the imaginary figure of the criminal other in mid-to late Victorian society, and the fear of crime that was associated. This will be closely tied to the discussion of how these anxieties were depicted in the flourishing late 19th-century literature, when social anxieties were the dominant themes of renowned works like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Grey*. Yet in this thesis *Dracula* by Bram Stoker was selected to demonstrate the presence and the social portrayal of the criminal other owing to its most vivid reflections on immigration, sexuality, contamination, and gender roles.

Following the introduction, the first substantive chapter will discuss the historical context of the time period with reference to the social changes, such as urbanization, immigration, changes in gender roles, class system and perception of crime. The second chapter will discuss the emergence and the figure of the criminal other. The third chapter will present an overview of the development of sciences, discuss important and relevant criminological theories. The fourth chapter will introduce the *fin de siècle* movement in Victorian literature and the fifth chapter will provide relevant evidence drawn from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to support the argument.

The term 'Victorian' conjures up a very specific historical time in British society, culture, and literature, sometimes symbolizing a curiously constrained collection of -often conflicting- beliefs, values, and attitudes. The Victorians are frequently portrayed as a society with strict moral principles, prudence, conservative values, and discretion concerning sexuality, and they were also infamous for their rejection of all perceived social deviants, such as 'lunatics', 'criminals', 'stray women', and 'homosexuals'. In a society where middle-class values predominated, these social deviants received harsh punishment, and the working classes were also regarded with suspicion and disrespect (Purchase 2006). A special emphasis was placed on female sexuality and the focus of

the patriarchal society on women's aspirations led to a shift in gender norms and conventional family values (Kovac 2015).

Owing to Britain's role as a key maritime trade power and its burgeoning colonial empire, immigrants and foreigners were common occurrences in major cities across the country, particularly in London. Due to concerns about the contamination of the Britishness, social degradation, and the invasion of civilization by primitive forces (Brantlinger 1988), all immigrants were looked at with suspicion, and this attitude extended to all non-British communities (McLean 2013). These anxieties notably escalated when Britain's influence as a superpower began to wane at the closing of the nineteenth century and resulted in further anxieties about potential reverse colonisation (Arata 1990).

The Victorian era has also been viewed in light of technological advancement and, as a result, social change. Victorian times were a time of transition between an antiquated way of living and new, technologically advanced one (Purchase 2006). The faith in modernity and advancement was a strong motivator during the late Victorian era, however the power dynamics and the social system came under intense scrutiny from the arts and sciences during the final decade, known as the *fin de siècle* (turn of the century) movement, which was typified by a significant deal of the social anxieties. All noble Victorian standards were called into doubt by Darwinism, urbanisation, criminality, socialism, feminism; the blurring of boundaries between concepts that to earlier generations appeared self-evident are the key themes of the literature from the turn of the century (McNabb 2017).

The concept of crime and criminality, which refers to the categorisation and labelling of human behaviour as deviant by society, is as old as human civilization itself (Chamberlain 2015). Crime definitions and how certain behaviours are interpreted vary among cultures, reflect the dominant social norms, are influenced by social processes, and change over time. Through history, various disciplines have attempted to investigate and explain the phenomena of crime in various ways. The development of classical criminology and later biological positivism in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries marked the shift from the pre-modern religious concept of crime and criminal behaviour to our modern understanding of crime (Croall 2011).

In Britain, perceptions of criminals and approaches to treating them had already experienced a number of changes in the 1830s and 1840s that were aligned with revisions in the dominant beliefs regarding the origin and development of criminal conduct. The notion that criminal behaviour was deliberate or that it was a product of an individual's lack of self-control progressively shifted to the concept that it was pathological and that offenders were barbaric and unreformable by their nature. Widespread contemporary beliefs that criminal behaviour is the consequence of personality defects or biological predispositions shaped how criminals were portrayed in a myriad of Victorian popular writings (Stearns 2013). Academics have long argued about the Victorian depictions of crime and the portrayal of the criminal archetype in artworks that were essential to the literal and social construction and maintenance of nineteenth century British society. As the era witnessed rising anxieties concerning crime, fiction was not only to depict crime and criminals, but also engaged in and influenced the shifting perceptions of criminality and its causes (Scarborough 2010).

CHAPTER 1

THE VICTORIAN SOCIAL ANXIETIES

The first chapter provides a short summary of the Victorian era and the key moments that influenced and changed society. Also, they aim to provide a succinct overview of the social anxieties of Victorian society that arose as a result of industrialism, including its effects on changes in the class system, crime, gender roles, and racial dynamics. Lastly, it seeks to discuss how these anxieties contributed to the construction of the criminal other.

The Victorian Era in Britain, which lasted historically from 1837 to 1901 was a period of rapid progression marked by economic prosperity, technological improvement, and significant industrialisation (Steinbach 2017). This epoch in history may be described as one of spectacular change, with an unceasing flood of new knowledge, wealth, prospects, politics, and perspectives. The dynamics of life, the manner in which people travelled, communicated, traded, treated illness, or even the methods in which food was conserved had never experienced such transformations previously. Significant changes were made in the areas of public health, education, child labour, mine and factory safety laws, and the abolishment of slavery in the British Empire. The term 'Victorian' became synonymous with strong morals, progress, a humanitarian and modern attitude, and technological advancements (Paterson 2013). Victorian culture was also characterised by migration in both directions; by 1871, the population of the UK doubled. Never before has British society changed so rapidly. While many British relocated to North America, numerous Irish settled in England and Wales, and immigrants arrived from all over the world (Paterson, 2013).

1.1 CRIME IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA, THE CRIMINAL CLASSES

According to Corfield (1987), the powerful organising construct known as 'class' first appeared in the middle of the 18th century. Along with it, a set of new defining qualifiers like 'upper, middle, working' also developed (Corfield 1987). The society evolved into a

hierarchical structure and became very class-conscious, with distinct lifestyles for the aristocracy, gentry, middle class, and working class. (Steinbach, 2017). According to Emsley (1996), the majority of crimes during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were petty thefts, and those who committed these crimes were often from the poorer socioeconomic spectrum. Consequently, the concept of 'class' grew increasingly central to the study and understanding of crime in society, and crime came to be perceived as primarily a class problem (Emsley, 1996).

The field of criminology was still dominated at this time by the Classical school and crime was regarded as a product of a rational actor's free-willed decision calculated on the pleasure and pain principle (Chamberlain 2015). However, following the French Revolution (1789), the fear and criminalization of the poor reached new heights (Emsley, 1996). The spread of the liberal and democratic ideas and the fast changes in dispensation of the population in the cities put a remarkable pressure on the government to maintain social hierarchies and existing governing structures. This transition highly influenced the extensive changes that appeared in the views of how criminals were perceived (Paterson, 2013).

Anxieties about the poor, their indecent or disorderly behaviour and habits had a significant impact on these perceptions, when they developed. The main concern was the quantity, rather than the quality of the offences (Emsley, 1996). The annual criminal statistics that were first released in 1805 showed a gruesome and terrifying image. The number of people brought to trial for criminal violations increased approximately sevenfold between 1805 and 1842, greatly outpacing the expansion of the population (Weiner, 1990). The passionate reports of the time by contemporaries about this crime wave have been discovered by modern historians to be very inaccurate because most crimes during the period of greatest worry were mundane and unthreatening, "involving small amounts being stolen, squalid robberies, burglaries and assaults, in which roughness was common, but not fatal violence, and in which the items taken were usually small amounts of coal, metal, clothing, food, money or personal possessions" (Phillips 1977, cited in Wiener 1996, p14). Arguably, in this period of unrest and instability, laws were passed to safeguard one class and uphold authority over the other, and punishment was administered to deter law breaking and safeguard the

possessions of the ruling class (Thompson, 1981). Concerning the rising population, increasing crime rates, and disorder on the streets, Home Secretary Robert Peel founded the police in 1829 (Emsley 1996).

The beginning of the Victorian era was marked by depression, financial distress, and terrifying social upheaval (Paterson, 2013). Additionally, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, social anxieties escalated to taint the lives of the public and one of them was the fear of crime, which became a source of major anxiety in British society (Philips, 2003). At the dawn of Queen Victoria's reign, those from the lower reaches were still referred to as members of the criminal classes. Publications like those from the Royal Commission contributed to the legitimacy of the concept that out there a criminal class exists. These publications were mainly written by Sir Edwin Chadwick (1800 – 1890), an English social reformer, who, based on his observations identified a criminal group among the working class that exhibited traits that were not deemed acceptable by society, including parental neglect, moral weakness, inadequate education, idleness, drunkenness, luxurious lifestyle, and/or a combination of these traits. According to these writings, it was not believed that poverty and destitution caused crime, but rather the two major vices of “indolence or the pursuit of easy excitement”, and ‘the temptation by the profit of the life of the crime’ (Chadwick 1839, cited in Emsley 1996, p63). were perceived as the fundamental causes of criminality. Crime was considered as a problem within the frightening and uncontrollable expansion of metropolitan areas (Emsley 1996).

1.2 THE DANGEROUS CLASSES

Queen Victoria's first full decade on the throne, the 'Hungry Forties', saw more domestic depressive events, such as the tragedies of the Irish potato famine, the prospect of political instability from the Chartists and the threatening shadows from abroad in the form of the European revolutions. It is evident from this synopsis that Victorian living was not exclusively prosperous and peaceful (Paterson 2013). The common perception of the criminal classes was pronounced even more distressing to society in the 1840s. The term "les classes dangereuses," was initially coined by H.A. Frégier (1789-1860) to describe the dangerous lower classes in Paris in 1840. It swiftly

entered the English language and was adopted by certain writers to refer to the dangerous classes in Britain, conjuring the concept of the 'dangerous classes' (Phillips 2003).

The Victorians placed a high emphasis on well-defined social classes. As with other customs of the Victorian era of 'progress' and 'improvement', respectability surfaced and became firmly associated in the Victorian minds with cultural and social development that promoted an organised, disciplined, and civilised society. Professionalism, consciousness, self-restraint- particularly in sexual behaviour, sobriety, prudence, truthfulness, morality, purity, domesticity, and orderliness were repeatedly stressed in considerations of respectability (Masters 2010). However, it has been argued that respectability rather functioned as a strong cultural and behavioural influence that facilitated the classification and alienation of individuals. According to Mullen (2014) since the Victorian middle class was yet not a homogenous group, the construction of a unified and separate class identity which would differentiate them from the classes above and below was essential (Mullen 2014).

The notion of the 'dangerous classes' combined the harm that regular criminality poses to people and their property with the larger menace that a combative and potentially revolutionary working class poses to the entire society. This impression of the 'dangerous classes' may be employed to generate fear or anxiety in the respectable reader conjuring up the image of the unidentified mobs who resided in the London slums and in the fast expanding industrial and business districts spreading out from their squalid dwellings into the affluent areas to beg, loot, and kill (Phillips 2003).

There was a dichotomy to how the city was perceived. "The city was the engine of national economic and social progress, but it was also a turbulent and troubling nightmare of disorder." (Muncie & McLaughlin, 2001 p 153) The urban poor grew to be viewed as dangerous due to the differences between their customs and habits and the emerging middle-class standards of respectability and decency. The 'oddness' of the working-class lifestyle and level of distinction afforded Victorian middle-class citizens a sensation of 'alien people' living among them (Muncie & McLaughlin 2001).

According to Emsley (1996), from the 1850s through the 1870s, a string of daring explorers took up their journals to expand the society's knowledge and write about their adventures into criminal quarters where the locals were most likened to "Red Indians" or varying sorts of "black 'savages'" (Emsley 1996, p70).¹ They frequently conducted surveillance of the squalid areas and filed reports on those who lived there. Among these explorers there was Henry Mayhew (1812 – 1887), a well-known journalist of the day. In his writings, Mayhew differentiated three distant subclasses within the London poor being the ones 'they [that] *will* work, they [that] *can't* work, and they [that] *won't* work' (Mayhew cited in Emsley 1996, p70), the latter being the beggars, the vagrants, and the prostitutes.

White-collar crime and corruption were concerns during the nineteenth century, and it was known that influential people of high social status were involved in these types of offences. Yet since ancestry, heritage and social standing were prerequisites for having a business in Victorian London, those who committed a financial crime would escape a harsh sentence if they continued to uphold their respectability in the eyes of the law. Bigamy, theft, and embezzlement were the identified offences that destroyed one's respectability. If the courts regarded the fraud committed by these 'gentlemen' offenders as theft or embezzlement, penal servitude, and serious punishment, such as a long prison sentence, were most probable outcomes of the sentence (Woolnough 2019). Despite the fact, that these immoral and unlawful activities caused hardship in society, these wrongdoers were not viewed as criminals, but rather as "rotten apples" within their social classes (Emsley 1996).

With the development of the Victorian era, from the 1850s, it became more difficult to distinguish between social classes based on their fortune, level of education, or other once stable features. Social divisions and class struggle became less pronounced as education levels rose and democracy was extended to the working masses. The working class now had more leisure time and resources to participate in consumer

¹ According to Muncie and McLaughlin (2001), it was the domestic application of the imperial perspective that contributed to the construction of 'the other' and the notion of an 'alien place' thus acquired a racial undertone in the imperial Victorian Britain milieu

culture and merged with the lower middle class. Victorians put a strong focus on the values associated with respectability during this period of peace and tranquillity (Steinbach 2017). Despite the advancement of the society, the reforms in education and the apparent development of civilisation, a layer of society was still widely referred to as the criminal class. They continued to be seen to exist among the respectable society as an irreparably lost, dangerous, and disordered species of an alien group, endangering the virtue and morality that the Victorian middle class so fondly treasured (Taylor 2005).

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

This chapter explores the important criminological theories that influenced nineteenth century thought, the anxieties and changes in understanding driven by scientific and pseudo-scientific doctrines and how these concepts contributed to how the 'criminal other' was perceived. The chapter also offers insight into how the 'criminal other' was treated in Victorian society in Britain. While we traditionally consider science to be objective, this chapter will contend that science reflects and reinforces the social beliefs and anxieties of its day.

One of the hallmarks of the Victorian era was the rising dominance of scientific knowledge. The rapid rate of discoveries in physics and chemistry, the advancement in a variety of human sciences like anthropology, sociology, and psychology resulted in the spread of science throughout a culture that had previously based on classical and religious ideologies are just a few examples of how science has dramatically transformed society. One of the most significant developments in relation to social anxieties was the emergence of the idea that primitive or atavistic vestiges might be hiding in the modern human mind and body (Luckhurst 2005). Nineteenth century science swiftly became ingrained in the social processes, concerned with humanity's evolutionary fate, and consequently core assumptions about what it meant to be human were called into doubt. Popular and scientific literature were saturated with the natural

genesis of 'mankind', as well as anxiety of the ramifications of our 'primitive' origins (McNabb 2015). New scientific perspectives served to reinforce the notion of the criminal other, through the construction of pathological explanations of deviance (Punter & Byron 2004). The classical school, which had dominated the study of crime for over a century, was challenged in the nineteenth century by biological positivism, which stated that criminals were 'biologically different' (Gray 2016). The concept that criminals are 'different' has prompted a series of studies to pinpoint these differences, which are frequently associated with pathologies or deficits and are regarded as deviant (Croall 2011).

2.1 POSITIVIST THEORIES OF CRIME

The study of criminology began to form around the middle of the nineteenth century as scholars from a variety of disciplines sought to understand the phenomenon of crime (Croall 2011). For instance, according to Foucault (1978) when psychiatry first emerged at the start of the nineteenth century between the years of 1800 and 1835, 'the psychiatrization of the criminal' included constructing a new social caste and scientific entity to fear and control. In the pathological approach to crime, mental, physical, or psychological disorders were determined to be the primary causes of criminal behaviour. The pathological approach to crime evolved with a number of major and interconnected advancements, such as the emergence of the professions, the birth and rise of the middle class, secularisation, urbanisation, and the introduction of 'the expert', signalling the expansion of professional proficiency that relied on scientific reason to comprehend, interpret, and control human behaviour. Moral insanity and degeneration were 'pathological stigmata' that nineteenth-century psychiatry looked for to identify potentially dangerous people. As Foucault says, "Nineteenth-century psychiatry invented an entirely fictitious entity, a crime which is insanity, a crime which is nothing but insanity, an insanity which is nothing but crime." (Foucault 1978, p6). This assisted in controlling the people through a system of medical reasoning and professional knowledge that ultimately replaced the barbaric and bloody retributive justice practices that had been already declining owing to the impact of the classical school (Foucault 1978).

The concept of the dangerous individual (Foucault 1978) along many other scientific thought and discoveries, such as physiognomy and phrenology, Darwin's publications on the theory of evolution and the emergence of the degeneration theory (Rimke 2011) gave rise to a new perspective of biological positivism, gaining popularity in efforts to recognize and manage people who were seen to be biologically unfit, degenerate, or undesirable. Throughout this procedure, the focus changed from the action (crime) to a scientifically supported characterization of the actor (criminal) (Foucault 1978).

The fundamental tenet of biological criminology—that a person's personality and behaviour are determined by their physical makeup—was first introduced by the concept of phrenology and physiognomy (Chamberlain, 2015). The two disciplines, that are probably the best-known early biological approaches to the study of criminality were derived from the studies of Franz Joseph Gall (1796), and other notable thinkers of the day, were popular among both the scientists and general public from the early nineteenth century. While physiognomy relies on facial characteristics to assess an individual's personality, phrenology tries to delve deeper by mapping the portions of the skull and brains that influence specific facets of personality. These pseudo-sciences had their roots in superstitious folklore and religion, but by the middle of the nineteenth century, these traditional notions about physical indicators of wickedness had become the focus of investigation (Marshall 2000). By the 1850s, as middle-class anxieties about the dangerous classes replaced the century's early optimism, the hereditarian notions veiled in phrenology theories became increasingly present. The focus of phrenology then shifted into the study of a system of inherited traits (Rafter 2005).

Although the word 'degeneration' initially appeared back in the fifteenth century in the English language it was not until the eighteenth century that it started to be applied in modern natural sciences (Lawrence 2010). Bénédict Augustin Morel's (1809-1873) works on the issue of degeneration in France in the 1840s and 1850s addressed the concept in a specific psychiatric context, and the publications introduced the foundations of the theory of degeneration (Walter 1956). Morel was well-known for his research on 'Cretinism' in which he attempted to construct a theory of heredity that included social pathologies and ethical concerns such as drunkenness and sexual deviance (Smith 2012). Morel defined degeneration as pathological alterations of a pre-

existing original perfect type of human caused by the environment and the parents' conduct on their descendants and argued that the impact of one generation's nutrition, toxins, environment, health, and moral decay results in a high number of neurotics, criminals, and paupers in the next. This degenerative damage was then transmitted to the third generation, which was plagued by mental defects, lunacy, and monstrosities. This, in consequence, led to severe deformities in future generations, resulting in infertility and the eventual demise of the contaminated bloodline (Smith 2012). The theory of degeneration has risen to be influential and has shaped several criminological doctrines, including Lombroso's idea of criminal anthropology and related racist theories (Schuster et al 2011).

As Morel's theory demonstrates, the subject of heredity has been already a matter of interest in the scientific milieu decades before the Darwinian theory was first introduced (Bashford & Levine 2010). Darwin's thesis was first presented in *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and claims that organisms evolve biologically over generations through inheritance of behavioural and physical features in line with their environments (Williams 1992). Yet, Darwin's hypothesis allowed for degeneration, in which humankind may devolve and turn into beasts (Gray 2016). This beast was now very similar to the human; in fact, it was hardwired into our bodies and minds as a heritage of our evolutionary past, and innate impulses were always on the verge of erasing the late additions of civilised morality and behaviour. This idea was immediately broadened to explain the reasons behind the savageness of the criminals, female hysteria, insanity, and the genetic impurity that led to degenerated descendants. The boundaries between animals and humans were challenged by Charles Darwin's theory of evolutionary development (Luckhurst 2005), and "placed humans in nature and subject to natural laws" ... "critically undermining the argument for special creation" (Bashford & Levine 2010, p4).

2.2 LOMBROSO'S CRIMINAL MAN

Both the evolutionary and the degeneration theories had a weighty impact on the developing domain of criminology. In the late nineteenth century, positivist criminology began to emerge as part of a larger trend whereby all social issues were progressively

seen through the expanding prism of science. The primary foundation for individual-based theories lies in the pathological concept of criminality which claims that delinquency is analogous to a disease or illness. The central thesis of the pathological approach is that criminal behaviour is individually innate and that it is beyond the individual's control due to personal differences at the level of biology, psychology, or both. Crime and criminality were seen as a social problem that need to be addressed in order to maintain the general health of the social system, therefore the positivist approach should be applied to progress us as society and eliminate issues like crime, degeneration, and depravity. The positivist school was first established as an alliance of scientists from several professions and disciplines that took the individual criminal as its focus of interest and research (Rimke 2011). The fundamental source of influence for the biological version of the predestined actor model of crime and criminal conduct is the product of Cesare Lombroso (1836- 1909) and the Italian School's research.

The major objective of criminology, according to these pioneering and prominent biological criminologists, should be the direct scientific observation of criminals and their conduct. As a result, they established an enduring empirical tradition of meticulous observation and experiment (Hopkins-Burke 2019). Cesare Lombroso (1836- 1909) merged phrenology and physiognomy, two pseudoscientific disciplines and claimed that based on a person's skull and facial features, he could determine their personality and behaviour. The most important concept in Lombroso's early studies is that criminals differ from moral citizens by their distinctive physical features. This theme is expressed in his most renowned book, *The Criminal Man*, which was published in 1875. Drawing on Darwin's theory of evolution, Lombroso argued that the criminals exhibit a type of degeneracy, being ape-like or atavistic and are biological reversions of a previous stage of human evolution (Chamberlain, 2015). As Lombroso described anatomically in his work, there suggestive markers of criminality, such as "...the sight of that skull...enormous jaws, high cheek bones, prominent superciliary arches, solitary lines in the palms...handle-shaped ears" and Lombroso identified "the ferocious instincts of

primitive humanity and the inferior animals" as the "problem of the nature of the criminal" (Lombroso 1876 cited in Arata & Stephen 1996, p34).

Lombroso also held the view that criminals can be categorised into four primary groups. First, those who can be identified as born criminals by their atavistic physical features. The second category are the insane criminals, and they include idiots, imbeciles, paranoid individuals, epileptics, and alcoholics. The third category consists of criminaloids, those criminals who occasionally commit criminal acts when the opportunity arises, but significantly, in Lombroso's observation, these offenders possess innate characteristics that make them more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. Criminals of passion, the final and fourth main category, are people who are driven to turn to crime out of rage, love, or honour (Hopkins-Burke, 2019). Lombroso also conducted studies on female criminals, and in 1895 he released his book, *The Female Offender*. He concluded that atavism is what promotes female criminality, but this is restrained by their feminine nature. Women who exhibited more masculine characteristics such as greater strength, propensity for violence, and intense sensual desires, were thought to have a biological predisposition to criminality (Chamberlain, 2015).

In the realm of sociology, Max Nordau (1849-1923) promoted the idea of degeneration in the 1880s. Nordau's argument, drawn primarily on Morel and Lombroso's works, argued that writers and artists, like criminals, prostitutes, and lunatics (the traditionally labelled 'misfits'), exhibited all of the typical mental and, in many cases, physiological characteristics of the degenerate condition. Nordau, like many other liberals of the time, had a definite concept of sanity and morality; they were largely governed by bourgeois respectability standards, and anyone lacking these attributes was a degenerate. Nordau's ideas reflected, in many respects, the traditional beliefs of his class and era and all of these themes fit within a larger ideology of positivist evolutionary humanism, which was typical of nineteenth-century European liberalism, that emphasised order, discipline, progress, respectability, and reason (Aschheim 1993).

2.3 THE RISE OF THE CRIMINAL OTHER

In addition to the widely held concerns that all types of lawbreaking were increasing, contemporaries of the 1850s also voiced mounting anxieties over violent crimes. Both the annual statistics and the violent incidents received extensive press coverage, and these were given a great deal of social relevance. The evidence of increasing crime

rates and the assumption of its accuracy published in the newspapers further exacerbated the existing anxiety. The rise in crime was frequently seen as a symptom of moral decay by both liberals and conservatives, who asserted that the primary problem of the day was the lowering of moral standards (Wiener 1990).

Contrary to popular belief, Casey's (2011) study revealed that crime rates were in fact declining. Despite an uptick in crime after the introduction of the police in the 1820s and 1830s, crime was on the wane by the late 1840s, and according to official figures, crime reduced considerably in almost every form after 1858 in Britain. Yet, the general public felt that crime was increasing (Casey 2011). The papers were eager to play on readers' interest in the crimes by making assumptions about the kinds of villains hiding in shadowy alleyways, ready to strike. (Farrall et al 2010). Truth be told, the vast number of crimes were relatively minor offences, including assaults, intoxication in public, and small thefts. In a lot of adult crime, alcohol was a major contributing factor and mental illness was also often an issue, particularly in cases of severe assault. Less emphasis was devoted to property crimes later in the century and more was focused on moral and sexual offences (Gray 2006).

As is well known, in the nineteenth century, tensions about sexuality, particularly regarding gender and class, took centre stage. The division between normal and abnormal sexualities was developed as a result of Victorian attempts to scientifically categorise sexualities, with a focus on the concept of unnatural passion exhibited in homosexuality and prostitution, which was the subject of scientific inquiry, moral concern, and criminalization (Muncie & McLaughlin, 2001). However, the public and political debates regarding, and also against, homosexuality were interwoven with other underlying social anxieties, including the threat of unrestrained 'male lust,' concerns over imperial collapse, and the purity of the race. Sex similar to race developed as a

symbol for threat in this form. The nation's ability to reproduce and moral order was perceived as at risk from unrestrained sexual behaviour. This threat sparked the vision of a multitude of dangerous people together with images of illegal, promiscuous, and unrepressed sexuality among the urban slums of the underclass (Muncie & McLaughlin, 2001).

During the nineteenth century contemporaries began to refer to prostitution as "The Great Social Evil," and it was believed that prostitution was the most pressing social problem that society was facing at the time (Joyce 2008). The clouded the image of the impoverished prostitute embedded in the public mind as a source of fascination and disgust, serving as a potent illustration of the alienation and social displacement that typified the industrial age. Prostitution was commonplace at the time, the respectable society saw it as a threat to its treasured values and morals. Since the prostitute did not fit the patriarchal social roles that were assigned to her in Victorian society, the stigmatisation of prostitution as the Great Social Evil contributed to the maintenance of the patriarchal framework (Joyce 2008).

Similarly, the movement for women's emancipation that also started to branch out resulted in increasing anxiety in British society. Feminist groups fought for feminist causes in general, including their desire to make their own marital choices and their refusal to be restricted by social expectations and practical or economic considerations. They campaigned for the legal and scientific acknowledgment of gender equality as well as their rights to education. These concepts were being adopted by the so-called 'New Women' by the 1890s. The New Women were modern, independent women who sought to establish their equality with men (Burdett 2014). Women's emancipation movements rocked the patriarchal society, and they quickly became connected to widespread accusations that women's neglect of domestic chores was a major factor for the rise of moral decay in families and juvenile delinquency (Weiner 1990).

At the turn of the century, social Darwinists and eugenicists were promoting the notion that there were superior and inferior races, as well as progressive and regressive ones.

Furthermore, they advocated that civilised, forward-thinking races like the British should rule the lower races, or possibly fully replace them. The gap between uncivilised and civilised peoples appeared to the Victorians to be extremely wide and maybe impassable (Brantlinger 1985).

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL ANXIETIES IN BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA

This chapter will present an introduction of the general descriptors of the fin de siècle movement in the Victorian literature and relevant evidence from Bram Stoker's Dracula to demonstrate the existence of Victorian social anxieties in fiction, with a particular emphasis on the criminal other.

3.1 THE VICTORIAN GOTHIC

The term 'gothic' first became widely used in the eighteenth century to describe anything that was in opposition to reason and order, despite the fact that its origins date back to the third century. History has attributed the downfall of the Western Roman Empire and the subsequent shift into mediaeval Europe to the so-called 'Goths', a conquering East Germanic tribe. As a consequence, they came to represent the demise of culture and civilization as well as the triumph of disorder and barbarism. The term 'gothic' came to be equated with the terror of the mediaeval era in post-Renaissance England; this unfavourable connotation persisted when the term was adopted to describe a literary subgenre that concerned with the macabre and the supernatural, that "was everything that offended neoclassical taste,"(Luckhurst 2005, pX) The gothic style first became prominent in the British literary landscape during the period between 1764 and 1820. This era marks the publication of The Castle of Otranto (1764), written by Horace Walpole, that is widely regarded as the first gothic novel and whose success sparked a widespread literary movement that featured authors like Mary Shelley and

Matthew Lewis. Following the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1818, the Gothic genre started to lose its popularity by the middle of the nineteenth century and it was not until the Decadence movement, towards the tail of the nineteenth century, and most notably in the fin de siècle literature, that it reappeared in full force. Yet there are notable distinctions between the first and second waves of Gothic: while the first wave was concerned with the romantic Gothic villains represented in a form of human or ghostly terrors in exotic and historical locations- to aid readers detach the horrors from

their surroundings; on the contrary, Victorian Gothic is defined chiefly by changing the site of fright with the urbanization of the Gothic villain (Briefel 2007). In this novel setting a new Gothic antihero, the criminal also started to arise. Horrors are now carefully woven into the fabric of society in the metropolis, delivering the fear to the home of the contemporary reader. In the fin de siècle "The city, with its dark, narrow, winding streets and hidden byways replacing the labyrinthine passages of the earlier castles and convent", is depicted as "a location of danger" (Punter 2004, p28) and residence of a new group of antagonists - a bizarre and eclectic collection of monsters as the new sources of fear. These monsters appear in a variety of shapes, including vampires, evil doubles, physically attractive men with decaying souls, and hideous human and animal hybrids, to cite a few (Briefel 2007) According to Halberstam & Halberstam (1995) this nineteenth century obsession with monsters "marks a peculiarly modern emphasis upon the horror of particular kinds of bodies" (p3), therefore, the rise of doctrines like Lombroso's criminal anthropology or Morel's theory of degeneration are often considered as examples of the underlying themes guiding the fin de siècle literature. By the 1880s and 1890s the concept of degeneration had been ingrained in society, and it had become a significant topic of social discourse and political conjecture in critical and mainstream journalism as well as in discussions among scientists and professionals (Pykett 2014).

It is unthinkable to exclude decadence from the discussion of atavism and degeneration. The term decadence originated in the Latin word 'cadere', which means to fall apart, rot, or decay. The meaning of the word 'decadence' signified moral and cultural decline, a movement that rejected bourgeois dealings and immersed

themselves in a secretive, sinister universe instead. Gothic became one of the favoured genres for portraying this grotesque celebration of malady and decay (Luckhurst 2005).

The Victorian fin de siècle was also concerned with the closing hours of civilization, (Luckhurst 2005). At the dusk of the nineteenth century, monsters appear to be the most pervasive: they evolve to represent anxieties and sometimes desires that were peculiar to this turbulent era, when themes like Darwinism, imperialism, degeneration, nonstandard sexualities, and the rise of the New Woman were becoming increasingly prevalent. By blurring the boundaries between humankind and creatures, these

monsters may represent tensions from the end of the nineteenth century over racial, biological, and gendered issues (Halberstam & Halberstam 1995).

A gothic obsession outpacing its popularity in the eighteenth century emerged in the Victorian fin de siècle. The release of books during this time period included such “works of terror” as Robert Lewis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) (Briefel 2007). Among the various works of fiction and countless phantoms that tormented the Victorian mind, one such fictional character stands out above the rest for its potential to generate terror. By the close of the nineteenth century in 1897, a single novel, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* appeared that encapsulated almost all significant themes of social anxieties of the Victorian age (May 1998), those were the fear of science, the fear of the foreigner and reverse colonisation, sexuality, and the rise of the New Women. The following parts of this thesis will discuss the representation of these main social anxieties of the Victorian era in *Dracula*.

3.2 SCIENCE: DRACULA, THE CRIMINAL OTHER

By the time Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* debuts in 1897, the forming powers of science and Darwin’s theories challenging religion and destiny had pervaded Victorian culture (Frost 2003). Stoker’s novel echoes and amplifies the anxiety over the extremely unstable duality between animals and humans (Kurz 2018). In the novel, there is a clear demonstration of Darwinism when Jonathan observes Dracula “... crawl down the castle wall over the dreadful abyss, *face down* with his cloak spreading out around him like

great wings" (Stoker 1897/1988, p37). Harker considers this occurrence unusual and terrifying since Dracula crawls "just as lizard moves along a wall" (Stoker, p38). As it is pointed out by Frost (2003), Harker's strange comparison underscores the impression that Dracula is both more and less than human, comparable to "lower reptiles" (Frost 2003, p6). The Count also holds the ability to transform into a form of animal, for example on one occasion Van Helsing states that "He can transform himself to wolf ... he can be as bat..." (Stoker, p257) and his telepathic connections with rats and wolves all contribute to the formation of a figure that reflects Victorian anxieties about Darwin's evolutionary theory and the scientific establishment of a relationship between humans and animals (Kurz 2018).

The novel *Dracula* is infused with further scientific theories. Stoker considered himself to be a believer of physiognomy (Long Hoeveler 2006) and his description of Dracula is centred around the key concepts of degeneration theory and criminal anthropology as hypothesized by Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau (Halberstam 1993). Given the numerous descriptors of Dracula's physique throughout the story, it is simple to draw analogies between Lombroso's degenerate and Stoker's Count (Tomaszewska 2004). There appears to be a clear reference to physiognomy in Jonathan Harker's first impression of Dracula's physical characteristics: "His face was a strong" ... with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead" (Stoker, p19). Stoker's vampire completely satisfies Lombroso's definition of a criminal, or more accurately a habitual criminal. Lombroso's account of the habitual murderer is reminiscent of Dracula's facial features: they have "a cold, glassy stare and eyes that are sometimes bloodshot... the nose is often hawklike and always large" (Lombroso 1887/2006, p51), which is evocative of Dracula's blazing red eyes and the depiction of his nose as slender with arched nostrils (Stoker 1897/1988). The murderer's mouth has unusually developed canine teeth, revealed by shrunken skin and thin lips, according to Lombroso's description, which is also identifiable in Dracula, who has "big white teeth", "pointed like an animal's" (Stoker, p185), which is a demonstration of their connection with predatory species, according to Lombroso (Tomaszewska 2004). Jonathan additionally describes Dracula's ears as being "at the tops extremely pointed" (Stoker, p19), and this, as per Lombroso, was a residue of apes' pointed ears and was associated with habitual criminals (Tomaszewska 2004). A further attribute that is noted

is the Count's hairy appearance. As Lombroso claimed, one of the primary atavistic stigmata that identifies an individual as a degenerate is an excess of hair, thought to be a relic of bestial fur. In the novel, Jonathan Harker accentuates this prominent feature of the Count's countenance in the account of his first meeting with Dracula in the novel (Tomaszewska 2004) by noting that "His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion," and "there were hairs in the centre of the palm" (Stoker, p19). Additionally, Van Helsing refers to Dracula as "this vampire" is "as powerful in person as twenty men" (Stoker, p254), a Lombrosian qualifier referring to the criminal's remarkable strength.

Dracula is directly described by Van Helsing in chapter twenty-five in Lombrosian terms as a criminal with "a child-brain", adding that Dracula is unevolved, and "predestinate to crime also" (Stoker, p365). While on their final hunt for the vampire, Van Helsing, Seward, and Mina discuss several categories of criminals. Mina provides scientific sources for the notion Van Helsing has supported: "The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind" (Stoker, p365). As a conclusion, we might argue that as Mina, the local teacher references Lombroso and Nordau, the scientific beliefs about crime and degeneracy were known to a wider public than merely the scientific world (Halberstam 1993).

3.3 THE FOREIGN OTHER AND THE FEAR OF REVERSE COLONISATION

While Stoker's vampire completely satisfies Lombroso's concept of a murderer, he also perfectly embodies the image of the 'foreign other' that plagued the British mind: he arrives in Britain, murders British, and transmits his vile blood, ushering the dreaded reverse colonisation. The 'foreign other' was portrayed as ill, unevolved, and criminal, and was scientifically claimed to be a form of atavistic human (Dager 2014).

Stoker opens his story by depicting the tension between modernity and tradition- British advancement contra foreign degeneration- by juxtaposing late-nineteenth-

century industrial technology with motifs of folklore and superstition from the classic Gothic (Ison 1985). Stoker chooses two contrasting principal locations to accomplish this. A specific emphasis is placed on London as the heartland of British civilization and imperial power, with which modern audiences would have been well connected (Punter & Byron 2004), while Transylvania is associated with ancient practices, political turbulence, racial invasion, and dominance (Arata 1990). The contrast is apparent as Senf (2002) notes, from the first chapter, when Jonathan Harker laments about the primitive circumstances he encounters on his trip to Dracula's castle. In fact, he notices immediately that "...the further East you go, the more unpunctual the trains are." (Stoker, p3). Stoker also employs recurring allusions to current technological innovations accessible in the West to further underscore the contrast between barbaric

Transylvania and British modernity.: "...telegraphs, typewriters, telephones, phonographs and Kodak cameras are all drawn upon in the struggle against the vampire" (Punter & Byron 2004, cited in Kovac 2015, p7).

As Jonathan discusses his journey across Transylvania in the first chapter, he implies that he is returning to an ancient culture: "The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East" (Stoker 1897/1988, p1), that is filled with frightened and superstitious villagers (Punter & Byron 2004). In his journal he keeps contrasting the foreign, savage East with his modernised West, the Eastern disorder with Western rationality. He compares Eastern superstition with Western reasoning, such as when a rural woman presents him with prayer beads to protect him from the 'evil eye'; and ultimately, he concludes that Dracula's homeland is "the wildest and least known portions of Europe" (Stoker, p1). This contrast between British modernity and Transylvanian barbarism is reinforced throughout the narrative to emphasise the dangers posed by the barbarians- and potentially criminals- conquering Britain (Tomaszewska 2004).

On his way to Dracula, Jonathan is fascinated by the different ethnicities he encounters in Transylvania. There are "four distinct nationalities" inhabiting in the country: "Saxons in the south, mixed with them are the Wallachs," that are descended from "the Dacians"; the "Magyars" reside in the west of the country "and Szekelys" populate "the East and the North" (Stoker, p3). Later, Jonathan encounters the szgany,

whom he portrays as the most unrefined and undeveloped: "There are thousands of them in Hungary and Transylvania who are almost outside all law...They are fearless and without religion..." (Stoker, p45). In doing so, Stoker strengthens the impression of Eastern ferocity. The Carpathians' multiracial nature is constantly emphasised in nineteenth-century reports and Dracula refers to Transylvania as a "whirlpool of European races"(Stoker, p31). Yet, inside that whirlpool, race relationships were typically marked by tension rather than tolerance. By placing Dracula in the Carpathians and continuously paralleling the Count's vampiric and militaristic efforts- being a warrior and patriotic ruler of a "conquering race" (Stoker, p32), the threat becomes evident for every nation across the globe. Consequently, as Arata (1990, p628) notes, "...his vampirism is interwoven with his status as a conqueror and invader."

The conquest of the British Empire by the Count begins in Transylvania. Harker discovers Dracula's library, which offers a wealth of information not just about the investment industry, but also about British culture and traditions (Stoker 1897/1988). Dracula made his initial move in defeating the Imperial power from within by learning English; he aims to blend in with and ultimately dominate British society (Ferguson 2004). As Arata (1990, p634) expresses it: "Before Dracula successfully invades the spaces of his victims' bodies or land, he first invades the spaces of their knowledge." In Jonathan Harker's remark Stoker articulated Britain's darkest nightmare: "There was a mocking smile on the bloated face which seemed to drive me mad. This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless" (Stoker, p56). It becomes apparent at this point, that the vampire is more than just a solitary uncontrollable entity. Dracula represents a destructive foreign power that intends to destroy the modern world. To further reinforce this notion, the characters in the novel refer to the "vampire kind" (Stoker, p256) rather than just vampires (Tomaszewska 2004).

Once the narrative departs Transylvania, this alien territory, it returns to England. Dracula, the atavistic vampire, stands in stark contrast to the civilised contemporary society, but, since "this 'foreigner' blends just a little too easily into the modern Victorian

world, strolling down Piccadilly in full daylight and watching the pretty girls pass by", the Count denotes the peril of conquest to Britain. (Punter & Byron 2004, p232). Dracula's arrival represents reverse colonisation; the Count's "lust for blood" (Stoker, p56) alludes both to the vampire's demand for its particular nourishment and the warrior's drive to attack. Vampirism in Dracula can be interpreted as a form of human colonisation, and if blood is a symbol of racial identity, then Dracula deracinates his victims. Consequently, they are given a new racial identity that differentiates them as the 'Other', and the anxiety of the British nation became to "ultimately dissolving into Roumanians" or barbarians (Arata 1990, p631).

3.4 "GOOD GIRLS GONE BAD"

(Swartz-Levine 2016, p346)

Bram Stoker's unique interpretation of the vampire symbol in Dracula echoes the fundamental anxiety of late Victorian society: sexuality (Craft 1984). In this context, Dracula grows ever more threatening since his hunger for blood and the means by which he satisfies this craving may be interpreted as sexual desire, while he disregards any attempts by society to regulate it, including rules on promiscuity, polygamy, and homosexuality (Senf 1979). Blood becomes the central motif of Dracula, symbolising nourishment, racial identity, sexual intimacy, and semen (Stevenson 1988).

Stoker begins to analyse female sexuality early in the narrative, when three female vampires seek to entice Jonathan Harker at Dracula's castle in Transylvania (Swartz-Levine 2016). Stoker's depiction of Dracula's Brides in the castle stresses their evident eroticism. They approach Harker with "voluptuous lips" and "deliberate voluptuousness" (Stoker, p41) and the adjective 'voluptuous' is used multiple times throughout the novel (Stevenson 1988). Jonathan is divided between fear and desire, despite his attraction to them: "There was something about them that made me uneasy... I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (Stoker, p41).

Demetrakopoulos (1977) asserts that this scene illustrates an attempted reverse rape and that the vampire women's seductive force creates masculine passivity. As a consequence, the thought that women will become more conscious of their own sexual desires, in contrast to the traditional concept that a woman should solely gratify her husband's sexual appetite, becomes paramount to Jonathan's anxieties (Swartz-Levine 2016).

The book emphasises the polarity of the 'domestic angel and the prostitute' and this polarity is reflected in the portrayal of the two main female protagonists, Mina Harker, and Lucy Westenra. Moreover, it is accentuated in Lucy's 'devolution' as she undergoes the complete conversion from human to vampire (Gerhards 2017). As Kathleen Spencer (1992) points out, Lucy is a flawed heroine whose sexuality is under poor control, ultimately leaving her vulnerable to the vampire. Lucy, who is described as being beautiful, sweet, and pure, is a controversial character. She has been proposed to by

three young men, and while she chooses Arthur, she feels bad rejecting John Seward and Quincey Morris, and laments, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" (Stoker, p65). And yet, Lucy's wish to wed all three of her admirers is not the only indication of her dubious nature. She is a sleepwalker, and this behaviour is frequently associated with sexual immorality. Thus, she is extremely exposed to Dracula's attack by expressing her sexual receptivity (Spencer 1992).

Lucy's transformation is inescapable. Following Dracula's infection, the gentle, and submissive woman transforms into an aggressive, overtly sexual beast who openly rejects obedience to society's rules (Gerhards 2017). Her blonde hair darkens as she transforms into a vampire wearing white, symbolising the conflicting forces of good and evil; and the adjective most frequently employed to describe her is 'voluptuous' (Rosenberg 2000). In the image of the suddenly sexual woman, Stoker presents the greatest fear: Lucy's behaviour is deeply linked to the dreadful concept of feminine "otherness" (Gerhards 2017).

The kiss of Dracula liberates women to turn into sexual penetrators who overturn conventional gender roles by penetrating men with their piercing fangs, placing men in the sexually submissive role traditionally allocated for women. Lucy's unrestrained sexual behaviour is seen as malicious since it challenges male dominance. Van Helsing and his crew of 'brave men' execute huge blood transfusions to reinfuse Lucy with the 'right' blood, "young and strong . . . and so pure" (Stoker, p132) in an effort to cure her of her deviant sexuality. The transfusion procedure, which involves inserting a phallic needle into Lucy's body and allowing the men to inject their own blood into her, reminds of gang rape. Paradoxically, Lucy's desire to marry all of her suitors is achieved, albeit brutally (Signorotti 1996).

Despite their best efforts, Lucy's resistance to traditional patriarchal coercion while she is alive drives Van Helsing and his allies to employ the most brutal forms of retribution following her resurrection as an Undead. Stoker's men employ severe phallic punishment on Lucy, staking and beheading her. Lucy appeared even more sexually vigorous in her coffin, her "body shook and quivered and twisted in violent contortions" (Stoker, p232). In her tomb, she becomes dehumanised, and she is simply referred to

as 'the Thing' (Signorotti, 1996). In the 'staking act', Arthur, her 'husband,' satisfies his role as a symbol of Victorian masculinity and as a husband (Spencer 1992) by hammering "deeper and deeper the mercy bearing stake" (Stoker, p232) into Lucy's breast. Through this action, he counterbalances the danger that the vampire-Lucy poses to the respectable Victorian femininity and domesticity. The operation 'heals' Lucy and restores her to the traditional role of sexually docile female (Signorotti 1996). Although her soul has been saved since her sexuality was executed, her cadaver must be tormented as she fell to Dracula's sexual seduction. Therefore, the decapitation is considered 'essential.' This attitude may be considered as the Victorian counterpart of victim blaming (Swartz-Levine 2016).

Mina Harker, the other main character, is presented as the woman who is dedicated to her husband and strives to be a faithful wife and devoted mother (Gerhards 2017). Dracula's advances, however, corrupt her as well (Swartz-Levine 2016). Mina is seduced by Dracula in her own bedroom, while "on the bed lay Jonathan Harker, his face flushed and breathing heavily as if in a stupor" (Stoker, p302). In this ritual, Dracula

forces Mina to drink his blood, so as to experience the thrills of vampiric hunger and exposes her to a dimension where gender boundaries dissolve and male and female bodily fluids intermix (Craft 1984). As the red stripes on her nightdress imply, she fails to preserve her chastity and this incident can be considered a rape as the act is forceful and aggressive (Swartz-Levine 2016). In this scene Dracula attempts to turn her into a lustful, oversexed, and anti-mother creature akin to Dracula's vampire brides and this is newly found sexuality is ruinous for Mina since the women in Dracula who morph into vampires grow far too sensual for the Victorian men to tolerate (Swartz-Levine 2016).

3.5 THE RISE OF THE NEW WOMEN

The emergence and aspirations of New Women sparked anxieties in Victorian society, and these anxieties generated by the disintegration of conventional standards permeate the narrative of Dracula (Punter & Byron 2004). As Senf (1982) argues, there are no true New Women in Dracula, but rather, as Ledger (1997) claims, the two lead female characters are different versions of the New Women. Stoker introduces the New Women through the two primary female characters, Mina, and Lucy. The series of

letters they exchanged with each other reveal major distinctions between the two women (Senf 1982). Lucy appears to be an epitome of Victorian womanhood, being beautiful and kind, with hair of "sunny ripples" (Stoker, p172), in waiting for the perfect man to marry. She is an eternal child, and her major interests are social gatherings and her personal delight (Senf 1982). Nevertheless, Lucy is not who she is believed to be; she supports the New Woman's aspiration for sexual equality (Senf 2010). This becomes soon evident from her letters to Mina, whereby she discusses the three marriage proposals she has received from her suitors. Lucy's lust unfolds dramatically through her sexualized meetings with Dracula, and she evolves as the sexual New Woman due to her destructive desires, but as a vampire, she additionally symbolises the negative mother figure since she only preys on children. According to Stoker's interpretation, Lucy is the sexualized woman, the genuine threat to masculinity and the traditional family (Lancaster 2004). While the first section of the book ends with the extermination of a heroine who embodies the New Women's sexuality and aggression, the second section concentrates on Mina Harker (Senf 1982).

Mina is different from Lucy in many respects. She is an orphan, stating that she "never knew either father or mother" (Stoker, p169) and has no supporters. She works professionally as an assistant schoolmistress, practices shorthand, and is accustomed to the modern technologies. This presentation of Mina, which is focused on her profession rather than her social status in the male-dominated society, appears to propel her into the domain of the New Womanhood (Boyd 2014). Regardless of how tirelessly Mina works and strives to better her talents, she remains dedicated to her husband, and she affirms shortly into the novel that her ambition is to be helpful to Jonathan when they marry (Rosenberg 2000).

Mina is not simply regarded as "sweet-faced", "dainty-looking" (Stoker, p236) and "pearl among women" (Stoker, p235), but she is also the embodiment of a strong and kind woman. Van Helsing best expresses the core of her character when he says that she has a "man's brain...and a woman's heart," (Stoker, p252) referring to her balance of intellect and emotion, and so reflecting the finest attributes of both men and women (Boyd 2014). However, when Dracula starts to victimise Mina, Van Helsing notices and remarks that "Madam Mina, our poor, dear Madam Mina, is changing" (Stoker, p345)

His concerns exemplify the growing social anxieties of the era when established concepts of the traditional feminine gender roles are threatened. Mina comes to resemble Lucy as her sexual desire intensifies and as not only her nightdress, but also her chastity has been contaminated, Mina labels herself "unclean" (Stoker, p305) and she orders herself not to touch or kiss Jonathan again (Lancaster 2004).

Dracula depletes both her blood and resistance, however, as soon as she joins the Crew of Light on her husband's side in the fight against Dracula, she regains the ability to suppress her desire and use her will against the Count (Spencer 1992). The demise of Dracula by the Crew members allows the men to seem to be the heroes of the story, although Mina is the one who guides them to Dracula. Still, Mina's actions appear to pale in comparison to the men's since she relies on them to protect her and re-establish her dignified, but submissive womanhood. Mina ultimately triumphs over desire and the threats of degeneration with the support of the Crew and her shameful scar also disappears from her forehead. She is not presented as an example of sexual femininity and vampirism, but rather as a manifestation of how females have managed to

transcend the boundaries of the traditional roles of men and women (Lancaster 2004).

In an era when literature traditionally portrayed women as angels or monsters, when female autonomy was most likely condemned and rejected, Mina Murray's character represents 'the golden mean' between angel and monster and the traditional and the New Woman (Boyd 2014).

CONCLUSION

The Victorian era was a period filled with severe social anxieties as in light of the rapidly rising of knowledge, society came to realise that their belief systems and principles were no longer entirely unshakable. As Arnold noticed (1838), that was a "new atmosphere of unrest" with "questions as to great points in moral and intellectual matters; where things which have been settled for centuries seem to be again brought into discussion" (Arnold 1838 cited in Houghton, p8). According to Houghton's (1985) interpretation of the "character of the age", it was a "time of science" (p11), "fuse and transition" (p9) when traditional ideas and structures were challenged, altered, and a new order was about to be born. Victorians had to exist "between two worlds, one dead or

dying, one struggling but powerless to be born, in an age of doubt" (Houghton 1985, p10). This Victorian sense of doubt and decline was echoed by contemporary authors. The historical setting for Dracula encompasses Britain's declining power as an empire in the last decades of the nineteenth century. While during the Victorian era, Britain was an imperial and industrial global power, the rapid changes on social, political, and economic domains, along with the interactions with other countries, nations and cultures generated anxieties in the Victorian society. Stoker's gothic novel explores most of these anxieties including the fear of science, the fear of the foreigner and reverse colonisation, and the fear of the changing sexual conventions with a focus on the shifting roles of women. As a consequence, while Stoker's Dracula is a captivating supernatural tale, it also provides a unique insight into the mentality of the Victorian society concerning 'The Other'.

In further research, it would be interesting to investigate if the study of Victorian society has any current relevance, such as the presence of the 'women question' or

our responses to the refugee crisis, while living in the midst of fundamental social, economic, and political changes. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to investigate whether there is still a propensity to 'otherising' the most vulnerable groups based on pseudo-science, fictitious or insufficient evidence.

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